



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

### Tuesday, 18 April 2023

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## TUESDAY, 18 APRIL 2023


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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.


### ABSENCE OF SPEAKER

 The Clerk informed the House that Mr Speaker was representing the Australian Region at the meeting of the Executive of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Gibraltar.

Mr Acting Speaker (Mr Joe Kelly, Greenslopes) read prayers and took the chair.

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS

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

The Honourable C.W. Pitt MP  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

I hereby acquaint the Legislative Assembly that the following Bill, having been passed by the Legislative Assembly and having been presented for the Royal Assent, was assented to in the name of His Majesty The King on the date shown:

Date of Assent: 2 April 2023

A Bill for An Act to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for particular purposes

This Bill is hereby transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, to be numbered and forwarded to the proper Officer for enrolment, in the manner required by law.

Yours sincerely

Governor

2 April 2023

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 2 April 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to a certain bill on 2 April 2023 [\[490\]](#).

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The Honourable C.W. Pitt MP  
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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

Date of Assent: 5 April 2023

A Bill for An Act to amend the Housing Act 2003, the Housing Regulation 2015 and the Retirement Villages Act 1999 for particular purposes

A Bill for an Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Environmental Protection Regulation 2019, the Land Title Act 1994, the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993 for particular purposes

A Bill for An Act to amend 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

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

5 April 2023

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 5 April 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 5 April 2023 [\[491\]](#).

## ACTING SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

### Acting Deputy Speaker



**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I inform the House that, in the absence of the Speaker and in accordance with standing order 12(2), I nominate the member for Cook to act as Deputy Speaker.

### Acting Integrity Commissioner, Appointment



**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I advise that on 10 April 2023 Mr Speaker administered the affirmation of office to Forbes Smith as Acting Integrity Commissioner of Queensland. I table a copy of the affirmation.

*Tabled paper:* Affirmation of appointment as Acting Integrity Commissioner of Queensland of Mr Forbes Smith, dated 10 April 2023 [\[492\]](#).

### Confidentiality of Committee Proceedings



**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I think it is timely to remind all members that proceedings of committees which are not open to the public and which are not authorised by a committee to be published remain strictly confidential to the committee, as detailed in standing order 211(1). Members should note that paragraph (4) of standing order 211 makes it very clear that members should not refer to proceedings of a committee in the House unless the relevant committee has reported those proceedings to the House or otherwise published those proceedings to the world at large. I urge all members to familiarise themselves with the requirements of standing order 211 and to avoid any unauthorised disclosure of confidential committee proceedings either in or out of the Legislative Assembly.

### Adjournment of Debates



**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** In recent sitting weeks there has been some confusion caused by members seeking to be 'helpful' in moving that the debate on a question before the House be adjourned prior to the time for that item of business to expire. I remind members that the determination of time in the House remains at the discretion of the Speaker and is exercised on behalf of the Speaker by the person occupying the chair at the relevant point in time. If there is a need to move that the debate be adjourned, the person occupying the chair will invite a member on their feet to so move at the appropriate time. Please do not seek to pre-empt such an invitation as it only causes confusion.

### Voice to Parliament, Panel Discussion



**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, this evening the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts, together with the member for Southport and the member for Noosa, will co-host a Voice to Parliament panel discussion and a Q&A session on behalf of the Parliamentary Friends of First Nations People. The event is an information evening ahead of the planned Voice to Parliament referendum to be held later this year. The event will be moderated by Deanella Mack of EY, with speakers to include: Dean Parkin, director of From the Heart; Noel Pearson, director of Cape York Partnership; and Semara Jose, chairperson and founder of Deadly Inspiring Youth Doing Good. The event will commence at 6.30 pm in the Speaker's Hall, with the panel discussion to begin at 7.15 pm. All members are invited to attend and further information has been distributed.

## School Group Tour



**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Bray Park State High School in the electorate of Pine Rivers.

## PETITIONS

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

### Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro Project

**Mr Andrew**, from 6,274 petitioners, requesting the House to halt planning of the proposed Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro project within the Pioneer Valley [\[481\]](#), [\[482\]](#).

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

### Lake Hugh Muntz

**Mr Stevens**, from 385 petitioners, requesting the House to entreat the Gold Coast City Council to not remove the last sanctuary in Lake Hugh Muntz and to maintain its ongoing sustainability [\[483\]](#).

### Maroochydore, Kuran Street and Bradman Avenue Intersection

**Mr Purdie**, from 359 petitioners, requesting the House to improve the safety of the intersection at Kuran Street and Bradman Avenue, Maroochydore [\[484\]](#).

### Townsville Northern Suburbs, Roads

**Mr Dametto**, from 1,929 petitioners, requesting the House to expedite upgraded road infrastructure in the northern suburbs of Townsville [\[485\]](#).

### Toowoomba, North-South Transport Corridor

**Mr Watts**, from 462 petitioners, requesting the House to construct a north-south transport corridor between Toowoomba and Highfields and to link Boundary Street to Old Goombungee Road as an urban traffic corridor [\[486\]](#).

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

### Billboard Advertising

709 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure a total ban on approving off-premise billboards and begin to phase out all off-premise billboard advertising in Queensland [\[487\]](#).

### General Practitioners, Taxation

1,321 petitioners, requesting the House to do all in its power to address the decision of the Office of Queensland Revenue to include doctors operating under contract as employees and provide an exemption to contracted general practitioners to allow them to practice in medical centres without added tax expenses to the centres [\[488\]](#).

### Housing

1,695 petitioners, requesting the House to take some action to help a large number of Queenslanders to find suitable accommodation, including working with local councils to search for housing that is sitting empty [\[489\]](#).

Petitions received.

## TABLED PAPERS

### PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS (SO 31)

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

31 March 2023—

- [416](#) Brisbane Girls Grammar School—Annual Report 2022
- [417](#) Brisbane Grammar School—Annual Report 2022
- [418](#) Central Queensland University—Annual Report 2022
- [419](#) Griffith University—Annual Report 2022
- [420](#) Ipswich Girls Grammar School including Ipswich Junior Grammar School—Annual Report 2022
- [421](#) Ipswich Grammar School—Annual Report 2022
- [422](#) James Cook University—Annual Report 2022
- [423](#) Queensland College of Teachers—Annual Report 2022

- [424](#) Rockhampton Girls Grammar School—Annual Report 2022
- [425](#) Rockhampton Grammar School—Annual Report 2022
- [426](#) Toowoomba Grammar School—Annual Report 2022
- [427](#) Townsville Grammar School—Annual Report 2022
- [428](#) University of Queensland—Annual Report 2022
- [429](#) University of Southern Queensland—Annual Report 2022
- [430](#) University of Sunshine Coast—Annual Report 2022
- [431](#) Murray-Darling Basin Authority—Annual Report 2021-22
- [432](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on official visit to Japan, Vietnam and Singapore by the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement (Hon. Hinchliffe), 25 February to 4 March 2023
- [433](#) Queensland Theatre Company—Annual Report 2022
- 3 April 2023—
- [434](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure (Hon. Dr Miles), to an ePetition (3841-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 970 petitioners, requesting the House to cause the removal of the Mayor of the Scenic Rim Regional Council and appoint an Administrator
- [435](#) Queensland Human Rights Commission: Report titled 'Building belonging: Review of Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Act 1991', July 2022, final government response
- 4 April 2023—
- [436](#) Education, Employment and Training Committee: Report No. 33, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 30 November 2022 and 21 February 2023
- [437](#) Racing Integrity Amendment Act 2022: Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 14: Erratum
- 5 April 2023—
- [438](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 43, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 9 November 2022 and 20 February 2023
- 11 April 2023—
- [439](#) Queensland Local Government Grants Commission—Annual Report 2022
- 13 April 2023—
- [440](#) Transport and Resources Committee: Report No. 32, 57th Parliament—Liquid Fuel Supply (Minimum Biobased Petrol Content) Amendment Bill 2022
- [441](#) Transport and Resources Committee: Report No. 33, 57th Parliament—Inquiry into Peninsula Developmental Road (Laura to Weipa) project
- [442](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure (Hon. Dr Miles), to an ePetition (3808-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 273 petitioners, requesting the House to withdraw the approval of a large public boat ramp to be constructed at Weinam Creek Redland Bay and to find an alternative site that does not impact so badly on the Redland Bay and islands communities
- [443](#) Response from the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (Hon. Linard), to an ePetition (3850-23) sponsored by the member for Everton, Mr Mander, from 9,451 petitioners, requesting the House to undertake a range of measures to address youth and juvenile crime
- [444](#) Response from the Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (Hon. Linard), to an ePetition (3855-23) sponsored by the member for Clayfield, Mr Nicholls, from 2,479 petitioners, requesting the House to help address the youth crime crisis by making breach of bail an offence for youth offenders
- [445](#) Response from the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement (Hon. de Brenni), to an ePetition (3846-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 630 petitioners, requesting the House to halt any Pioneer Valley land compulsory resumption negotiations or contracts until the completion of the business case and EIS for the proposed Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro project
- [446](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3853-23) sponsored by the member for Burnett, Mr Bennett, from 346 petitioners, requesting the House to commence construction of the already-identified Queensland State Government Priority 1 Project for Walkers Point, Woodgate boat ramp
- 14 April 2023—
- [447](#) Public Interest Monitor—Report on inspections under Section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for the period of 1 July 2022-31 December 2022
- [448](#) Letter, dated 13 April 2023, from the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, to the Premier, Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk, regarding the member for Ipswich West
- [449](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 45, 57th Parliament—Property Law Bill 2023



[450](#) Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 31, 57th Parliament—Waste Reduction and Recycling and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

[451](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 46, 57th Parliament—Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

#### TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

#### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

##### Police Service Administration Act 1990:

[452](#) Police Service Administration (Transfer of Executive Officer) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 20

[453](#) Police Service Administration (Transfer of Executive Officer) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 20, explanatory notes

[454](#) Police Service Administration (Transfer of Executive Officer) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 20, human rights certificate

##### Public Records Act 2002:

[455](#) Public Records (Commission of Inquiry into Forensic DNA Testing in Queensland) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 21

[456](#) Public Records (Commission of Inquiry into Forensic DNA Testing in Queensland) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 21, explanatory notes

[457](#) Public Records (Commission of Inquiry into Forensic DNA Testing in Queensland) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 21, human rights certificate

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

[458](#) Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation (Administration Fee and Levies) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 22

[459](#) Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation (Administration Fee and Levies) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 22, explanatory notes

[460](#) Motor Accident Insurance and Other Legislation (Administration Fee and Levies) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 22, human rights certificate

##### Public Trustee Act 1978:

[461](#) Public Trustee (Interest Rate) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2023, No. 23

[462](#) Public Trustee (Interest Rate) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2023, No. 23, explanatory notes

[463](#) Public Trustee (Interest Rate) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2023, No. 23, human rights certificate

##### State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995:

[464](#) Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 24

[465](#) Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 24, explanatory notes

[466](#) Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 24, human rights certificate

##### Forestry Act 1959, Nature Conservation Act 1992:

[467](#) Forestry (State Forests) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 25

[468](#) Forestry (State Forests) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 25, explanatory notes

[469](#) Forestry (State Forests) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 25, human rights certificate

##### Queensland Veterans' Council Act 2021:

[470](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 26

[471](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 26, explanatory notes

[472](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 26, human rights certificate

##### Inspector of Detention Services Act 2022:

[473](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 27

[474](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 27, explanatory notes

[475](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 27, human rights certificate

##### Corrective Services Act 2006, Inspector of Detention Services Act 2022, Public Sector Act 2022:

[476](#) Inspector of Detention Services Regulation 2023, No. 28

[477](#) Inspector of Detention Services Regulation 2023, No. 28, explanatory notes

[478](#) Inspector of Detention Services Regulation 2023, No. 28, human rights certificate

## REPORT BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

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

**Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2022**

Amendments made to Bill

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

*Omit—*

'Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2022'

*Insert—*

'Police Powers and Responsibilities (Jack's Law) Amendment Bill 2023'

**Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2022**

Amendments made to Bill

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

*Omit—*

'Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2022'

*Insert—*

'Police Service Administration and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023'

## MEMBER'S PAPER


The following member's paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Mermaid Beach (Mr Stevens)—

[480](#) Nonconforming petition requesting the House to entreat the Gold Coast City Council to not remove the last sanctuary in Lake Hugh Muntz and to maintain its ongoing sustainability

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Housing

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.38 am): Our government recognises the pressures affecting the national housing market and the impact on the people of our state. In response, our government is investing almost \$4 billion in social and affordable housing supply and services—a record commitment. This week we will table legislation that will mean rents can only be increased once per year and we will begin public consultation on stage 2 rental law reforms that aim to strike the right balance between the needs of the community while supporting continued investment in the housing market.


We are acting and investing right across the housing spectrum. Since 2015, our government has delivered more than 4,300 social homes, bringing the statewide social housing portfolio to more than 74,000 social homes, and we have already 650 more currently under construction. Last year we invested \$26 million in immediate housing support which has provided support to more than 4,200 vulnerable Queensland families. Last month we announced an additional \$28 million to continue this support.

In December, as part of our Queensland Housing Summit Outcomes Report, we announced \$11.7 million to help people on the verge of homelessness to keep a roof over their head. This funding has so far supported almost 700 Queenslanders, including over 200 First Nations people. Between 1 July last year and 31 March, our government has also supported more than 10,500 households with bond loans, more than 3,400 with rental grants, 135 with Helping Hand Headlease services, and 7,500 households advisory and tenancy assistance services. These form some of the almost 120,000 households that our government has provided housing assistance for this financial year alone. Since we have progressed changes to allow renting of granny flats in the private market, 147 rental bonds for secondary dwellings have been lodged with the Residential Tenancies Authority.

These numbers alone do not tell the full story of how important these government programs have been. For example, 20-year-olds Christine and Asher in Townsville spent months couch surfing and house sitting and ultimately living out of their car. Through the help of Queensland Youth Services Christine and Asher were connected with Sharehouse Youth Programs which provided support until emergency accommodation became available. Three and a half months later they were offered long-term accommodation in social housing in Townsville where they now live. As Christine and Asher say, having long-term housing means they now have a foundation on which to grow.

Solving the housing issue is a complex problem that needs partnership and collaboration across all levels of government, along with industry, investors and community organisations. We will continue to fully engage with our housing round table as we address these issues together.


### Renewable Energy, Projects

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.41 am): Last week, the Deputy Premier and I visited Australia's largest solar farm west of Dalby to watch the last solar panel being installed. There at the Western Downs Green Power Hub more than one million solar panels have been installed. At full strength, it will provide enough energy to power the equivalent of 235,000 homes. Queensland owned Powerlink has connected up this mega project to the Queensland SuperGrid, and our government owned clean energy company CleanCo will purchase and supply 80 per cent of this renewable energy to businesses like Coles, BHP and Westfield shopping centres.

Today I can announce that just down the road we will be building a big battery in Chinchilla to bolster the SuperGrid and store wind and solar energy. This battery is the first at the Kogan Creek clean energy hub and will be big enough to power 30,000 homes for two hours during peak demand periods. As you know, in Queensland we like to go big, and this solar farm is not the only 'Australia's biggest' we are building. Not far from the Western Downs Green Power Hub is the MacIntyre Wind Farm precinct. This will not only be the biggest in the country but also the biggest in the Southern Hemisphere. See—big state, big projects, big build! When complete it will generate enough clean energy to power 700,000 Queensland homes. Further north, our pumped hydro energy storage project near Mackay will be the largest in the world. It will be 20 times bigger than Wivenhoe with energy generation capacity 2.5 times more than Snowy 2.0. In the north-west, CopperString 2032 will open up the largest renewable energy zone in the nation and more than \$500 billion in critical minerals.


Let's not forget that all of these projects will be connected through Australia's largest energy SuperGrid to transport all of this renewable energy to households and businesses across our state, businesses like Brisbane Airport Corporation, Arnott's, steelmaking coal producer Anglo American, Officeworks, Bunnings—the list goes on. All these projects mean more economic growth for regional communities, more good jobs for Queenslanders, and more cleaner, cheaper energy in our energy system—an energy system that is proudly owned by the people of this great state. We are powering towards our renewable energy target of 70 per cent by 2032 and 80 per cent by 2035.

### Coronavirus and Influenza, Vaccination

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.43 am): I am proud to lead a government that did all we could to protect the community during the pandemic, from border closures to vaccination. There was fierce opposition at times, but our government stood firm and followed the advice of health experts. Our position of waiting for 80 per cent of the population to be vaccinated before opening the borders was fiercely opposed. New research published today shows that this was in fact the right decision and one that is still having a positive impact on the health of Queenslanders. The research shows in the highly vaccinated population of Queensland, long COVID symptoms may be no more severe or prevalent than those seen in influenza.

Speaking of influenza, I am sure you have noticed that the mornings are starting to get a little bit cooler which means flu season is on its way. This year we have had more than 7,300 cases already. At the same time last year, we had just 69. Five hundred people have been admitted to hospital. What that means is people should go out and get their flu shot. They should also check with their GP to make sure they are updated with their COVID booster. My message is especially to our seniors in our community. It is a good time now to go and get your flu shot and COVID booster to have that added protection. I urge our Queensland seniors to do that.


### North-West Queensland Floods, Recovery

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (9.45 am): I recently travelled to the north-west of our state to witness firsthand the aftermath of a relentless monsoon season that hammered the remote region from Christmas 2022 to Easter 2023. The damage on the ground is significant, and the Palaszczuk government will stand with the communities of Burketown, Doomadgee and surrounds to ensure they have what they will need on the long road to recovery.

Queensland Reconstruction Authority CEO Major General Jake Ellwood joined me in the north-west. He is no stranger to disasters and the efforts required to ensure communities build back more resilient than before. He is already planning his second visit. I was also pleased the member for Traeger was able to join me. We met with councils and community members. We spoke about the region's recovery priorities and what will be needed in the weeks and months ahead. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority remains on the ground in Mount Isa and Burketown to support recovery planning and will continue to work with impacted communities and the Commonwealth on the long road to recovery.


A support package of up to \$12 million is now available for primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profits across the hardest hit areas in northern and western Queensland. It is too early to put a dollar figure on the reconstruction and recovery costs associated with these floods, but all affected local government areas can have confidence that the QRA will still be there to provide the assistance necessary to repair the damage.

### Housing, Parkside Yeronga

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (9.46 am): I know the member for Miller shares my excitement today in announcing that construction has commenced at Parkside Yeronga on Brisbane's south side. This project is turning a disused site—the former TAFE college—into a community of more than 280 homes. Diversity in the type of housing is key in these mixed-use precincts. Parkside Yeronga will be made up of a 169-apartment retirement living facility, 37 custom designed town homes, 75 social and affordable units and over 4,000 square metres of open-space areas. When completed, it will be home to hundreds of Queenslanders. To enable this mixed-use development which includes the delivery of the Yeronga Community Centre, the Palaszczuk government is investing more than \$40 million in the preparation of the site. In addition to delivering on jobs and housing, the project will attract around \$180 million of private sector investment over the next four years.

It is only the Palaszczuk Labor government that is working together with councils and industry to improve housing supply, security, affordability and diversity right across Queensland.

### Economy

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.48 am): Our state's economy and our state's labour market continue to go from strength to strength. That is because Queensland continues to lead the nation. Three years on from the start of the COVID pandemic, Queensland's trajectory is ever upward. Our economy today is more powerful, more agile, more diverse and more resilient than it was before March 2020. Queensland's business conditions are the envy of all other states. Meanwhile, more than 1,000 Queenslanders are finding new, meaningful work each week.

The confidence of Queenslanders is on show for all to see. On Saturday night, more than 26,500 people, including US Ambassador to Australia, Caroline Kennedy, were on hand to watch the Broncos take on the Gold Coast Titans. That is the largest crowd at Cbus Super Stadium since the start of the pandemic. The night before, more than 23,000 attended the Dolphins-Souths game at Suncorp.

It is not just about footy fans. On Saturday night English pop rock sensation The 1975 sold out the Riverstage. These are crowds of hardworking Queenslanders. They are showing—

**Ms Palaszczuk:** Did you go?

**Mr DICK:** I could not make it, but they are on my playlist. These Queenslanders are showing their confidence in Queensland, their confidence in our economy by getting out and spending while enjoying our wonderful lifestyle.

**Ms Palaszczuk:** They don't like good economic news.

**Mr DICK:** They do not like good news—the economic powerhouse of the nation. The strength of the Queensland economy was evident in the latest NAB Business Survey released last week. It showed business conditions in Queensland were the strongest of all the states and well above the historic average. These strong business conditions are reflected in Queensland's continued jobs growth. Last week's ABS Labour Force Survey showed trend employment in Queensland continued to rise in March 2023, up 6,400 persons in the month. That takes our annual jobs growth to March 2023 to 58,200 jobs. That is more than 1,000 Queenslanders finding a new job each week. The vast majority of these, 46,800 or more than 80 per cent, are full-time jobs.

Queensland's unemployment rate remains at a near historic low of 3.8 per cent in March and we have seen low unemployment right across the state. In Cairns the unemployment rate in February 2023 was just 4.1 per cent. In Central Queensland it was 3.3 per cent. In Mackay, it was 2½ per cent and in Townsville, the clubhouse leader, unemployment was just 2.2 per cent.

Notwithstanding the strength of the Queensland economy, the global outlook remains uncertain. Our government is actually aware of these challenges—we are acutely aware of them—and they are challenges that lie ahead for our state. The International Monetary Fund's latest forecast saw a downgrade in its global economic outlook. The IMF now expects economic growth to slow over the next two years amid the impacts of higher global interest rates and persistent inflation in many countries. These global trends are likely to also impact on economic growth outcomes in Queensland in the near term.

As we face these challenges, Queensland does so from a position of unrivalled strength. Our diverse economy, our highly skilled workforce and, above all, the resilience of Queenslanders mean we are well positioned to confront whatever lies ahead.

### Residential Tenancies



**Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (9.52 am): Housing affordability is a significant issue across Australia and Queensland is not immune from the challenges being faced. Balancing the rights of renters with those of property owners requires measured consideration. We know there is unprecedented pressure on the housing sector right now and we recognise that tenancy laws in Queensland must be modernised to keep pace with the changing rental landscape. As the Premier announced today, we will begin public consultation on stage 2 rental law reforms that aim to strike the right balance between the needs of the community while also supporting continued investment in the housing market.


In October 2021 our government passed stage 1 rental reforms in this parliament that establish minimum standards for rental properties for safety, security and functionality; end without-grounds evictions; and make it easier for renters to keep a pet. Last month we acted quickly to stabilise rents, announcing a limit on rent increases to just once a year. Now in stage 2, we are building on those foundations to further increase transparency, accountability and fairness in our state's renting market.

Public consultation has been opened today on five key areas: making it easier for renters to install safety, security and accessibility modifications; improving negotiations around personalisation changes to a property like hanging pictures or planning a garden; privacy and access issues; improving the rental bonds process; and providing renters with fee-free methods to pay rent as well as ensuring rent payments, utility and reletting fees and charges are fair and reasonable.

In addition to our work on rental reforms, the Palaszczuk government is working hard to help vulnerable Queenslanders keep a roof over their head with our \$3.9 billion investment in social and affordable housing. Since we announced our second housing action plan in July 2021, the Palaszczuk government has added more than 38 new social homes to our stock every single month. That is more than one a day every single day. That is 827 new homes completed in less than two years with another 647 being built and more to come.

It is against this backdrop of investment in social and affordable housing that the Premier has announced the opening of our stage 2 rental reforms consultation, and I encourage all Queenslanders to have their say.

### Turn to Teaching


 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.55 am): Our teachers and teacher aides are the foundation of the world-class education system we have here in Queensland, setting up our kids for a great future and economic advantage. No doubt there are challenges that are being felt across the country in terms of attraction and retention, but we are leading the way in Queensland to support our existing teachers and recruit more into what is a wonderful profession and vocation.

Our new enterprise bargaining agreement is delivering some of the best wages and conditions for teachers in the country. We are delivering on our election commitments to employ over 6,100 new teachers and over 1,100 teacher aides in our schools, with over 4,500 teachers and 1,700 teacher aides already employed. We are making great strides with innovative programs like Turn to Teaching. The Turn to Teaching program aims to employ and support 300 aspiring teachers with financial support, mentoring, a paid internship and a guaranteed permanent position in a Queensland school at the end of the two-year masters program. The first 2022 cohort of 41 are now in schools across the state from the Gold Coast to Gladstone, from Cloncurry to Cairns, completing their paid internship as part of the second year of the program. Our second cohort of 109 has just started their first year of study, and later this year we will be advertising for the third intake to start in 2024.

I met Callum Morrison, one of our interns who was teaching science and biology at Kirwan State High School in Thuringowa. It was fantastic to see how much he enjoyed sharing his knowledge with the students. Novi Ong at Milton State School in Maiwar said, 'Turn to Teaching is a great program for those looking to change career into the teaching profession.' James Dickson, who left the minerals industry to teach biology, science and geography in your electorate, Acting Speaker, at Coorparoo Secondary College, said, 'I highly encourage anyone who is looking at a career change or believes they have something to offer the next generation to jump on board.' Alex, also at Coorparoo Secondary College said, 'After lots of thought on changing careers the Turn to Teaching internship was the final push I needed to jump into my teaching career.' The OECD education report that was released last week also singled out Turn to Teaching for special mention as a positive program to get teachers in the classroom.

The Palaszczuk government will always back our teachers. My message for any aspiring teachers out there is to check it out and come on board.

### Hospitals

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (9.58 am): Just as Queensland is leading the nation in our economic management, Queensland's hospital system is nation leading. The *Report on government services* for 2021-22 showed that Queensland led the nation for the treatment of elective surgery patients within the recommended time. While we are the busiest Ambulance Service in the country, we beat New South Wales and Victoria when it came to ambulance response times. We are also the only mainland jurisdiction to offer our ambulance services free of charge, something that will never change under a Labor government. In addition, Queensland was the second-best performing—

**Ms Palaszczuk:** They'd cut it.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I take that interjection. I have no doubt that it is one of the things those opposite will put on their cuts list. In addition, Queensland was the second-best performing jurisdiction in the treatment of emergency department patients within the recommended time.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order, Leader of the Opposition.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I will read that again because those opposite were talking and might not have heard this great news. In addition, Queensland was the second-best performing jurisdiction in the treatment of emergency department patients within the recommended time.

**Opposition members** interjected.

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

**Mrs D'ATH:** I will say it again for the Leader of the Opposition, who appears to be struggling to hear.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister, resume your seat. Members, I am trying to listen to the minister's contribution. The minister is literally the closest person to me in the chamber and I am having difficulty hearing her. I would ask the members to maintain what has been good and orderly decorum up to this point.


**Mrs D'ATH:** Queensland was the second-best performing jurisdiction in the treatment of emergency department patients within the recommended time. The most recent quarterly data demonstrates that Queensland has now surpassed New South Wales in the timely treatment of ED patients. In the October to December quarter, Queensland emergency departments saw 72 per cent of patients within the recommended time. In New South Wales, in the same period that figure was 66.4 per cent.

Queensland's nation-leading emergency department performance is made all the more impressive by the fact that we have seen demand for the most urgent category 1 and 2 patients increase by more than 100 per cent since we came to government. In the last quarter alone, there was a 12 per cent increase in category 1 emergency department patients compared to the same quarter the year before. When the most urgent cases increase in volume, less urgent cases will need to wait while life-saving treatment is delivered. As an extension of this fact, an increase in complex and acute demand leads to an increase in ambulance lost time. Where patients are transported to hospital via ambulance but are considered less urgent than more acute patients, these patients may receive expert care from our paramedics inside our EDs while they await the assessment of our ED clinicians.

While we are acutely aware of the demand pressures on our public health system, our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan is working to reduce the time that all patients spend waiting for treatment by delivering 2,509 new hospital beds, 11 hospital expansions, three new hospitals and a new Queensland cancer centre. In addition to new hospitals and hospital beds, our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan is delivering innovative and expanded services to reduce ED wait times. This includes: embedding the Care4Qld investments on an ongoing basis, including the expanded QAS mental health co-responder model and Hospital in the Home models of care; investing in the Long-Stay Rapid Response Program to ensure long-stay patients are able to obtain support in the community rather than stay in hospital; delivering rapid access clinics across the state to prevent re-presentations and readmissions to hospital; providing care closer to home through our Satellite Hospitals Program; and ensuring statewide access to the Metro North Virtual ED.

We are also investing in our frontline workforce, with an increase in the Queensland Health budget of 62 per cent since coming to government. We have been able to deliver an additional 17,000 frontline health staff including more than 10,000 new nurses and midwives, more than 3,000 new doctors and more than 1,000 new ambulance officers. I thank all of our wonderful frontline health workers for the amazing work they do in providing world-class care to Queensland patients day in, day out. My message to them is simple: the Palaszczuk government will always have your back.

### Knife Crime

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.02 am): The last time parliament sat we passed a historic law—Jack's Law. We named it in honour of Jack Beasley, who lost his life to a senseless knife crime. Jack's parents, Brett and Belinda, rose above their crippling grief to campaign for safer communities. Thanks to their relentless efforts, the parliament legislated Jack's Law. What started as a discrete wandering trial to detect knives being carried in public is now being expanded and extended across the state.

The very first weekend after the law came into being, on what would have been Jack's 21st birthday, the Queensland Police Service began the rollout of what will now become a statewide wandering operation. Wandering operations took place as usual on the Gold Coast but also on that weekend, for the first time, wandering operations were conducted in Fortitude Valley. Also on that weekend, wandering operations were conducted in a regional centre, in Townsville. In total, nearly 600 people were wanded or scanned; six knives were detected. Then last week, a two-day operation at Ipswich train stations resulted in 35 people being wanded, with three knives located, including a machete, and

knuckledusters. Of concern is the fact that one wandering operation at Redbank Railway Station saw 18 people scanned and the detection of four weapons. That is a hit rate of about one in every four people at that location being detected with a weapon.

What we saw from the Gold Coast trial across the two years that it ran was that, on average, about one in every 100 people scanned was carrying a weapon of some description. This weekend just gone, wandering operations were expanded to Brisbane, Gold Coast, Townsville, Ipswich, Sunshine Coast, Logan, Toowoomba, Airlie Beach and Capricornia. Police advised that over the weekend they conducted wandering operations across 18 areas. That included 10 safe night precincts and eight transport hubs. Police scanned 530 people and detected eight weapons. Across the 10 safe night precincts, police scanned in excess of 450 people and located seven weapons. At our public transport hubs, police scanned about 80 people and detected one weapon.

Police advised that feedback from patrons in the party precincts and at transport hubs has been very positive. Of course, that is not surprising: if you are not carrying a knife, you have nothing to worry about if you are approached by an officer conducting wandering operations. In addition, people attending party precincts and transport hubs can have confidence in the fact that police are conducting operations to make these areas safer.

The ultimate goal is to see no-one carrying any knives in public. That is what Jack's Law is about: detecting knives and saving lives. I look forward to the continued rollout of police wandering operations to other centres across Queensland. Jack's Law is a force for good. Once again, I thank Brett and Belinda Beasley. Like the law named in honour of their son, Brett and Belinda are also a force for good.

### Couran Cove Island Resort



**Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.06 am): As members will recall, Couran Cove Island Resort on South Stradbroke Island is beset by numerous complex issues and legal disputes between private entities. These include allegations of many millions of dollars in debts owed in relation to body corporate levies and utility service charges. There are multiple proceedings involving Couran Cove currently before the Supreme Court. Now we have seen the privately owned utilities provider take the extraordinary step of cutting off power, water and gas to the residents and owners. As members can appreciate, it would be inappropriate for me as Attorney-General to intervene in court proceedings between private entities; however, like everyone, the government wants to see these issues resolved and utility services restored as a priority.

Directors-general from across agencies have been meeting regularly to consider how the government can assist residents and what long-term solutions are available. We have considered and sought advice on every available option. I know that some members in this House and commercial operators have been calling for the government to somehow appoint an independent manager or administrator while this dispute plays out. Even if we could rush through complex legislative change to achieve that, any manager would simply become another party to the ongoing legal disputes, meaning the parties would be right back where they started. It is not clear to government in whose interest an administrator or manager would be working, potentially resulting in additional legal disputes and challenges. The best thing the government and the Gold Coast City council can do at this time is to continue to support the residents of Couran Cove in any way we can.

We know that there are approximately 360 residential and short-term accommodation premises at Couran Cove. I am advised that there are approximately 40 permanent residents currently living on the island. The government is doing everything we can to assist those residents during this uncertain and distressing time. The department of communities has been on the ground to deliver support for residents, including delivering more than 9,700 litres of water. Since February, the community recovery team and Red Cross have made a number of visits to the island. This has led to 22 housing referrals; eight referrals to financial counselling; one referral to My Aged Care; 20 \$200 grocery vouchers provided by Givit; seven \$100 vouchers for fuel provided by Givit; \$16,000 worth of vouchers for water provided by Givit; 37 sessions of psychological first-aid assistance; and one referral to Givit for financial assistance to relocate. Residents can contact the Couran Cove Recovery Hotline on 1800173349 and can contact Lifeline on 131114.

I want to thank the Minister for Communities and the Deputy Premier for all of the work that their offices and departments have undertaken to assist residents during this time. The government will continue to monitor the situation and provide support to residents as appropriate while we await the outcomes of the current court proceedings.



### Community Partnership Innovation Grants



**Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.09 am): On Saturday I announced the successful recipients of the second round of the Palaszczuk government's Community Partnership Innovation Grants. Twelve community groups from across Queensland will share in more than \$3 million in funding for local projects to tackle the complex causes of youth offending. For example, in Cairns, Selectability has received close to \$260,000 to deliver an after-hours outreach and mentoring program in Earlville and Edmonton which builds on the success of the highly successful Fire Project which operated last year. I want to acknowledge the advocacy of the member for Cairns on behalf of his community for this initiative. The Fire Project did a fantastic job diverting young people off the streets and away from crime. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of that project in future.

Winangali Infusion will receive \$300,000 to provide young people in Goondiwindi and in the New South Wales border towns of Boggabilla and Toomelah with a safe and supervised community hub at the local PCYC for prosocial opportunities, cultural education and recreational activities. I acknowledge the advocacy of the local member for the community there also. Queensland Youth Services will receive almost \$130,000 to deliver the Proud Warrior project in Mount Isa and Townsville. This project will provide intervention for primarily Indigenous young people who are at risk of disengaging from school, young people from low socio-economic households and cases where young people are known, or their family is known, to police.

Logan-based Youth Off the Streets will receive nearly \$300,000 to support First Nations, Pasifika and African communities through culturally responsive wrap-around support. I was delighted to meet representatives from Youth Off the Streets on Saturday and hear firsthand of the great work that it is doing locally and its passion for helping young people at risk of offending. I know the Treasurer has also sung this organisation's praises as it is based in his electorate and I look forward to sharing the outcomes from the program with him after the evaluation is completed. There are many other very worthwhile initiatives including in Toowoomba, and I acknowledge local members there have raised a number of those initiatives with me as well. I look forward to the outcomes of those projects.

The Palaszczuk government is proud to partner with these community groups. It is another way we are working to tackle youth crime and ensure community safety. In recent years we have implemented a range of policies and initiatives to keep our community safe. Our latest tranche of reforms focused on serious repeat offenders, continued our efforts to tackle the complex causes of youth crime and further supported community safety. Included in the package was an investment of an additional \$100 million in diversionary and rehabilitation programs proven to make a difference, including 80 new frontline jobs in early intervention, prevention and diversion. The initiatives and policies implemented by the Palaszczuk government have been informed by feedback from stakeholders, our police and justice agencies and the general community and are the result of careful consideration. This is what good government does: we listen, we consult, we consider and we act. We are not about to rest on our laurels. We will continue to engage with stakeholders and listen to the community and take action where necessary to keep the community safe.

### Housing



**Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (10.12 am): The Palaszczuk government is proud of its track record and its plan for the future to deliver more homes for Queensland. We know how important it is for Queenslanders to find a safe and secure place to call home. Homes are a promise, a fresh start and a new beginning where young families will get started in a home delivered by the Treasurer's build-to-rent program. If you are a vulnerable Queenslanders seeking refuge from the rollercoaster of life, you are supported by the Minister for Housing through lives more difficult than yours or mine. If you are a frontline worker in the agencies of the ministers for health, education or emergency services making a commitment to serve Queenslanders in the most remote parts of this nation, you will all benefit from the largest concentrated investment in social, affordable and government employee housing in this state's history.

We are partnering with tradies, builders and developers to create whole new communities with their own unique destinies, shaped by the Deputy Premier and his significant efforts to unlock more land and more housing supply. Whilst those frontline workers across Queensland are tireless in their efforts to deliver a better life for all of us, we are tireless in our efforts to support them by making sure there are homes in the communities in which they serve delivered more affordably and more rapidly.

Today I can announce that this week we have awarded contracts for another 56 new homes across Queensland. It is the Palaszczuk government that is delivering with more new homes from Texas to Tambo and Taroom, along with Winton, Wondai and Westmar, from Lochington to Hamilton, to Alpha and Baralaba and then out to Augathella and Capella. We will partner with industry to deliver new modern homes built faster, reducing build times from months to just weeks—more homes more rapidly, and that is a real plan for new rapid housing that we can all get behind.

## ACTING SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

### Members for Whitsunday and Maroochydore



**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I think it is appropriate at this point to wish a happy birthday to the members for Whitsunday and Maroochydore. What better place could you think to celebrate it?

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### Member for Ipswich West



**Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (10.15 am): As the member for Ipswich West, I have been very proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government—a government committed to investing in and restoring frontline services, delivering for the Queensland community, bringing in a world-leading Energy and Jobs Plan and bringing about important social reforms. In relation to the recent allegations made in the media, I have always tried to uphold the standards expected by my community and Australian Labor Party. I have fully participated in processes about issues raised.

I am also able to report that the Clerk of the Parliament has reviewed a referred matter dating from 2018 and found the complaint was not substantiated. I spent my own money buying a piece of art from a local special school to support its fundraising efforts. It is a great part of my role as the member for Ipswich West to support the effort and creative energy of young people in our community.

However, some time ago I made the decision that I will not be renominating for preselection as the Australian Labor Party candidate for Ipswich West for the election in 2024 and, as such, will not be recontesting the next election. I made the decision that I will retire as a member of parliament in 2024 after careful consideration of my ongoing physical and mental health. In just the last two years I have been admitted to hospital to undergo surgery on three occasions. But until the 2024 election, I am committed to continuing to serve my community as the member for Ipswich West.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Question time will conclude today at 11.17 am.

### Youth Justice, Reforms



**Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.17 am): My question is to the Premier. When defending the government's youth justice changes, the police minister said there was a distinction between writing the script and developing the storyline. When making changes just 15 minutes before the youth justice announcement, can the Premier confirm if the government's priority was controlling youth crime or controlling the storyline?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The last part of the question is asking for a bit of an opinion, but I am happy to talk about the issue. Here we have a prime example of the opposition doing a press conference on a press release—not on a policy but a press conference on a press release. This is coming from the Leader of the Opposition who was part of the most chaotic government ever in Queensland. I watched on Sunday night and who did the member for Broadwater take to the press conference on the press release but the architect of the most chaotic government—the member for Clayfield. Honestly, the member for Broadwater should concentrate on formulating a policy rather than commenting on a press release. Let me say this to those opposite: you voted for our strong reforms. You voted for them. All you have got is commenting on a press release. Honestly!

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No. All we hear from the member for Broadwater is whingeing and whining—no policy. Bring back the member for Clayfield. At least the member for Clayfield had some policies. They were not good policies, but he had policies. Bring back the member for Nanango. At least she had some policies—the Bruce hoax, build the Bradfield. At least there were some policies.

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). Whilst I know the government loves the LNP's policies—they steal them—the question was actually about the government's youth justice announcement.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Taking points of order is not an opportunity to engage in debate. I have been listening carefully to the Premier's response. The question was quite broad. The Premier is being broadly responsive, but I would ask the Premier to come to the aspects of the question regarding youth justice.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As we know, those opposite voted for our strong youth justice reforms. They voted for them; not against them. You voted for the reforms.

**Mr Crisafulli:** Chaos!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Chaos is the LNP, the Newman government.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr Bleijie:** Madden said that he's jumping ship. You've just lost a member. The chaos!

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order, members. Pause the clock. Premier, could I ask you to resume your seat. I want to take some advice from the Clerk. I was just consulting with the Clerk regarding whether or not unparliamentary language had been used. Member for Kawana, it is very close to the line but it is not unparliamentary at this stage. The level of interjection is quite extreme. I have to say that as soon as the question was asked the Leader of the Opposition started interjecting. I would ask members to give the Premier the opportunity to answer the question.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This is the most well resourced opposition. We created more policies when we had seven members and were in opposition—more policies, more private members' bills.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** But the brains trust of the LNP said, 'Let's do a press conference on a press release.'

*(Time expired)*

### Youth Justice, Reforms

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** My question is to the Minister for Children and Youth Justice. For two years, until right before the announcement, the Palaszczuk government was opposed to the LNP's breach of bail policy. Will the minister finally admit the government needed the LNP's breach of bail policy because Queenslanders were not buying the Labor government's youth crime storyline?

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In relation to the question, I believe it both has inferences in the way that the question has been framed and is seeking an opinion and I ask that it be ruled out of order.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** I will take some advice. There is no point of order.

**Ms LINARD:** I would like to thank the member for the question. I would like to thank the opposition for voting for our policy changes. Thank you for supporting our changes. We introduced them, they voted for them, so thank you for supporting the government's position. We appreciate it.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Ms LINARD:** Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I found the comments from the member for Nanango offensive and I ask her to withdraw.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** I will take some advice.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Nanango, I am actually addressing you, if you would like to stop your quarrelling across the chamber. The member has taken personal offence at your statement. I would ask you to withdraw.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I withdraw.

### Path to Treaty; Voice to Parliament

**Ms LUI:** My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Will the Premier outline the importance to Queensland of the Path to Treaty and the proposed Voice to the national parliament?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Cook. We are very proud to have the member for Cook in our government as the first Torres Strait Islander representative in this House. I know how much the member for Cook supports Path to Treaty, as does everyone on this side of the House. I would like to reaffirm today my absolute commitment to the Voice. I speak for every single member of our government that stands side by side with our First Nations people for a voice to the national parliament. It is something I believe in. I believe that it is a very strong stance of our path to reconciliation, but also recognising that First Nations people should be involved in decisions impacting on them. We stand very strongly in relation to that.

Unfortunately we do not know what those opposite stand for. We have heard recently in a statement from the Leader of the Opposition that he wants the debate to be respectful, which I absolutely agree with, but then he said that it is for his members to form their views with an open mind. That is a bit of a contradiction. You might say one thing on the radio and then there is another thing that is happening behind the scenes. It is very clear that Peter Dutton is leading the 'no' campaign against the Voice, but, not only that, the LNP are actually posting 'say no to the Voice'. That is what they are saying.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** There is no open mind. It is 'We are one & free. Say No to The Voice. Support Real Change'. That is what it says. I table that.

*Tabled paper:* Social media post, undated, from the Facebook page of the Liberal National Party, in relation to 'Say No to the Voice' [493].

**Mr Dick:** Shame!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. Again criticism of Anthony Albanese, three days ago from the Liberal National Party. Here is a chance for the Leader of the Opposition to go out those doors today and say whether or not he supports a Voice. It is a very simple question. Member for Kawana, do you support a voice; member for Whitsunday; member for Surfers Paradise; member for Southport? It is about time every single member was able to say whether or not they support the Voice because their party does not support it. The party says 'no'. We know—

*Tabled paper:* Social media post, undated, from the Facebook page of the Liberal National Party, in relation to the Voice to Parliament proposal [494].

*(Time expired)*

### Youth Justice, Reforms

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the Minister for Children and Youth Justice. Can the minister confirm if the government's youth justice plan was worked on for some time, as the Deputy Premier said, or urgently scripted in the days after the death of Emma Lovell while the Premier was at a folk festival before jetting off to France, in a bid to control the storyline?

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** The House will come to order and questions will be heard in silence. If I am to rule on questions I need to hear the questions.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I believe there are very clear imputations in that question and I ask that it be either re-worded or ruled out of order.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** I will take some advice. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I ask you to reword the question, removing the last part of your question or rephrasing it.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Youth Justice. Can the minister confirm if the government's youth justice plan was worked on for some time, as the Deputy Premier said, or urgently scripted in the days after the death of Emma Lovell?

**Ms LINARD:** Absolutely I can confirm that the government worked for an extended period on this significantly comprehensive package of reforms that we announced.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order, members! Members, the minister is being directly responsive to the question and before she has had even 10 seconds to respond the interjections are drowning her out. If you are asking the question then I assume you want to hear the answer.

**Ms LINARD:** As anyone who is involved with policy knows, it takes time, particularly when you have a significant and—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms LINARD:** Do you want to hear the answer? Mr Acting Speaker, do those opposite want to hear the answer? They may learn something about policy development. I am going to talk about policy.

**A government member:** They wouldn't know.

**Ms LINARD:** They would not know; that is right. As I said, these were comprehensive reforms. I will talk about a few of them: a new declaration of serious repeat offenders, more offences with presumption against bail, strengthened conditional release orders, new grassroots early intervention—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms LINARD:** I am still going.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** I am sorry, Minister, but I will ask you to resume your seat. Pause the clock. Members, the Clerk and I, and I assume Hansard, are having difficulty hearing the minister's response. She is being very responsive to the question. I will start warning people.

**Ms LINARD:** I have another minute and 47 seconds to keep going through the comprehensive reforms that we announced. I will continue where I stopped: expansion of intensive case management, expansion of youth co-responder teams, expansion of on-country programs—I am still going—high-visibility police patrols, investment in seniors securing their own homes, subsidising the installation of vehicle immobilisers, increased support for victims of crime. I am turning the page; there are four pages and I will keep going. We had the extension of all of those grassroots initiatives and I announced some more today. We are helping people make sure their homes are safe.

I want to compare. While I have multiple pages that I could go through, but time is limited, I also have written down the policy for those opposite. There are three dot points on here. I am happy to table this.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** There is to be no use of props, Minister.

**Ms LINARD:** I am reading from my notes, but I can table it. It states: gold-standard interventions, unshackle the judiciary—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr Purdie** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Ninderry, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms LINARD:** What we do not know is what that actually means because they have no policy. Queenslanders want to know what it means. Those opposite have no policy. They have no idea. Queenslanders want to know, what do you stand for? What do you stand for?

## Economy

**Mr SULLIVAN:** My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Will the Premier please update the House on the strength of the Queensland economy and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Stafford for the question. I know he is a very strong advocate for ensuring that young people in his electorate get jobs and training, whether through Skilling Queenslanders for Work or TAFE and we know how successful those programs have been. Our government is focused on the economy. We went to the last election saying that if we had a strong health response then our economy would also be strong. This morning we have heard from the Treasurer and now from me as well that we are backing in the fact that our economy is strong. It is the fastest growing economy in the nation. It is nation leading and we are creating around 1,000 jobs—

**An opposition member:** Nothing to do with your policies.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take that interjection. Those opposite wanted the borders opened, but we stood strong and that is why our economy is going very well. In fact, it equates to around 1,000 jobs a week and we have an unemployment rate of 3.8 per cent. Let us consider those low unemployment rates in the regions compared to how high they were when we came to office and also given what happened in Townsville. To see that those unemployment rates have come down is great news for

Queensland, and it is also great news for regional Queensland because we are one state. On this side of the House we want to keep Queensland united, not divided like those opposite, which is what they are doing with the 'no' vote for the Voice. They are seeking the politics of division. On this side we promised stability; on that side, all you get is the chaos of the Newman government.

It is timely to also remind the House, for the benefit of those who were not here, that the LNP government cut Skilling Queenslanders for Work and had plans to sell off TAFE campuses across our state. We have generated tens of thousands of jobs through Skilling Queenslanders for Work and through free TAFE. Tens of thousands of people have been able to get jobs because of those programs. On this side of the House we will always back our economy and we will back our regions.

We also recognise that families are facing pressures at the moment. As the Treasurer and I have discussed, the budget that the Treasurer will hand down this year will be focused on the cost of living because we understand that that is an issue for families. That is what a government does: it listens and it responds. We have heard all this rubbish today from those opposite, when they voted for the reforms that went through this House—

*(Time expired)*

### Youth Justice, Reforms

**Mrs GERBER:** My question is to the Minister for Youth Justice. For Queenslanders living in fear in their own homes, having their cars stolen and losing loved ones, Queensland's youth crime crisis is not a storyline to be scripted. It is real life. Can the minister tell Queenslanders how changing youth justice policy 15 minutes before announcing it was about controlling youth crime and not controlling the storyline?

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Under the standing orders, that question was far too long, full of innuendos and should be restated.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Minister, you have made a point of order. Would you like me to rule on that? There is no point of order.

**Ms LINARD:** I thank the member for the question. I think it is worth reviewing *Hansard* as I have already made it clear that those statements are incorrect so that is misleading the House. I have made it clear that there has been significant work on these policies and the member has ignored that and continues the line of questioning.

It is clear that since coming to office this government has acted and listened to the community and has never stopped responding to the concerns of the community. What the Queensland public saw this year is that this government has yet again taken difficult steps, and they were contested steps. I know there are people in the community who felt that maybe we were too tough. The community wanted action.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Buderim, you are warned.

**Ms LINARD:** This Premier and this government act. I thank those opposite for supporting our measures. I thank them for supporting the measures that we put forward, because we clearly have policy. Those opposite struggle to have any cogent policy or anything other than slogans. The question that I have—unfortunately, question time is where they ask questions and we answer them—and that I know Queenslanders have is: what do those opposite stand for? If they were in government, what would they cut? What would this chaotic group of chaotic cutters do to the policies that we introduced—policies like—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms LINARD:** I cannot even hear myself speak, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mrs Gerber** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Currumbin, you asked the question. You are not listening to the response. You are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms LINARD:** When I look at the statistics—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for Nanango, you are also warned. I had just called the House to order and you chose to interject.

**Ms LINARD:** Programs like intensive case management have been evaluated. We have seen a 51 per cent reduction in frequency of offending. Will those opposite cut that program, or 'prune' that program? With Transition 2 Success, 67 per cent of young people did not reoffend within 12 months. Will they cut that program? Will they prune that from the youth justice budget—the record youth justice budget of this government? We respond to the concerns of community. Those opposite throw out slogans left, right and centre that mean nothing. There are no policies from those opposite, just chaos.

### Renewable Energy

**Mr WHITING:** My question is of the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure. Could the Deputy Premier advise the House how the Palaszczuk government is helping Queensland become a renewable energy superpower, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any other approaches?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for Bancroft for his question. All of the members on this side of the House are determined that Queensland and Queenslanders reap all of the benefits of the revolution in energy systems that is happening right around the world. Our plan to make Queensland a renewable energy superpower took a giant leap forward recently when the millionth panel was installed on Australia's largest solar farm at the Western Downs Green Power Hub. The Premier and I were pleased to watch that millionth panel be installed in that giant green power hub. It is a \$600 million project delivering enough power for 235,000 homes, taking Queensland's fantastic natural advantage as the Sunshine State to deliver affordable, clean energy into Queensland households and businesses every single day. Soon we will be able to deliver that affordable energy day and night, with the installation of a giant battery on the site of the green hub.

These projects are delivering regional jobs in construction but, more importantly, are powering the jobs of the future that will ensure young Queenslanders have access to fantastic opportunities. This power will go to companies employing Queenslanders such as BHP, Coles and Bunnings. On this side of the House, we are determined to ensure future generations of Queenslanders benefit from the opportunities of being a renewable energy superpower. It is only possible because Queenslanders own our electricity assets. Let us never forget that those opposite would have flogged them all off—sold them all off—and we would not own those assets now. We could not be on the path to being a renewable energy superpower if those opposite had succeeded in their plan to sell off our electricity assets. Let's not forget how at the federal level they undermined our efforts at every single turn. Let's not forget that those opposite opposed our 50 per cent renewable energy target by 2030, saying that we could not do it. Now we will deliver it two years early, in 2028. The greatest risk to our chance of getting to 70 per cent renewables by 2032 is those opposite and the plan they would have to sell off our assets.

### Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

**Mr LAST:** My question is to the Minister for Youth Justice. I refer to police not wanting to stand up with the minister on 27 December 2022. Can the minister tell Queenslanders who overrode the police in the 13 minutes that followed?

**Ms FARMER:** Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek your judgement on the imputations in the member's question.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** There is no imputation in that question.

**Ms LINARD:** No-one overrode the QPS. I stand up with the QPS often and proudly do so. They do a wonderful job. I was advised that the media had questions and I made myself available, as is appropriate.

### Coal Royalties

**Ms LAUGA:** My question is of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on what Queensland's progressive coal royalties are delivering for Central Queensland, and is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for Keppel for her question. The member for Keppel knows how much the resources of Central Queensland contribute to the wealth of our state and the earnings of mining companies. The member for Keppel knows that it is only fair that the people of Central

Queensland get their fair share of the record profits currently being earned by mining companies through our new progressive coal royalties. Those coal royalties will help build the Fitzroy to Gladstone Pipeline that will ensure more jobs in more industries through Central Queensland. Coal royalties are building the new Browne Park in Rockhampton, the home of Rugby League in Central Queensland, and coal royalties will open up the inland through CopperString 2032.

When it comes to royalties, it is clear that the Leader of the LNP is now out to get regional Queensland. Last week once again the Leader of the Opposition was on Brisbane radio whingeing about progressive coal royalties. The Leader of the LNP called them a 'shoddy plan'. That is what he thinks about delivering for regional Queensland. For the Leader of the Opposition and the LNP, a new hospital in Moranbah is a shoddy plan, upgrading Browne Park is a shoddy plan, building the Fitzroy to Gladstone Pipeline is a shoddy plan and delivering CopperString 2032 is a shoddy plan. The Leader of the Opposition will not say what secret promises he has made to the mining lobby. Instead, the Leader of the Opposition has given an ominous warning. He said—

Ahead of the election we will see the true state of the books. We will know what we can do. We will know what's affordable.

We have seen this film before. We have seen it all before. The cuts are coming. Do not take my word for it. The Leader of the LNP is on record whingeing about our government's spending, saying we are 'fattening up the public sector' which is 'unproductive'. He says the Public Service needs to 'get agile and lean'. The Leader of the Opposition has even said that we should inflict 'short-term budgetary pain' on Queensland to make things better for business. We know what is coming. The LNP will pull out the red pen and put the red pen through progressive coal royalties. That will hurt every regional community from the New South Wales border to the cape.

In 18 months the people of Queensland will have a choice. We welcome back the Leader of the Opposition and his secret plan to support his friends in the coal industry. The option that the Leader of the LNP is offering Queensland is clear: the end of a fair share of royalties for Queensland and, instead, cuts to vital services. That is the plan of the Leader of the LNP. He will do all of this to deliver more free money to the LNP's masters in the coal lobby.

#### **Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs**

**Mr NICHOLLS:** My question is to the Premier. I refer to police not wanting to stand up with the youth justice minister on 27 December 2022. Can the Premier advise how there was no problem with her political office deliberately interfering to override a request made by police investigating a murder?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** My understanding is that at times, to make it more convenient for the media, the minister is offered up around the same time. This is not unusual. It happens from time to time.

I have never seen a question time strategy based on a press release. Honestly, if I were a member of the LNP backbench, I would say, 'Is this as good as it gets?' In all honesty, they are not questioning policy; they are actually questioning a press release. To be asked a question by the member for—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** The Premier is being directly responsive to the question asked and the level of interjection is making it difficult for me and, I am sure, the Clerk and Hansard to hear.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let us also make it clear that those opposite supported our strong measures to keep the community safe. What they want to do is go back in history—

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. They supported the policy. Now they want to go back and talk about a press release. There have been many meetings that have taken place in relation to youth justice measures. It might be the way those opposite ran government, but we sit down and constructively work out the policy. Those opposite—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, member for Kawana, that was your government. That was the government—

**Dr Miles:** You had to hide away.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take that interjection. For six months the member for Kawana was hidden away from the cameras. He did not front the cameras. He was hidden away from the cameras. The member for Kawana does not want to talk about that.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.



**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Kawana, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Maybe they might go away and think of some questions to ask about government policy tomorrow.

**Ms Simpson** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Maroochydore, I just bought the House to order and you chose to interject. You are warned as well.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** And happy birthday to you too, Minister. You can join the warning list as well.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Those opposite voted for the laws. They are strong laws. They are about protecting community safety. They should stop their whingeing and write some policies.

### Kindergarten

**Mr WALKER:** My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's \$1 billion Kindy for All investment is providing cost-of-living relief for Queensland women and families, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms GRACE:** I thank the member for the question. It is providing some excellent cost-of-living relief to families. I recently visited Lady Gowrie Headstart in Vincent, in the electorate of Mundingburra, and met Patricia who is saving \$130 a week with our Kindy for All program—one of 50 families in that centre getting kindy free. That is a saving of \$5,200 per year for their families. There are 40,000 of them throughout Queensland.

I met Cassandra and Krystal at C&K Kingston, in the Woodridge electorate, and they are getting free kindy—saving \$4,280 a year or \$107 a week. In fact, of the 84 families enrolled in that kindy, 82 are getting free kindy. That centre is receiving a total of \$350,000. I met Raj and Kylie at Lady Gowrie Love Street kindy, in my electorate. Raj is saving \$3,600 a year. Kylie is saving \$1,500 a year on her daughter Gigi's fees. Some 35 families at C&K Estelle Cardiff in Mount Isa are now getting free kindy, saving those families \$112 per week or \$4,500 per year. In Sandgate, at Boopa Werem Community Kindergarten and Preschool, 45 children are receiving free kindy, saving each family \$3,700 a year.

This is saving the hip pockets of families, enabling parents, particularly women, to boost their participation in the workforce and ensuring cost is not a barrier to kids enjoying kindy. When we couple that with the federal government's cheaper childcare plan, real families are getting cost-of-living relief.

I do hope that this brings more women into the workforce and maybe a few more women can apply to be endorsed as candidates for the LNP. When we look at those opposite, this might be something that works. What does not work is when you count yourself twice. There was an attempt at this by the member for Warrego in a recent video. I quote her when she said, 'Ann Leahy, David Crisafulli and I have been out.' It is a nice try, but it does not mean there are two women in Warrego. There is only one member in this House so good they named her twice, and it is not the member for Warrego. Can I also say that even if you use the phrase 'me, myself and I', it does not mean there are three women on your side of the House.

*(Time expired)*

### Health System, Ambulance Ramping

**Ms BATES:** My question is to the Premier. I refer to new government figures which show paramedics spent 147,000 hours in one year ramped with patients—the highest ever recorded by a Queensland government. It is the equivalent of 40 ambulances and their crew off the road every day. After eight years of health failures, will the Premier finally admit her government does not have the solutions to fix the Queensland health crisis?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Mudgeeraba for the question. This is the same member who calls our regional health workers duds. This is the same member who also called for our borders to be opened. This is the same member who was sacked as a minister under the chaotic Newman government.

They have short memories on that side of the political divide. They have absolutely short memories. I will say this: at least it is a policy question and not a press release question. We will give the member for Mudgeeraba some credit for that, but the member was not listening to the health minister's ministerial statement. Let us go through it because those opposite do not like good news. Despite being the busiest, the RoGS data shows our ambulance response times are some of the best in the country, beating New South Wales and Victoria.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba South, you continue to interject. I am trying to bring the House to order. The Premier is responding directly to the question. I would ask that members listen to the answer in silence.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am absolutely delighted to repeat what the health minister said because it is good news for Queenslanders. As the health minister also said, we are the only mainland state to provide ambulance services for free—it will stay that way under our government. That is not necessarily so under those opposite when they are looking to 'prune' and 'unshackle'. According to the RoGS data, in 2021-22—

**Mr Crisafulli:** In the minister's office they lurch from crisis to crisis.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** So rude!

**A government member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. I take that interjection. They forget about the Strong Choices they had—wanting to sell off the power assets.

**A government member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. They sacked health workers. According to the RoGS data, in 2021-22 Queensland had the second-best performing EDs in the country, with 68 per cent of patients seen in time. However, based on the most recently released quarterly data, Queensland now leads the nation. We saw 72 per cent of ED patients in the recommended time. I urge those opposite to stop talking down our health system. Shame on you! Shame on you! Shame on you!

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order.

### Rockhampton, Maternity Services

**Mr O'ROURKE:** My question is of the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Can the minister advise the House of the state of Rockhampton maternity services and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mrs D'ATH:** I thank the member for Rockhampton for his question because I know he is passionate about his health facilities and the wonderful health workers who work each and every day to look after the community there. We know that Queenslanders have access to a world-class health system in this state day in and day out. As I have said numerous times, there is a national—in fact, an international—health workforce shortage.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr Dick:** Stop yelling at women.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** And, Treasurer, stop yelling across the chamber.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I have said many times that there is a national and international workforce shortage when it comes to health workers, but we are leaving no stone unturned when it comes to this challenge—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Cease quarrelling across the chamber.

**Mrs D'ATH:**—that is, to not just boost obstetrics and gynaecology and nurse and midwife numbers but to boost all of specialties—attract more doctors to Queensland to work in our system. I am very proud that our Maternity Medical Working Group has been working with professional associations, locum agencies and partners to fill the vacant roles in Central Queensland.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order, Leader of the Opposition! Cease your quarrelling across the chamber.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I am very proud that last week we announced for Gladstone—as part of Central Queensland and that maternity group network between Rockhampton and Gladstone—that we are taking another step forward towards level 3 services to now do emergency gynaecology services and also where individual women are assessed as having no identified risk they will be able to birth at Gladstone. The maternity group believe this will halve the number of women having to transfer to Rockhampton which will help ease the pressures on the Rockhampton and Gladstone services. I want to thank all the clinicians who came forward.

What worries me is what the other side have been doing—and that is all about getting a headline, not about health services at all. The Leader of the Opposition's office was racing around the media last week trying to get up a story about Rockhampton. In fact, the senior media adviser in the Leader of the Opposition's office sent to a media outlet a letter saying, 'This is the first time it has been revealed that Rockhampton doesn't have full maternity services.' That was in bold, except that is not what the document said. If that was not bad enough, the Leader of the Opposition the day before put out a press release—

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Leader of the House, do not use it as a prop.

**Mrs D'ATH:**—saying, 'Maternity services at Mackay and Gympie Hospitals are "close" to shutting their doors.' If the women of Mackay have not been through enough, this statement was put out with no proof at all. Both hospitals had to put out statements to say the Leader of the Opposition is wrong. That is shameful and he should apologise.

*(Time expired)*

### Minister for Transport and Main Roads

**Dr MacMAHON:** My question is to the Minister for Transport. The CFMEU has labelled the minister's management of the Cross River Rail project as 'dysfunctional' and has called for the minister to be replaced. What is the minister's response to the CFMEU's calls for him to be replaced?

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** The House will come to order. I call the minister.

**An opposition member:** Send them an email!

**Mr BAILEY:** Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I am going to reset the clock to three minutes because the minister had not even started and the interjections kicked off. Member for Everton, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr BAILEY:** There are so many different ways I could answer that question. I have made it very clear. I have made a range of comments in relation to this matter. The fact is that the safety record of the Cross River Rail project is well below industry standards. There are very strong provisions on the site.

Let me just say this: I will always work with all of the representatives and workers across the unions when they raise safety issues. You can never be complacent about safety particularly on construction sites. They are dangerous projects—construction. You always have to be on your guard. I will always make sure that any safety concerns are appropriately looked at and investigated and explored.

I will always work with the representatives of the workers. I will not undermine this project like the member for South Brisbane does regularly. We are building a whole new underground rail line for South-East Queensland in Brisbane—cut by those opposite when they were in power and promised to be cut by them because that is all they believe in. It is in their DNA—you cut Cross River Rail and you would do it again.

I will always make sure that safety is our top priority. The member for South Brisbane only needs to look at the record of this project and it is well below industry standards. I want it to stay that way right through to the end. I might say at this point that all of the tunnelling has been completed. We are doing the station boxes at the moment. We are closing up the station boxes, so there is still heavy work to be done. A lot of the heavy work has been completed, but there is still some to do. Safety will always be my No. 1 concern.

Everybody knows that I believe that this project is awesome. It is awesome. It will transform travel in South-East Queensland and Brisbane with a whole new underground rail line. It has been important for our population growth, as well as the games coming up. I will always make safety a top priority for me and for the delivery authority.

### Far North Queensland, Housing

**Ms BOYD:** My question is to the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement. Can the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is delivering for First Nations communities with housing in regional and remote Queensland, especially Far North Queensland, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the member for Pine Rivers because she is the epitome of a member who is listening. She is doing a fine job as the Assistant Minister for Local Government. I have observed her listening closely to regional and remote communities and, of course, their elected leadership in council. She is a leader who is delivering because she is listening.

Those communities are also saying, like many Australians, that they want help to find an affordable place to call home. Especially in Far North Queensland, the Palaszczuk government is delivering on housing. We are freeing up more homes by building more right up to the top of this great state. We are listening to voices like those especially in the electorate of Cook. We have just delivered two new homes on Warraber Island for teachers and nurses. We have secured a pipeline of three new homes on Mer Island. On Thursday Island we have already delivered three four-bedroom new homes for government employees and I can confirm construction has started on two additional apartments and another house in John Street and four new apartments at 7 Pearl Street. That is a pipeline of 33 new homes on Thursday Island alone.

I want to take this opportunity to remind the House of this fact. I want to remind the House of this important statistic: Labor is delivering more homes on Thursday Island—a tiny island in an isolated part of this state—than the Liberals and Nationals delivered in their entire term across the entire state.


There are 2,000 kilometres between this parliament and Thursday Island. You would think they could have found somewhere to build some government employee housing, but they did not because the Liberals and Nationals always say no. They say no to new homes for frontline workers in regional Queensland. They say no to social housing. They say no to seniors and accessible housing. They say no to public ownership of assets. They say no to renewable energy. They say no to action on climate. They say no to women and their reproductive choices. Now we know they are going to say no to a First Nations Voice to Parliament.

Just like on energy or housing affordability, there is another secret plan by the LNP opposition leader because his lips are sealed by the division in their party room. The playbook of the Leader of the Opposition is say nothing and do nothing until he votes no, because they lead a coalition of opposition with no position on anything. They say nothing and they do nothing except cut, sack and sell.

Interruption.

## PRIVILEGE


### Correction to *Record of Proceedings*

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.10 am): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising from my previous answer. It has just come to my attention that I may have misspoken. In my answer I meant to say that the number of injuries and safety instances were well below what is usual in this standard. I think I misspoke. We are in fact well above safety standards, not below them. We have had a lot fewer instances on this project, Cross River Rail, than is usual in the industry and we are well above the standard. I just wanted to clarify that if I misspoke.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Resumed.

### Residential Tenancies and Short-Term Accommodation

 **Ms BOLTON:** My question is to the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning. Given that obtaining information on the lawful use of a property such as whether it is for residential or short-term accommodation use can be difficult, expensive and not easily understood by property owners, will the government review the planning system to ensure that information on the lawful use of land and buildings can be easily accessed, identified and effectively enforced?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for Noosa for her question. I am aware of the concerns within the Noosa community about housing supply and affordability more generally and the impact that short-stay accommodation is having on properties available for longer-term residents. I have discussed it with the member and met with the council on a number of occasions about it. Clearly, Noosa is unique in that it is a tourism destination with a very constrained supply of residential property, so the impact of short-stay accommodation is likely to be greater and different in Noosa than in other parts of the state. That is why the local government level is the best place to regulate, and we have been working with Noosa council to deliver on additional regulations. We have been providing advice to them about the local law that came into effect in February 2022 which requires property owners to register their properties as short-stay accommodation and renew that registration annually.

I understand the member's question goes largely to how the council can enforce compliance with those regulations. We are happy to continue to work with them about how they can do that. We have also been advising on the scheme amendment that Noosa has proposed, and that is currently in the assessment stages with my department. If there is more that we can do to assist local government to enforce their local laws, whether that is acquiring and providing data or sourcing data from other sources, we are certainly happy to do that. I will undertake to have the State Planner reach out to Noosa council and get deeper into what might be appropriate or necessary.

At the state level we have a review underway on the impact of short-stay accommodation on housing supply right across the state. As I noted earlier, I suspect the situation in Noosa is different to most other parts of the state. Stage 1 of that review has been completed and stage 2 is underway. We have commissioned the University of Queensland to do that. We hope to have advice from that review available which can then inform what else we need to do on a statewide basis. As to the member's question and the impacts in Noosa, the next best step I can offer is a conversation between the State Planner and council to see exactly what they need to make their local law work.

### Housing, Supply

**Mr TANTARI:** My question is of the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts. Will the minister update the House about how the federal government can assist Queensland with the supply of more social and affordable housing?

**Ms ENOCH:** I thank the member for Hervey Bay for his question, his ongoing advocacy for social and affordable housing in his electorate, and his acknowledgment that Queensland is not immune to some of the issues we are facing right across this country. It is not the state government alone that can solve these problems: we need the federal government to be part of the solution in terms of social and affordable housing.

For the benefit of the House, earlier this year the Albanese government introduced and debated a bill to establish the Housing Australia Future Fund. This bill included a \$10 billion investment fund to ensure the ongoing support of new social and affordable housing. That bill also committed to build some 30,000 new social and affordable homes in the first five years, including in Queensland. It also included 4,000 properties that would be put aside for women and children escaping domestic and family violence and older women at risk of homelessness. Put simply, the Housing Australia Future Fund would provide more homes for people who need them. It would build more homes. It would fund specialist services for veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It would provide housing options for women and families impacted by domestic and family violence. It is an innovative solution.

You would think it would be a no-brainer to support, but at the federal level we saw the LNP say no to that. They voted against that fund. They voted against that bill. I guess this is what they are cut from. The federal LNP voted against it. When the member for Everton was the minister for housing in this state we saw the social housing construction program cut by 90 per cent. In fact, because of the policies of those opposite—led by the member for Everton under Campbell Newman—we saw a reduction of 428 social homes in this state. We saw zero commencements in places like Logan, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast and Ipswich. There were cuts to services.

When we see the LNP say no to the Housing Australia Future Fund at the federal level, it is no wonder when that is the ilk of the LNP at the state level. It was not only the LNP at the federal level with regard to the HAFF; we saw the Greens threatening to block that bill. Who would block more funding to get more social housing right now? Who would block the opportunity to support families and children escaping domestic and family violence? Who would block housing for older women? The Greens: that is who.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** The period for question time has concluded.

## MOTION

### Business Program



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.18 am): I move—

1. That the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 be considered as cognate bills for their remaining stages, with:
  - (a) separate questions being put in regard to the second readings;
  - (b) the consideration of the bills in detail together; and
  - (c) separate questions being put for the third readings and long titles.
2. That the following business will be considered this sitting week, with the nominated maximum periods of time as specified:
  - (a) the Local Government and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill, a maximum of four hours and 15 minutes;
  - (b) the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, a maximum of four hours; and
  - (c) the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 to complete all stages by 5.55 pm on Thursday, 20 April 2023.
3. The following time limits for the bills listed in 2. apply:
  - (a) the minister to be called on in reply:
    - (i) for the Local Government and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill, 45 minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours for the bill;
    - (ii) for the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, 30 minutes before the expiry of the maximum hours for the bill; and
    - (iii) for the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, by 4.35 pm on Thursday, 20 April 2023.
4. If the nominated stage of each bill has not been completed by 5.55 pm on Thursday, 20 April 2023, Mr Speaker:
  - (a) shall call on a minister to table any explanatory notes to their circulated amendments, any statement of compatibility with human rights or any statement relating to an override declaration
  - (b) shall put all remaining questions necessary to either pass that stage or pass the bill without further debate
  - (c) may interrupt non-specified business or debate on a bill or motion to complete the requirements of the motion
  - (d) will complete all stages required by this motion notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Members, please leave the House quietly.

**Mrs D'ATH:** As we outline the business program motion for this week, it is important to note that the bills which come before this chamber go through a rigorous policy development framework. From the birth of the policy idea to policy work in the department, to consultation, the cabinet process and then through the committee process, our system of legislative development and option of legislation is rigorous.

I therefore would like to take this opportunity to thank the public servants who work on policy and also the parliamentary committees and the committee staff for their assistance in not only developing the legislation but reviewing it and engaging with stakeholders right across Queensland.

While the Palaszczuk government gets on with developing and introducing legislation which will benefit Queenslanders—and I am sure those opposite will criticise us by saying they are not getting enough time to speak on the bills—those opposite are being extremely lazy in opposition. This is an opposition which is well resourced but cannot seem to make up policies for even a private member's bill. We are past the halfway mark of this term and the member for Broadwater as the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Kawana as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition have not stumped up one policy idea in the form of a bill in this chamber—nothing.

I read with interest the parliament website the other day where it says that of the 11 private members' bills introduced in this term of parliament—

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order regarding relevance to the motion that the Leader of the House has actually moved.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): I will get some advice.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Can I speak to that point of order before you rule, Mr Deputy Speaker?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes.

**Mrs D'ATH:** If those opposite want to take a very narrow reading of what we debate during the business motion each week, I am happy to do that. It means they cannot prattle on every week talking about all of the irrelevant things they do.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will take some advice on the point of order. The minister is being broadly relevant to the motion. It is a broad debate.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Those opposite come in here every week on these motions talking about the things they would like to debate. They never actually talk about introducing a private member's bill, and we know why—because that would mean they would have to come up with a policy first and then turn the policy into a private member's bill, which they really struggle with. As I said, there have been 11 private members' bills introduced in this term of parliament and none were introduced by the opposition. We will not be debating any private members' bills this week because there are so few on the *Notice Paper* and none from the opposition. This is a damning indictment of the Leader of the Opposition and his team, who cannot even muster—

**Mr Lister** interjected.

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Southern Downs and member for Pine Rivers!


**Mrs D'ATH:** They cannot even muster the energy to develop policy, work with the Office of Parliamentary Counsel to draft legislation, go through the committee process—

**Mr Lister** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Southern Downs, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mrs D'ATH:** They cannot even do those things which would then lead to debate of that legislation. This shows that the LNP either are lazy or have no ideas for Queenslanders—I suspect it is both. We know that the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and a number of their front bench are just recycled cabinet members from the Newman government. Maybe they hold the same views as the Newman government. Maybe they just do not want to let the cat out of the bag and reveal their policies for Queensland. Maybe they are sitting on them and waiting. I do not know if I have that much faith in them that they do actually have them, but maybe they do and they are going to sit on them until the last four weeks before the election in 2024 hoping that no-one has time to read them—although the policies I have seen in the past are generally just one page with four dot points. That is not a policy; that is a press release. They like talking about press releases; that is all they put out. They say, 'Here we have a policy,' but it is a press release and nothing more.

I am very proud of the legislation we bring before this parliament and will be debating this week. We will continue to introduce legislation and debate it through this term of government. I ask that members support the motion.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (11.23 am): It will come as no surprise that the opposition will be opposing this motion put by the Leader of the House regarding how we will be debating legislation in this chamber. Before I go to the substantive motion, let me reflect on some of the comments just made by the Leader of the House. Queenslanders know that the only reason those opposite are calling on the LNP to provide policies and private members' bills is that they are bereft of their own ideas. After eight years, they have an inability to govern without relying on the LNP to provide the solutions.

If members want proof of that, let me reflect on the particular words of the member for Redcliffe where she said we should get some legislation drafted. Well, the opposition did that. It was called breach of bail, and so effective was it that those opposite used it verbatim. They did not change a single word in the bill that the LNP previously introduced into this chamber. The Leader of the House should not come in here and lecture us on providing you with policy, because we know and Queenslanders know that the only reason there is now breach of bail in this state, the only reason those opposite are even pretending to be tough on crime, is that they have adopted lock, stock and barrel the LNP's policy.


Heaven forbid if the Leader of the House, the Minister for Health, actually adopted the LNP's health policy. It might actually solve the health crisis that we are seeing unfold across this state, including in maternity services in rural and regional Queensland. Women in the electorate of Callide—which is the size of Tasmania—cannot give birth in that electorate and need to travel outside their electorate. They tended to go to Gladstone but they cannot go there now. That is why child after child is being born on a hay bale on the side of the highway—to the point where their birth certificate actually says that.

We know that the government desperately want the opposition to put private members' bills in this House because they want to steal our ideas. The people of Queensland have wised up to those opposite. They know that any good idea this government is coming up with is an LNP idea. The government are using the LNP to write their policies because after eight years they are confused, they are in chaos, they are stumbling from crisis to crisis and they are inept.

Let me return to the motion that the Leader of the House moved. I need to again explain to the people of Queensland what occurs here. The Leader of the House might say there is some level of debate, discussion and agreement around how much time is given to each bill and how much time is given to consideration in detail, but the issue is that at the end of the day there are only so many hours in parliament. Let me use the analogy of a pie with so many hours in it.

If we make a suggestion and it is agreed to that we want some extra time for consideration in detail in one bill, then it comes at the expense of another bill. In this instance, we have taken some time from the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to give us more time in consideration in detail on the police powers and responsibilities bills. In doing that, in giving that time, we still shorten the number of speakers who can speak to the bill. I can guarantee the House, as I have every week, that just about every single one of these bills—if not every one of them—will be guillotined and the speaking list will not be exhausted before the time allocated to it is expired. Sure, some of those who miss out on an opportunity to speak on that list may get an opportunity in consideration in detail, but not all of them will.

The Leader of the House talks about the exhaustive legislative process—where we have departments that consult, committees that give consideration and members of the public who have their say on the legislation. Let us not forget though that ultimately each of us is elected to have our say on legislation and debate it in this chamber on behalf of the electorates that have elected us. If you are a member of the opposition or crossbench, at no other stage have you had any input into the development of this legislation. It is all well and good for the Leader of the House to talk about how long it takes them to come up with a policy idea and turn it into legislation and how they may or may not consult and then put it to the committees. At the end of the day, this is the chamber where we get a say, and every time bills are guillotined it means that members who are elected by their constituents miss out on an opportunity to speak. We will be opposing this motion.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (11.28 am): Here we are with the predictable paradox—where the opposition say that debating time is so valuable but then waste 15 or 20 minutes in here debating a procedural motion which is just normal parliamentary business in any chamber across the country.

**Ms Pease:** Where are they all?

**Mr BAILEY:** I will take that interjection from the member for Lytton—very few opposition members are interested in this and attending this debate on the business motion. The reality is that this is normal management of parliamentary business using family-friendly hours. That is a modern parliament. Those opposite want to go back to the old days when we sat to two or three o'clock in the morning. What happened then? We had half the LNP turn up in various states of undress—actually, there were a lot of them, including the then member for Hervey Bay—as well as a whole lot of them who did not turn up because they were asleep. We are actually saving this parliament the embarrassment of those sorts of scenes because of the incompetence of the LNP.

This is a modern parliament. It should have modern sitting times, and to be suggesting we should be debating bills until midnight and 2 am as the opposition is suggesting in this time is ridiculous. There should be family-friendly hours and support of members from all kinds of backgrounds and responsibilities. They talk about wanting more women in parliament, but then when it comes to actually supporting a workplace that is more conducive to people from all backgrounds they always oppose it. The contradiction and the hypocrisy is very clear and very obvious.

We see a lazy opposition. That is the truth here. Some of the crossbench parties—the Katter party and other parties—have done some work to put private members' bills together. I might not agree with them, but good on them for doing the work. They are a crossbench with small numbers of people and here we have an opposition with, what, 34 members and not one private member's bill in nearly 2½ years in this chamber. They are a lazy opposition who are not interested. They did better under the member for Nanango. When she was opposition leader, they actually did private members' bills; they did a little bit more work than they do now under the member for Broadwater.



Let's have some integrity from the opposition rather than this silly debate. I see the member for Glass House but I actually hear the member for Kawana on this. To suggest that somehow the government and the opposition have the same policy agenda is a farce. Cross River Rail, the M1, second M1, our energy assets kept in public hands—they would have been sold off by those opposite. They sacked 14,000 staff members, including thousands of nurses. They cut the health staff. They cut deeply into health, which we restored. You can imagine what would have happened in the pandemic. If they had been in power, there would have been a disaster in this state with the inept leadership, including the Leader of the Opposition who was suggesting that our response to the pandemic was like putting a doona over your head. That was the sophistication of a leader who does not have anything other than a very good blagging technique, who does not have any content underneath there.

They say they have changed, but they have billions in cuts coming. The member for Chatsworth was very clear about that only two weeks ago. They have already made decisions about savings—that means cuts—billions in savings. The Leader of the Opposition was exposed by the member for Chatsworth, my shadow minister, that they have already made decisions to make billions in cuts. So what are they? Tell us what they are. Tell us what the cuts are, because these are the words of the LNP themselves—not my words—the words of the shadow minister for transport and main roads and member for Chatsworth, in a moment of honesty, told us about the cuts that are coming by those opposite. Tell us what those cuts are. Share it with the people of Queensland. Do not keep it hidden like you have been doing on other things. Tell us where the cuts will be.

In terms of this business motion, it is ordinary parliamentary process. The parliament does not need a long list of members repeating the same key lines and themes handed out at the LNP partyroom. That is not a contribution to debate. That is not original. They need to prioritise their speaking list just as the government does and the crossbench does.



**Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (11.33 am): I, too, rise to contribute to this debate. I was not going to this week, but I could not let that minister get away with some of the rot that he just talked about. Honestly, really, the broad-ranging debate that the minister just talked about was completely irrelevant to this motion that is before the House. Given that the minister was given such latitude by you, the honourable Acting Speaker, I figure that I should be granted the same latitude and talk about the incompetence of the Palaszczuk government. However, firstly, in relation to this motion debate, I have a prime example right in front of me why we are arguing against the Leader of the House's motion today. I thank the member for Condamine for alerting me to the fact that the bill that is on the *Notice Paper* was just handed around—

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I take that interjection from the member for Pine Rivers. It is obvious that the member for Pine Rivers did not know about it either. The long title of the bill has just been amended. We are talking about changes to the Residential Tenancies Act in the Local Government Act that has just been handed around. Not only does the opposition not get time to review this; nor do the people of Queensland. It did not go through committee; it is not going to go through committee. There is no openness, no transparency. Hang on a minute, wasn't that what the Palaszczuk government was apparently elected on—openness and transparency? Goodness me, there is absolutely none! When you are given a green two minutes before the debate starts, that is not open and that is not transparent. That is exactly why the Palaszczuk government need to change the laws of this House back, to enable the opposition members to all have an opportunity to contribute.

The speaking lists and the times have already been determined by the honourable Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business. That had already been determined yesterday. Where was the discussion around the amendment of the long title of the bill? All of a sudden, outside of the long title of the local government bill, we will now be talking about the rental caps and other things which no-one in this House has had an opportunity to read because it has literally just been given out to us here in this House.

The committee certainly would not have known about these last-minute changes. Who does know about this? I am quite sure the Labor backbench have no idea. Someone is in there now scrambling to have a look at the speaking notes which we are going to get from the Labor members of parliament, all verbatim, straight from their speaking notes. I bet someone is sitting in there typing madly away: 'Hang on a minute, we are not talking about local government anymore, we will be talking about whatever the amendments are that have just been handed around. It is outside the long title of the bill.' The Minister for Local Government is now saying, 'Hang on a minute. I have to clean up someone else's

mess. That is why we will slip in this amendment to this bill.' That is why we need more time to negotiate, to talk to our communities about what the Palaszczuk government is mucking up this time. Right now, who knows?

**Mr Hart:** Maybe the media teamed up together and decided to change things.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will take that interjection. Maybe the media team got together or maybe someone from the Premier's department did not want a minister to speak. I think it was the Minister for Transport who took a question today that I thought was hilarious, but anyhow. The Minister for Transport probably got a call from Shane Doherty from the Premier's department saying, 'Hang on a minute, which ministers do we not want to stand up together?' Is it the Deputy Premier that does not want to—

**Mr BAILEY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Oh, here we go!

**Mr BAILEY:** I find those comments offensive and ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): The minister has taken personal offence, member. Do you withdraw?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I withdraw. It seems like I may have touched a nerve. Is it because we have the Minister for Transport trying to—I don't know—possibly think he can be the next Premier of Queensland? Is that what is happening here? We see some ministers with sneaky little smiles. Which minister knows? Is it the Minister for Water who should resign given that it is nine months since the minister said he was going to resign for—

*(Time expired)*

Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

**AYES, 50:**

**ALP, 50—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 38:**

**LNP, 34—**Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

**Grn, 1—**Berkman.

**KAP, 3—**Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

Resolved in the affirmative.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION (EXPENDITURE CAPS) AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 1 December 2022 (see p. 3843).

### Second Reading



**Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (11.44 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

The bill before the House today delivers on our election commitment to implement electoral expenditure caps for Queensland local governments. It continues the government's reform agenda for the sector guided by principles of integrity, transparency, diversity and consistency. Across Queensland we have so many great councillors who are dedicated to their local communities. Every Queenslanders deserves the best representation on their council as well as every opportunity to be on that council. These reforms will help ensure the highest quality candidates can contest council elections with a level playing field available to all who wish to participate.

I also inform the House that the government will move amendments to the bill during consideration in detail to give effect to recently announced rental reforms. On 28 March 2023 the Premier announced that the Queensland government would limit rent increase frequency to once a year as an immediate action to stabilise rents in the private rental market. Acting quickly to limit rent increases will give a fairer go to the over 95 per cent of people who get their housing on the private market.

Rent is a significant component of the household budget. For many households it would be the biggest single expense. The majority of landlords do the right thing, but in the case of those who do not, these changes will improve protections for Queenslanders who rent their home. This approach provides stronger consumer protections for renters against the affordability impacts being driven by the supply constrained market. It balances the need for action with the need for investors to still see a return on their investment. These changes are part of a comprehensive package of reforms and investments into the housing market to improve housing supply and affordability.

The amendments to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 will limit the frequency of rent increases from every six months to once a year for residential tenancies and rooming accommodation agreements. This annual limit will apply to all new and existing tenancies from 1 July 2023 onwards. The transition arrangements clarify that any terms of a tenancy agreement in place on 1 July 2023 which provide for a rent increase after 1 July 2023 will not be valid unless it has been at least 12 months since the last rent increase. Consequential amendments to other sections of the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act are also necessary to give effect to, and the enforcement of, the limit on frequency.

I now turn to the substantive bill. I want to thank the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for its thorough examination of the bill. The committee tabled its report on 24 February 2023. I also thank stakeholders for their contributions not just to the recent inquiry on the bill but also to the extensive engagement conducted over recent years. I note the committee's comment that several stakeholders reflected positively on the consultation process conducted by the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning. The committee's report noted unanimous support amongst inquiry participants for the introduction of an expenditure cap scheme for local government. The committee made four recommendations, the first being that the bill be passed. I table the government's response to that report.

*Tabled paper:* State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 37, 57th Parliament—Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022, government response [\[495\]](#).

The bill implements the government's policy in relation to the recommendations of the previous parliament's Economics and Governance Committee in its inquiry report into the feasibility of introducing expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections, tabled on 15 September 2020. This report stemmed from a recommendation of the Crime and Corruption Commission in its Belcarra report. The government supported the Economics and Governance Committee's seven recommendations in principle. The bill reflects the outcomes of further analysis and consultation as recommended by the committee in the final design of the local government electoral expenditure cap scheme. Importantly, the scheme is similar to the laws that are already in place for Queensland state elections.

The bill ensures and reinforces the equitable conduct of Queensland local government elections, including by minimising the risk of unequal participation in the electoral process and ensuring a fair opportunity to participate. In April 2022 the department consulted stakeholders on a proposed expenditure cap scheme informed by the committee's recommendations and comments and by an analysis of electoral expenditure incurred by participants in the 2020 local government quadrennial elections. Every Queensland councillor and mayor was encouraged to make a submission on the discussion paper. The department received 22 submissions in response to the discussion paper. There was broad support for introducing an expenditure cap scheme. The feedback has informed the preparation of the bill and certain elements of the scheme were modified in response to the feedback. A draft of the bill was provided to key stakeholders in September 2022.

To deliver on its objectives, the bill amends the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, the Local Government Act 2009 and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 to establish an electoral expenditure cap scheme for local government elections. To implement the government's policy in relation to recommendation 1 of the 2020 Economics and Governance Committee report, the bill amends the definition of 'electoral expenditure' to align with the definition for state elections in the Electoral Act 1992. Currently, the definition for state elections is more specific in defining the methods used in broadcasting and publishing material for an election. It also clarifies the expenditure which is excluded.

It includes the concept that expenditure is electoral expenditure if incurred for a campaign purpose as defined in the bill. For third parties, expenditure is electoral expenditure if the dominant purpose for which the expenditure is incurred is a campaign purpose.

In addition to aligning the definitions of 'electoral expenditure' and 'campaign purpose' in the state and local government systems, the bill also provides for gifted electoral expenditure, which applies under the state system. The bill provides that an amount of electoral expenditure is gifted to an election participant if the expenditure benefits the participant, and a range of other circumstances apply. The State Development and Regional Industries Committee noted in its report that several inquiry participants sought further clarity on certain concepts contained in these definitions. The alignment of definitions across state and local schemes will give certainty and consistency to those who participate in state and local government elections.

While the committee considered how the legislation might apply to a range of specific issues, including council newsletters and campaign offices, matters of interpretation are part of the compliance role held by the Electoral Commission of Queensland. The department will continue to work with the ECQ to support compliance of the scheme through the development of resources and training material. This acknowledges the committee's comment that comprehensive and accessible education and training resources will be vital to ensuring definitions are consistently understood and interpreted by election candidates.

Recommendations 2, 3 and 4 of the 2020 Economics and Governance Committee report covered the introduction of a sliding scale of expenditure caps, further analysis and consultation with stakeholders, and the registration of third parties. The bill provides for registration of third parties and for a sliding scale of electoral expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections, with reference to the number of electors in the relevant division or local government area at a specified point in time. The bill provides for the ECQ to decide elector numbers and publish notice of the numbers and the relevant caps for each local government area and division. The sliding scale does not apply to Brisbane City Council. The caps for Brisbane are a fixed amount in recognition that Brisbane City Council's election environment differs from other Queensland local government areas.

The bill provides for caps for mayoral candidates over five bands. The bands begin at a \$30,000 cap for areas with 30,000 or fewer electors. The highest band outside Brisbane applies to areas with more than 200,000 electors, allowing a cap of \$175,000 plus an additional 25 cents per elector for each additional elector over 25,000. For Brisbane City Council mayoral candidates, the cap is \$1.3 million. There are four bands for councillor candidates. Outside Brisbane City Council, these bands range from a \$15,000 cap for areas with 20,000 or fewer electors up to a maximum cap of \$30,000 for areas or divisions with 40,000 electors or more. For Brisbane City Council councillor candidates, the cap is \$55,000 per division. The cap levels for mayoral and councillor candidates are underpinned by a comprehensive modelling and consultation process to ensure they are fair.

The bill also provides for a cap for a group of candidates for an election or a registered political party that endorses candidates in an election to pool the caps of the members of the group or endorsed candidates within a local government area. An upper limit applies to the group or registered political party cap based on the number of vacancies to be filled in an election. This means a group or registered political party cap does not increase if the number of candidates who are members of the group or endorsed by the party exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled in the election. This limits the ability of a group or registered political party to access a disproportionately large expenditure cap by fielding more candidates than the number of vacancies in an election.

The State Development and Regional Industries Committee noted that stakeholders were focused on ensuring pooled caps created a level playing field and were not misused by candidates. The committee was satisfied that the group pooling arrangements are appropriate and are underpinned by a comprehensive consultation process. The purpose of these provisions is to ensure groups and registered political parties are subject to expenditure caps while also being able to run coordinated group or political party campaign activities, for example, joint advertising or shared how-to-vote cards.

I note the views expressed in the opposition's statement of reservation. The caps are designed to be practical and were informed by the recommendations and feedback in the Economics and Governance Committee report of September 2020. The level of the caps was calculated after reviewing the expenditure caps model previously proposed by the former department of local government, racing and multicultural affairs in March 2019; the model proposed by the Local Government Association of Queensland in its submission to the 2020 committee inquiry; and the expenditure caps models operating at the local government level in New South Wales, Tasmania and New Zealand.

Unlike the state scheme, the scheme applies scaled caps. This acknowledges that the number of electors varies across Queensland's local governments. A scaled cap can take these varied sizes into consideration rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach. For example, Diamantina Shire Council had 165 enrolled electors at the 2020 local government elections whereas the Gold Coast City Council had nearly 390,000 enrolled electors and Brisbane City Council had nearly 790,000 enrolled electors.

The proposed caps are the result of a comprehensive consultation process with the public and with Queensland councillors and mayors. They were tested against the reported electoral expenditure from participants from the 2020 local government election. The final electoral expenditure caps in the bill were further revised by feedback received. The bill proposes a capped expenditure period of approximately seven months to align with the state capped expenditure period under the state scheme. The bill provides for the registration of third parties if the electoral expenditure incurred by or with the authority of the third party during the capped expenditure period exceeds \$6,000. The system of third-party registration is modelled on the existing provisions in the Electoral Act 1992 for the state expenditure caps scheme.

The bill provides that the electoral expenditure cap of an unregistered third party is \$6,000. For registered third parties in the quadrennial election, the cap is equal to a mayoral candidate's cap. For registered third parties in a by-election, the cap is equal to the candidates cap according to whether the candidate is a mayoral or councillor candidate. The cap for registered third parties cannot be applied across local government areas. The bill requires the ECQ to keep a register of third parties who are registered for an election. The register will provide clarity and transparency regarding the entities which are registered third parties for an election. The committee was satisfied that the third-party registration process and cap amounts are appropriate. It emphasised the importance of training and awareness resources and encouraged the department to continue working with the ECQ to ensure third parties understand their compliance obligations under the scheme.

To implement the government's policy in relation to recommendation 5 of the Economics and Governance Committee report, the bill provides that electoral expenditure incurred by an associated entity of an election participant is treated as though it were incurred by the election participant. The bill amends the definition of 'associated entity' to align with the Electoral Act 1992, meaning that associated entities of candidates, groups of candidates and political parties will be captured and will be subject to the expenditure cap of the relevant election participant. Consistent with the state scheme, the bill also provides for an associated entity to use the campaign account of the election participant with which it is associated.


To implement the government's policy in relation to recommendation 6 of the Economics and Governance Committee report, the bill aligns the new scheme penalties and recovery provisions with those applying under the state scheme. It prescribes certain offences as integrity and serious integrity offences under the local government legislation, meaning that noncompliance results in automatic suspension if charged and disqualification for certain periods if convicted. I note the comment from the State Development and Regional Industries Committee that several stakeholders supported the penalties, stating they must be firm enough to deter noncompliance. The committee concluded that the offence provisions are relevant and appropriate and provide a necessary deterrent to those who may seek to undermine the integrity of local government elections in Queensland. I note the issue raised by the opposition members in the statement of reservations about the timing of prosecutions after an election rather than during it. It is important for swift investigations to reduce disruption and prevent by-elections. The department will continue working with the ECQ to prepare training and capacity-building resources to support compliance.

I turn now to further highlight these important issues of training and capacity building in addition to a proposed review of the scheme. Recommendation 7 of the 2020 Economics and Governance Committee report was for the department to coordinate with the ECQ to ensure election participants have access to a suite of information or resources and training to support their compliance with the established scheme. The government supported this recommendation in principle. Recommendation 2 of the recent State Development and Regional Industries Committee report on the bill was for the minister to include training on electoral expenditure caps in the training and professional development requirements for councillors and local government candidates. The committee canvassed a range of stakeholder views about the importance of adequate training. The committee expressed its firm view that the development of a comprehensive and accessible training program is vital to ensure that councillors and candidates are able to meet their obligations under the new scheme. The government supports the committee's recommendation 2.

To implement the government's response to both recommendation 7 of the 2020 report and recommendation 2 of the recent committee report on the bill, the department will continue working with the ECQ to prepare training and capacity-building resources for the range of election participants to be affected by the new scheme. Further, recommendation 3 of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee report was for the department to consider conducting a review of the electoral expenditure cap scheme within 12 months of the 2024 local government elections and that the key findings of the review be published. The committee considered that the review would be best carried out by the department as the policy lead in conjunction with the ECQ as regulator of the scheme. The government supports this recommendation. Terms of reference for a review would be subject to consultation with stakeholders, and feedback from stakeholders will be vital and form an important component of a review.

Finally, I want to address an issue raised in recommendation 4 of the report from the State Development and Regional Industries Committee. The committee's recommendation was for the government to consider future legislative amendments to ensure that Independent candidates in local government elections are not lawfully prevented from holding fundraising activities. This issue arises from the provisions of the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999 and is outside the scope of the bill. As the relevant legislation falls within the portfolio of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, I have referred recommendation 4 to her for her consideration.

The committee chair rightly noted that an expenditure cap scheme for Queensland councils and councillors is an important step to ensuring the equitable conduct of local government elections. He highlighted that broad support for the scheme had been made clear through a widespread and rigorous consultation process with regular engagement with key stakeholders throughout the development of the bill. The committee commented that Queenslanders rightly expect local government elections to be democratic and fair. Every Queensland community deserves the best council it can elect. This bill delivers the level playing field which is fundamental to that right. Comprehensive engagement has delivered a strong scheme that will serve Queenslanders well. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (12.03 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022 and I welcome the Deputy Premier's first local government bill this term. The LNP supports integrity and transparency in government, and that includes local government. It is important that our local government elections are fair and free from undue influence. This legislation has had a long path to make it to the parliament. With many reports and examinations of electoral expenditure laws prior to this legislation, many of the concerns should be addressed. However, the Palaszczuk Labor government has some history when it comes to electoral laws governing local government. At one stage there was Labor's policy to change the voting system from optional preferential to compulsory preferential for local government. There was also the runner-up laws that had to be rescinded as they were on track to deliver a mayor nicknamed 'Pineapple' to the good citizens of Rockhampton. The LNP is well aware of some of Labor's shortcomings on local government electoral laws in the past. However, the LNP opposition will not oppose the bill. We will, however, be moving an amendment for a review of these laws in the future.

With new legislation such as this, it is important to deal with any unintended consequences. It is often only when the legislation is tested in practice that these consequences become apparent. The 2024 local government elections will certainly give that test to this legislation. If the 2020 local government elections are any guide there is certainly a need for a review, and I draw the attention of the House to the *Inquiry into the Electoral Commission of Queensland's online publication of the preliminary and formal counts of the votes cast in the 2020 quadrennial local government election and the Bundamba and Currumbin state by-elections held on 28 March 2020*. As such, the LNP believes it is important to have a review of this legislation by the relevant parliamentary committee within 12 months of the 2024 local government elections. We agree with the committee recommendation. However, this should go a step further and we wish to see this expressed in the bill.

No doubt people will ask why place this in the law? This is because local government has been caught out with reviews that have been promised but not delivered, and I refer to the review of the amendments that were promised in 2018 with regard to the urgent amendments that gave the minister the power to dismiss or suspend councillors or councils in consultation with the LGAQ. In 2018 the parliament was told the government would review the amendments within the next two years. Again, this government has been slow to act and local governments are still waiting for this review. Reviews need to be in the law, not just in the *Hansard* and not just in the committee recommendation. The deadlines on reviews need to be clear because all too often this government leaves local government

waiting. As a matter of interest, local governments have been waiting 600 days for the promised reform to conflict of interest laws from this Palaszczuk Labor government, and I table a copy of the LNP amendment.

*Tabled paper:* Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022, amendment to be moved by Ms Ann Leahy MP [\[496\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes to Ms Ann Leahy's amendment [\[497\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Ms Ann Leahy's amendment [\[498\]](#).

I also note the government's amendments to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act, and those amendments will be dealt with by the shadow minister for housing.

This legislation is a result of the Belcarra recommendations—namely, recommendation No. 1. It states—

That an appropriate Parliamentary Committee review the feasibility of introducing expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections. Without limiting the scope of the review, the review should consider:

- (a) expenditure caps for candidates, groups of candidates, third parties, political parties and associated entities
- (b) the merit of having different expenditure caps for incumbent versus new candidates
- (c) practices in other jurisdictions.

At the introduction of the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2019, the Legislative Assembly also resolved that the committee, when considering the bill, also consider recommendation 1 from the Crime and Corruption Commission Operation Belcarra report. This was to look at the feasibility of introducing expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections, with a view to the model commencing after the 2020 local government elections.

The proposed caps made an appearance in the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs local government reforms in March 2019. There was also the issues paper that proposed compulsory preferential voting in local government elections proposed as government policy. However, that reform to introduce CPV to council elections was a party political, not a CCC, recommendation or even a recommendation from the Soorley review of the 2016 local government elections, and I recall that that proposal ended up with the Labor government being caught out in its attempt to rig the voting system for local government elections for Labor's advantage. It was a dodgy approach that saw the government fall on its sword and withdraw the legislation.

CPV has been resoundingly rejected by the local government sector and this Labor government should listen to that strong stance. The reforms progressed to the Economics and Governance Committee for consideration. I want to thank the Economics and Governance Committee members for their report No. 47 which made seven recommendations. The government supported the seven recommendations in principle. After further policy development and consultation, they released a discussion paper on 19 April 2022, local government electoral expenditure caps and invited stakeholder feedback by 27 May 2022. The LNP at a state and Brisbane City Council level raised concerns about the unions being able to outspend a lord mayoral candidate 400 to 1 in that time. Having made changes prior to the introduction of the legislation, that imbalance now rests at 26 to 1. As I said, there have been a few rehearsals to where we are today.

I would like to thank the State Development and Regional Industries Committee members from both sides of the House for their consideration of the bill. I would also like to thank the submitters who made submissions to the bill through the committee process and the departmental staff who briefed the LNP. The bill amends the Local Government Electoral Act, the Local Government Act 2009 and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 to establish an electoral expenditure caps scheme for local government elections. Key features include: local government electoral expenditure caps for councillor and mayoral candidates, groups of candidates, registered political parties that endorse a candidate in an election and third parties—registered and unregistered. The legislation enables ECQ to decide and publish enrolment figures for local government areas and divisions and the corresponding caps. There are amendments to the purpose of the Local Government Electoral Act for consistency with the purpose of the scheme. It enables the prescription of certain offences as integrity or serious integrity offences under the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Act and general alignment with state electoral requirements under the Electoral Act 1992 related to a number of provisions as outlined on page 4 of the explanatory notes.

The proposed caps for mayors and councillors are outlined in the bill and the explanatory notes. The bill provides for registration of third parties and for a sliding scale of electoral expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections, with reference to the number of electors in the relevant division or local government area. As Brisbane City Council's election environment differs from other Queensland local government areas, the sliding scale does not apply to Brisbane City Council, for which the caps are a fixed amount. I note there is a sliding scale amount of \$1 per elector for areas with more than 30,000 electors and not more than 150,000 electors for mayors but not for councillors. The four undivided councils—Gladstone, Mackay, Noosa and Toowoomba—are categorised as band 3 and council candidates have a cap of \$30,000. Toowoomba has 115,000 electors and is covered by three state electorates. There is an anomaly in the case of these four large, undivided councils. In Toowoomba, for example, there are over 115,000 electors. Therefore, one council candidate can spend only \$30,000 in an area covering nearly three state electorates, while a state independent candidate in one of these seats can spend \$90,000 each.

There is not much alignment of the local government scheme with the state scheme, which is one of the policy objectives of the bill. This legislation leaves the door open to incentivise groups to pool and share resources in these council areas and subsequently attempt to manipulate the electoral system. The outcome could be a politicisation of regional local government in a way that it has never been politicised before. This is not fairness or integrity in the electoral system for local government or the community. I suggest to the government that in those four councils in band 3 councillor caps need some closer attention.

Touching on some of the concerns raised by submitters, the LGAQ generally support the policy framework settings adopted in the bill, but made six recommendations: to amend and clarify that council communications are not electoral expenditure; the capped expenditure period be extended to the entire four-year term; an evaluation of group cap pooling be undertaken as part of the statutory review; consideration be given to cap differences for divided and undivided councils as part of the statutory review; the issue of when an elector number determination is made be considered as part of the statutory review; and the state government include a clause to ensure a statutory review is held within the first 12 months after the 2024 local government elections. Councillors expressed concern that the pooling of group caps may lead to a disadvantage to individual 'independent' candidates and suggested that candidates should prove that they are seriously running candidates. The Queensland Law Society were generally supportive of the bill but raised the issue that the definition of electoral expenditure can be changed by regulation which, in their view, did not have sufficient regard for the institution of parliament.

In the statement of reservations the opposition raised concerns that the expenditure caps will not be enough for council candidates campaigning in undivided local government areas, especially those that cover vast, remote areas in Queensland's regions. The electoral expenditure of a candidate would be stretched across an entire LGA rather than focused on a specific ward or division, as is the situation with a divided LGA. Some large, undivided councils could have as many as 16 media markets when taking into account the many different local newspapers in the area.

It is also very interesting to look at these expenditure caps on a per capita basis. The electoral caps for both mayoral and councillor candidates have revealed some very interesting results. I am pleased that the minister mentioned the Diamantina Shire Council as I will also mention it. The highest level of expenditure for mayors per person was in the Diamantina shire where a mayoral candidate could spend \$181.82 per elector and the lowest was in the Gold Coast where the mayoral candidate can spend 57 cents per person. A councillor candidate in the Diamantina shire has the highest per person spend of \$90.91 and the lowest is 26 cents in the Toowoomba Regional Council. A councillor candidate standing in the Diamantina Shire Council can buy two cartons of beer with a 'vote 1' on it for each constituent but a councillor candidate standing in the Toowoomba Region council cannot even buy a Freddo frog with 'vote 1' on it to hand out to elicit votes.

As I mentioned earlier, the publication of the preliminary and formal counts of the votes cast in the 2020 quadrennial local government election was found to be lacking by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee. This was a scathing assessment of the 2020 local government elections. Report No. 66 outlines the underlying problems experienced by the Electoral Commission in the 2020 local government elections especially with the presentation of data on election night. The committee notes submitter concerns about the delay in posting updated results to the ECQ website on election night and subsequently, and the ECQ's acknowledgement that this delay was unacceptable. The government do need to appropriately resource the ECQ to do its job and to provide timely training to all local government candidates. Confidence is important for future elections and confidence comes from




the actions and ability of the ECQ to deliver in a timely manner that meets the expectations of candidates and the community. As a result of this legislation ECQ's workload will increase and for fair elections the ECQ need to be resourced appropriately by this Labor Party government.

The opposition will keep a watching brief in the forthcoming budget and in the lead up to the 2024 local government elections as there is much training and information that needs to be provided to mayoral and councillor candidates. Local governments pay the ECQ for the conduct of the local government elections and the LNP will be keeping a very close eye on the costs of the 2024 local government elections.

I hope this legislation is not a repeat of the issues that we have seen where the intent of the legislation as outlined by the government and the department is out of step with the agency doing the implementation. We have seen that happen with the department and the Office of the Independent Assessor.

Local governments do not want to see history repeating itself with this legislation whereby the legislation is quite clear yet is interpreted differently by another agency. The LNP will continue to engage with the local government sector and monitor the changes that are brought forward by this legislation. I look forward to listening to the contributions of all members during the debate on the bill.

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (12.19 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill, including amendments to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008. On 28 March 2023, the Premier announced that the Queensland government will limit rent increase frequency to once a year as an immediate action to stabilise rents in the private rental market. Today we will move amendments to enact that change and bring Queensland into line with other Australian jurisdictions. We know there is unprecedented pressure on the housing sector right now and we recognise that tenancy laws in Queensland must be modernised to keep pace with the changing rental landscape. With more than one-third of Queensland households renting, it is vital that renters get a fair go. As we seek to modernise Queensland's tenancy laws, we are determined to strike a fair balance that protects the interests of both renters and rental property owners.

Acting quickly to limit rent increases is a critical government response to community concerns about the impact of current market conditions and cost-of-living pressures on renting households in Queensland. Taking this action will build on the Queensland government's record to improve protections in Queensland's private rental market through strong, balanced rental law reform. In addition to protecting the rights of renters and rental property owners, our rental law reform agenda seeks to improve stability in the rental market.


The amendments to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, through the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022, will limit the frequency of rent increases from every six months to once a year for residential tenancies and rooming accommodation agreements. This annual limit on rent increases will apply to all new and existing tenancies from 1 July 2023 onwards. The limit on frequency of increases will continue to apply across tenancy agreements where at least one of the renters remains in the same rental property under a subsequent agreement. The transition arrangements clarify that any terms of a tenancy agreement in place on 1 July 2023 that provide for a rent increase after 1 July 2023 will not be valid unless there has been at least 12 months since the last rent increase. Practically speaking, this means that if a renter had their rent increased two months ago, in February, then their rent will not be allowed to increase again until February next year, 12 months after their last increase.

Property owners and managers who increase rent before the 12-months minimum period allowed between rent increases face a maximum penalty of 20 penalty units. This is an existing penalty under the RTRA Act. The new obligations introducing a minimum period before rent can be increased in rooming accommodation also carry a penalty. Rooming accommodation providers who increase rent before the minimum 12-month period will also face a maximum penalty of 20 penalty units. This is a new penalty and will help protect some of our most vulnerable renters.

Consequential amendments to other sections of the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act are also necessary to give effect to and for the enforcement of the limit on frequency. This approach aims to stabilise rents by reducing the frequency of rent increases. It will mean stronger consumer protections for renters in a market constrained by housing supply challenges.

In addition to limiting the frequency of rent increases, there is a minor technical amendment to section 277 of the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 to avoid confusion about when a residential tenancy agreement ends. This does not alter the operation of section 277 but is necessary to remove any doubt or confusion about the parties' obligations and operation of the section. As a consequence of these amendments, the long title of the act will need to be amended for accuracy and will include a reference to the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 and the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Regulation 2009.

This government has shown its willingness to work with stakeholders to build a more sustainable housing market. The housing round table and housing summits that we have held have unlocked housing investment and policy reform options with a strong focus on delivering more fairness for Queensland renters. I acknowledge all of those who have been working on this bill, particularly those in my department, with regards to ensuring that we are moving as quickly as possible to support renters right now. We will continue to work with the housing sector to ensure that renters get a fair go in Queensland. I support the bill.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (12.24 pm): I rise to speak on the amendment bill before the House and, in particular around the local government expenditure area, a couple of amendments that are being moved today. It would have been nice if they had been included in the inquiry by what is a very workable committee, the State Development and Regional Industries Committee. Alas that was not the case.

The Lockyer state electorate is made up of two local government areas, the Lockyer and Somerset council areas, which I will talk about in a moment. One of the things that governments should do is encourage people to be a part of local government. Local governments are the level of government closest to the people and are responsible for many things that people in our communities see, feel and touch every day. In speaking to this bill today I want to talk about integrity, fairness and complexity. I ask the question: does this bill and other bills encourage councillors and mayors to again run for local government as community champions or do they actually discourage them? When government makes the local government sector more complex then certainly that question is raised. Mayors and councillors have raised it with us in many inquiries, particularly the inquiry into the Office of the Independent Assessor that happened across the state. Many mayors and councillors are very concerned about even nominating and some have said that they will not nominate for local government again.

As I mentioned before, the Lockyer state electorate is made up of the Lockyer Valley Regional Council and the Somerset Regional Council areas. I have not done this before but I would like to place on the record my sincere appreciation and thanks to Lockyer Valley Regional Council's Mayor Tanya Milligan as well as Deputy Mayor Jason Cook and councillors Chris Wilson, Michael Hagan, Rick Vela, Brett Qualischefski and Janice Holstein; and the Somerset Regional Council's Mayor Graeme Lehmann, Deputy Mayor Helen Brieschke and councillors Sean Choat, Cheryl Gaedtke, Kylee Isidro, Jason Wendt and Bob Whalley. Those community champions have talked to me about how the government can make changes that affect local government and that do make things more complex. Certainly we need to have accountability and fairness in every sector of government. I note that one of the goals of this bill is to see state and local government aligned. As the member for Burleigh and I have outlined in our statement of reservation, we have some significant concerns in this space.

Before I talk about the difficulties that the Toowoomba regional council faces, I place on the record that my brother Geoff McDonald is the deputy mayor in Toowoomba, but has in no way influenced what I am about to say. I also give a shout-out to Mayor Paul Antonio who is another great community champion. He is originally from Millmerran but has at heart the best interests of the Toowoomba Regional Council.

The Toowoomba Regional Council has 115,000-odd electors. Candidates in that undivided council area are given only \$30,000-odd to contest an election campaign and I think that is very light on. There were 24 submitters on the bill, including the LGAQ and other councils. While they support the bill in principle, each of the submitters, and particularly the LGAQ, outlined their recommendation that there be a statutory review within 12 months of the 2024 local government election. That is one of the reasons why I am very pleased that our shadow minister for local government and member for Warrego, Ann Leahy, has moved an amendment to embed that in legislation. As we all know, following stage 2 of Belcarra the government promised that there would be a review after two years but that has not happened. We want to see it embedded in the bill as an amendment.

In fact, the government recognises the State Development and Regional Industries Committee recommendation 3, which basically says that we will undertake a review within 12 months. It should be included in the bill so that the department has clear guidance to undertake that review. With any changes to legislation, unintended consequences can occur. With such a complex change to the local government expenditure caps, there will be. I know that in two years we will be coming back to this place to consider amendments, because there will be unintended consequences—whether it be from the amounts of money available to candidates, what those moneys can be applied to or some of the pooling arrangements.


I recognise that the Deputy Premier did clarify that the pooling arrangements would be one less than the multiple of the number of positions available for the local government area. The committee welcomed that advice when it was provided to us by the department. As members can imagine, we were very concerned. One briefing note said that we might end up seeing a large number of candidates in a group with up to the cap multiplied for that group and that some of those candidates might ‘run dead’, meaning that there would be more money available to their cohort. That is a big change to the local government electoral arrangements across the state. That is another reason that embedding a 12-month review in the bill is vitally important.

I want to focus on the issue of fairness. As members elected to state parliament, we have the opportunity to spend up to \$140,000-odd—\$56,000 locally and then a party contribution. That is a very large amount compared to what is available to some of the local government areas. The issue of the benefits of incumbency comes into play when candidates may not be able to spend an amount that somebody else may.

Through its inquiry, the committee was very concerned at a number of aspects of what was included in these caps and particularly the duration. I welcome the government’s stance on a seven-month period before an election rather than four years, as proposed by some. Again, there is complexity and difficulty in reporting by candidates at upcoming elections. As I said earlier, we want to encourage good members, champion members, of our community to run as mayors and councillors so that we get the best elected local governments possible.

The other issue we raised in our statement of reservation concerned the level of funding and resourcing to the Electoral Commission of Queensland. As its good officers outlined, when an election is occurring and complaints are coming in about electoral matters or about unfairness of electoral matters, they simply do not have the capacity to guarantee that they can address all of those complaints within an election period. Complaints against candidates could well be weaponised against other candidates. Certainly, all will be politically motivated in trying to give somebody the best standing in terms of being elected. One of our real concerns was that the ECQ is not properly resourced to address those complaints in a timely manner. I recognise that the ECQ did give the committee a guarantee that it will certainly be able to administer the changes in this bill and provide adequate training.

I recognise again the unintended consequences of some of the different laws. During the committee inquiry we discovered that Darren Grimwade, a councillor close to Brisbane, could not even run a raffle amongst his supporters to raise funds without triggering some contested legislation. Let us get this right. Let us embed an amendment to provide for a review to make this a better bill.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.34 pm): I rise to speak in support of the bill. Before I discuss the bill, I want to rebut some comments by some LNP members. The member for Warrego suggested that some of these changes have been too long coming or that we have left the local government sector waiting. I point out that in recent years the sector has been through many changes, especially in the light of what Belcarra has revealed. When we talked to councillors and mayors, they shared that they sometimes have struggled to get across the changes that have been brought in already and that we need to go at a pace and a volume that suits the local government sector. I always have that in mind when we talk about how many changes we make and how quickly we make them. As we have seen today, members of the LNP are quick to spout slogans but they have little idea of what is happening out there in the real world.

I thank the member for Warrego for introducing a new statistical measure in terms of examining local government electoral expenditure: how many Freddo Frogs per vote do you need to expend? I think it is very novel. It is quite easy to grasp and brings to mind the image of a candidate doorknocking, as I did. Perhaps I should have given out more Freddo Frogs at each house I went to. I should have asked people if they wanted a Freddo Frog and if they wanted to vote for me. In fact, I still might use this idea. By talking about chocolate I think we can get kids interested in learning about local government elections, so I congratulate the member for Warrego for introducing this new statistical measure.


I do not think the member's proposed amendments to have a parliamentary committee review the changes under this act within 12 months are needed. I suggest that this work will already be done very well by the local government department and the ECQ. If a committee did this work, we would just be repeating exactly what the ECQ and the local government department had already reported. I also note that our committee is already doing an annual review of the councillor conduct system. We already have our head in that space. I see these proposed amendments as perhaps unnecessary and perhaps duplicative of the work that will already be done.

The bill, which introduces electoral expenditure caps for local government elections, will be very welcome. As the minister has said, it will make it a level playing field for our local government elections. Every elector and every candidate will know how much each candidate can spend. Every candidate will know that they will not face an obscenely funded candidate. It means that ordinary Queenslanders who want to run for council will know that they have a real chance of getting elected if they go out and work hard. These changes will also mean greater transparency in our local government system. We will have greater clarity on what constitutes a donation or a gift in kind. We can track what third parties are doing and what they are spending. We can see how candidates in a group are funded as well.

Probably one of the most important parts of this bill is that it increases confidence in Queensland's local government system. Electors will be able to see how much each candidate spends and where it comes from. Electors will know what is spent and know that essentially it cannot be hidden; it has to be seen. Electors can have confidence that the best person can win—not the person with the deepest pockets.

Building confidence—and this reflects the work we have been doing as a committee—in our local government sector is absolutely crucial because we know that councils make decisions every day that impact their local communities. Electors want to know that their councillors have their best interests at the heart of what they do every day. They want to know that this is what motivates those local councillors. We know that Queenslanders want to have faith in their local councils because they know councils do so much. As a state government, we know that they do so much for us.

Finally, our committee believes—and this reflects what the Economics and Governance Committee said as well—that training is crucial when we talk about these changes. As I have said, local government has seen many legislated changes over the last few years. All these changes have been necessary because we need to make local government more effective and build confidence. We know from the committee's OIA inquiry that further professional development and training is crucial for each councillor, and that includes councillors who have been in council for many years as well as new councillors. We will keep encouraging local governments to do more training and professional development to make sure their councillors are fully across all the changes that, I know, will be welcomed when the bill is passed. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (12.41 pm): I rise to speak on the bill, but, more particularly, to speak to the amendments that amend housing legislation that were circulated at the last moment by the Deputy Premier. There is no greater example of the chaos of this government than the amendments that were circulated moments before the bill was to be debated. This bill has absolutely no relevance to the amendments that have been circulated. The other thing it says about the government is that it was too frightened to have these amendments, which the minister said are significant and will make such a difference, scrutinised by the committee and allow stakeholders to have a say. They have obviously been scraped together at the last moment.

How long did this take? Is this like the police powers bill that we debated recently where just minutes, hours or days beforehand they put something together? This government is chaotic and there is no better example than these latest amendments. It is debatable what impact these amendments will have, if any.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): The minister will cease his interjections or he will be warned.

**Mr MANDER:** The minister's wit is so quick. Look at him laughing at himself. He is so funny! He is one of the intellectual heavyweights of the government and his interjections are very hurtful. I have feelings too you know.

The chaos of this government was also seen in the lead-up to these laws. In a press conference the Premier suggested—was it a thought bubble or was it deliberate?—that they are going to help renters by bringing in a rental cap and freeze rents. That went on for 24 hours. Economists and every stakeholder who has half a brain said, 'What the heck are you talking about? Have you any idea about the impact of that statement?'

They wheeled out the Deputy Premier the next day to do some damage control. He said, 'No, no, she did not mean that. We are going to limit them to CPI increases. That is what we are going to do. We are going to limit the increases to CPI increases.' Again, the criticism came from wide and far from stakeholders who understand how the economy works and how confidence in investment is so important. Then the Premier came out the next day—day 3—in her press conference and said, 'No, no, you misunderstood what I said.'

**Mr Langbroek:** Went on a tangent. People went on a tangent.

**Mr MANDER:** People went on a tangent. I will take that interjection from the member for Surfers Paradise. She said, 'Everybody went on a tangent after what I said was quite clear'—for her and not anybody else.

This is the chaotic nature of this government. They do things on a whim, a thought bubble. Something sounds good but they have no idea of the implications. These types of amendments should be scrutinised by a committee so they can be better informed. Let us also remember that one of the reasons they are bringing these amendments in is that they will take not responsibility for the housing crisis. The reason we have a housing crisis is that we do not have enough houses. We do not have enough housing.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. The member for Pumicestone will cease her interjections. The member for Bundaberg will cease his interjections. Ministers will cease their interjections.

**Mr MANDER:** Since this government came into power in 2015 there has been a 33 per cent decrease in lot approvals. That is the equivalent of 60,000 houses that could have been built that have not been built because this government has no strategy and no leadership when it comes to providing housing supply. What do they do? They say, 'Let's go for an easy target.' They blame the landlords—those mum and dad investors who are trying to get ahead and trying to make a contribution to the rental market.

In this country 20 per cent of taxpayers have an investment property and 89 per cent of those are mum and dad investors. What this government wants to do is continue to demonise them and make them out to be the villains. The amendments that they have brought before the House continue that theme. Remember the first tranche that came in and took away the rights of landlords—people who want confidence in their investment.

It is now more difficult for them to reject having a pet in the house—tenants can have an alsatian running around and causing havoc in the property that they don't own. They have basically made periodic leases redundant. What landlord would enter into a periodic lease if they know there is no end date? They have basically made periodic leases, which benefit the renter rather than the landlord, redundant with their first tranche.

There are more changes that have been signalled today. People can make modifications to a house that they do not own. They are going to restrict the rights of landlords to come and inspect their properties. They are going to restrict their entry rights. Is it any wonder that there are fewer and fewer rental properties available when they continue to impose these conditions.


Who can forget the grand-daddy of all which was the Treasurer's widening of the land tax umbrella. The anecdotal evidence was that people were fleeing the market straightaway and selling their investment houses because they did not want to get caught up with the latest, madcap thought bubble of the Treasurer. We had the humiliating backdown when the Premier overruled him.

This is at a time when the rental vacancy rate across the state is less than one per cent. Any healthy market would have around 2½ to 3½ per cent. We are less than one per cent. We have all heard story after story of people who cannot find a rental property—many people we would never have imagined would be in this situation. Through some mishap in their life, through a job loss, through a marriage breakdown or through whatever it maybe, they have been forced to go out and find a property but cannot find one.

We hear story after story of people sleeping in cars, sleeping in tents or couch surfing. What does this government do? This government brings in more impositions to make it more difficult for landlords to have confidence in their investment. That is one of the reasons we have a rental crisis at the moment. They will not listen to the experts. They will not listen to the people who continue to warn them about it. They run with policies that they think are popular, that they think will make an impact. What they do not understand is that those policies with regard to tenancy laws will disadvantage the very people they think they are going to advantage.

The other issue with these amendments is that the government cannot provide the information. For how many leases currently are there six-monthly rental increases? We have asked those questions. They could not answer the questions in parliament. They plucked some figure out of the air a couple of days later when they realised they had to find something. Again, there has been no proper research done on this. There has not been any proper public briefing so people can provide information.

I will argue that these amendments will make zero difference—zero difference—to renters in this state. Rather than getting a 2½ per cent increase every six months, they will get a five per cent at the end of the year. That will make a heck a lot of difference, won't it? We are going to support this because it will make no difference. It is going to make absolutely no difference whatsoever, but we will continue to fight to make sure that the scales are balanced evenly between renters and landlords, who are investors. Landlords are not demons. We should be applauding them and thanking them for investing and providing accommodation for our most vulnerable because the government is not doing it. The government is incapable of doing it. We need private investment in this state. All this is doing is driving confidence down.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (12.51 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill. This bill will amend the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Local Government Act 2009 and the Local Government Electoral Act 2011. The purpose of the bill is to implement an electoral expenditure caps scheme for local government elections. This scheme is another step in the Palaszczuk government's local government reform agenda that delivers on our 2020 election commitment to the people of Queensland to implement electoral expenditure caps for local government elections. With local government elections, it is important that we have the best representation possible on our councils right across Queensland. This bill will ensure the equitable conduct of candidates in our local government elections.

The Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning released a discussion paper in April 2022 seeking stakeholder feedback on the proposed local government electoral expenditure caps scheme. The discussion paper opened a consultative process where every Queensland, including past and present councillors and mayors, were asked to contribute. The feedback to the department indicated broad support introducing local government expenditure caps as provided for in this bill. The local government electoral scheme outlined in this bill will provide for a fair opportunity for anyone to participate in the electoral process. In many ways the scheme is similar to the laws that are already in place for Queensland state elections.

The roadmap to this bill began in 2009 when the Legislative Assembly requested the Economics and Governance Committee review the feasibility of introducing expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections. On 15 September 2020 the committee tabled its report and recommended that an electoral expenditure caps scheme be established in Queensland for local government elections. The committee made seven recommendations and the government supported all seven recommendations in principle, subject to further analysis and consultation.

In accordance with recommendation 1, the bill amends the definition of electoral expenditure in the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 to align with the definition under the state scheme. To implement the government's policy in relation to recommendations 2, 3 and 4, the bill provides for registration of third parties and for a sliding scale of electoral expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections with reference to the number of electors in the relevant division or local government area. The sliding scale does not apply to the Brisbane City Council. In Brisbane the caps are a fixed amount in recognition that the Brisbane City Council's election environment differs from other Queensland local government areas.


While the proposed local government election funding scheme is intended to align with the state scheme where practical and appropriate, the proposed caps for mayor and councillor candidates are grouped in tiers, recognising the differences in elector numbers and the varied shapes and sizes of Queensland's 77 local government areas. The caps for mayoral candidates are spread over five bands. Outside Brisbane City Council the bands begin at a \$30,000 cap for areas with 30,000 or fewer electors. The highest band outside Brisbane applies to areas with more than 200,000 electors, allowing for a cap of \$175,000 plus an additional 25 cents per elector for each additional elector over 200,000. For the Brisbane City Council mayoral candidates, the cap is \$1.3 million.

For by-elections, the capped expenditure period starts on the day the notice of the by-election is published. For fresh elections, the capped expenditure period starts on the day the notice of the election is published, unless the capped expenditure period for a quadrennial election has already started.

To implement the government's policy in relation to recommendation 5 of the committee report, the bill provides that electoral expenditure incurred by an associated entity of an election participant is treated as though it was incurred by the participant. The bill amends this definition of an associated entity to align with the Electoral Act 1992. This means that associated entities of candidates and groups of candidates will also be subject to the expenditure cap of the relevant election participant to disclosure requirements including electoral expenditure, gifts, loans and other amendments.

To implement the government's policy in relation to recommendation 6, the bill amends the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 to include new compliance and offence provisions to enforce the scheme. Where a councillor is suspended or disqualified, the Local Government Electoral Act 2011 provides the person may only be nominated as a candidate, or for appointment, as a councillor if the person is qualified to be a councillor under the local government legislation. If convicted of an integrity offence, a person is disqualified from being a councillor for a period of four years. If convicted of a serious integrity offence, a person is disqualified from being a councillor for a period of seven years.

The Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill aims to promote fairness and diversity with our local government elections in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.57 pm): I rise to address the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022. From the outset I wish to reaffirm the Liberal National Party's support for measures which enhance integrity, transparency and accountability across all levels of government, including local government. Integrity, transparency and accountability in government first begins with elections, and in our democracy it is vital that elections are conducted fairly and free from undue influence. With that in mind, I wish to turn to the specific legislation which is currently before the Queensland parliament. This legislation originated from the Economics and Governance Committee of the 56th Queensland parliament, following its consideration of the Electoral and Other Legislation (Accountability, Integrity and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2020 and consideration of recommendation 1 of the Crime and Corruption Commission's Operation Belcarra report.

Tabled on 15 September 2020, the committee made seven recommendations including those pertaining to the alignment of the definition of electorate expenditure in the Local Government Electoral Act and the Electoral Act; the establishment of a sliding scale of expenditure caps for local government elections; consulting with stakeholders to determine relevant cap amounts; and establishing expenditure caps for third parties. The Queensland state government, having supported the seven recommendations in principle last year, released a discussion paper for consideration and feedback prior to the introduction of this specific legislation. Under this legislation, a new electoral expenditure caps scheme for local government elections will be established and applicable to all candidates from the 2024 local government elections.

As outlined by the 57th Queensland parliament State Development and Regional Industries Committee in its report No. 37, the key features of the electoral caps scheme for local government include: councillor and mayoral candidates with individual caps based on a sliding scale in recognition of the different sizes of local governments in Queensland and the number of electors in a local government ward or division; groups of candidates who will be able to pool the individual caps of candidates in a group within a local government area and up to a certain capped amount; registered political parties that endorse a candidate in an election who will be able to pool the individual caps of their endorsed candidates within a local government area and up to a certain capped amount; and third parties such as trade unions, industry associations and community groups, if registered, who will be able to spend as much as an individual candidate and, if unregistered, third parties who will be able to spend up to \$6,000.

I note through the committee's examination of this legislation and through submissions and feedback provided by relevant stakeholders that this legislation is broadly supported with the exception of some specific concerns. This includes the Crime and Corruption Commission, which was supportive and overall believes that this legislation will increase the consistency between state and local government elections. I also note that the Local Government Association of Queensland was also generally supportive of the policy framework with some exceptions, including the need for a statutory review to be held within the first 12 months after the 2024 local government elections.

Debate, on motion of Dr Rowan, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance



**Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): Queenslanders have never been more concerned about youth crime. They are losing faith with the revolving door of the youth justice system in this state; they are losing faith with the lack of consequences for actions; and they are losing faith with the lack of detail of early intervention from this government. Secret correspondence shows the government's focus is not on Queenslanders but about writing a script and delivering a storyline. It shows a government in chaos lurching from crisis to crisis. It shows a lack of a plan and it shows a lack of compassion. Today the Premier was aghast at questions about an issue that she said was a media release. It was not a media release: it was a window into the soul of the way this government operates.

It revealed details about a policy that every Queenslander knows was cobbled together despite what the Deputy Premier of this state says. It showed that with 15 minutes to go the government was still not rewriting just the media release but the policy. It showed that police did not want to stand up with the minister. Then something happened in 13 minutes that changed all of that. It shows that despite a reluctance to adopt the breach-of-bail policy the opposition has spoken about for two years, finally after stonewalling they adopted it word for word because it was all they had.

Leaders in this state are not directors in a movie. People in this state are not extras in that film. They are plumbers losing their trucks; they are kids losing the feeling of safety in their homes; they are husbands losing their wives. This afternoon just before I walked into this House I was contacted by the family of a young woman in Yeppoon. She was at the gym this morning. Her car was stolen by someone brandishing a knife. The car has already been crashed. How is she going to get her kids to school tomorrow? How is she going to get to work tomorrow? How long will she be without a vehicle? What will it cost her? She is not part of a movie; she is not part of a script. This is her life, and she deserves to know that the people making decisions about the laws that should be keeping her safe care more about her survival than their survival.

Queenslanders are losing faith that this government will address their issues and they are losing faith in the Premier and her leadership team. We are seeing a breakdown in frontline services every day. Today it took questioning from the LNP to find out how long Queenslanders are waiting because of ambos stuck on ramps—147,000 lost hours, a record no Queenslanders ever thought they would see or wanted to see. That is 400 hours every day; 40 ambulance crews off the road every day. Not because of those ambos and not because of the doctors and nurses—but because of a government that has not properly planned the health system or allowed frontline staff to take control. Today the health minister tried to respond to the clamour about response times. The response times show how good the paramedics in this state are. They are trying to hold a system together that is at breaking point because of a government that has not planned, not listened to our solutions to improve triaging and making sure we are serious about open data, and to properly resource our hospitals and put doctors and nurses back in charge.

It is not just in law and order and health: it is in the small business community where there is genuine concern at the moment. We heard the Treasurer this morning tell them that they have never had it so good. Well, he is not speaking to the people I am listening to.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** We should take those interjections because those at the backbench, who the Premier says will never be moving, are yelling out about how great things are.

**Mr Harper:** Three per cent unemployment rate in Townsville; 14 per cent under you!

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I will take the interjection, because there is a lack of understanding about how tough things are for small and family business and their staff. Last week I spent time in both Bundaberg and Nambour. There is a sense of fear from the small and family business community and their staff about things like rising costs, electricity, insurance and their goods and services. I spoke with one small business owner in Bundaberg whose biggest concern was that, because of falling trade, they had to scale back the hours of a casual staff member. That casual staff member means a lot to that business. As a result, that casual staff member cannot stay with the business because she has to continue to pay her mortgage and she cannot. There is a feeling of disconnection from that business because that person is like family to them. These are real world decisions.



The state government will sit there and crow about figures while completely missing the point. Small and family business have never felt more pressure than what is coming. They know because, unlike the government, they can plan. Unlike the government, they know how to deliver for the long-term. Their staff are feeling it. They are seeing it with all of the rising costs that are coming, but they are not able to pass those costs on because the community is at breaking point. We are 12 months away from the kind of economic conditions this state never wants to see. It is going to be tough. It is not helped by a Treasurer who stands up and tells people they have never had it so good. So it is with a lack of planning in other issues like water security. The government has not mentioned water security once in this House in a considerable period of time.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Yes, the member for Southern Downs and the member for Nanango have mentioned it once or twice. The government's solution to a future water shortage is to hope and pray for rain. The government has not built and invested in infrastructure and is just hoping everything will be okay. The government is now talking about a myriad of schemes but there is no money, there is no planning and there is no vision from this government. Despite a rapidly growing population, the government has not kept pace with that growth. There is no detailed planning and there is no vision. There is an anti-dam agenda raging through their souls.

So it is in housing, where the government has overseen the biggest blowout in the social housing waiting list that Queenslanders have ever seen. By even its own standards the government has not met its own promises, which would have fallen beneath the mark on its own. The Auditor-General showed that the government has not been able to do everything it said it was going to do. The government has not partnered with the local government sector to deliver infrastructure to open up opportunities for young kids to buy a home or people to rent. The government has a philosophical aversion to the community housing sector. If you look at other states of both political colours across the years the community housing sector has been unleashed and they have been able to deliver for the least fortunate, but because this government has an aversion it has not done the same.

If the government were actually delivering social housing, we would understand it, but they are not and the most vulnerable are waiting. In fact, the waiting list for social housing has grown by 70 per cent while the stock on the ground has not moved by two per cent. That is a crisis created by a government with an inability to plan.

Queensland is in a frontline service delivery crisis. We are seeing it in our housing, we are seeing it in health and we are seeing it in law and order. This is a government that cannot plan or deliver. The government might very well think it is a script and a storyline, but Queenslanders are living through their horror-movie government and Queenslanders realise that this government has lost the plot.

### **Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements; Leader of the Opposition, Performance**



**Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (2.10 pm): If we had seen a parody of the opposition leader and his speech, it would be hard to tell the difference. What did we say we would do? We said we would bring unemployment down. We said we would build Cross River Rail, and we are doing it. We said we would invest in the M1, and we are doing it. We said we would invest in the Bruce Highway, and we are doing that after they only did two or three years. We said we would keep our energy assets in public hands, and that is what we did. We did not sell it off like the Leader of the Opposition was so keen to do. We said we would invest in the second M1, and we have done it. We said we would keep Townsville and Gladstone ports. We said we would build social housing, and we are doing it—not cutting it, like the member for Everton and the member for Broadwater did when they were in power.

At the core of the LNP's dishonesty is their key policy of not mentioning the pandemic or thinking about the pandemic—they pretend it did not happen. That is their policy. When we hear the opposition say, 'There hasn't been proper planning in health,' it sends a shiver down your spine because the LNP's version of proper planning is to cut the health budget, to sack the nurses, to get into fights with the doctors and to call our world's best response to the pandemic tantamount to putting a doona over your head. That is the juvenile leadership of the Leader of the Opposition. He was in the thick of it as they sacked nurses and they cut health, yet he comes in here and says that he cares. Well, Queenslanders can see through that duplicity. He is a good blaggard and a good spinner, but he has no integrity.

We know his record. They worked him out in Townsville and they will work him out on the Gold Coast. He tried to sell off the port and he tried to sell off Ergon, and the people of Townsville sent him packing, so what did he do? He went to the Gold Coast and did over the youngest female MP in the House at the time, Verity Barton. He did the numbers on her and in his lust for power he did her over. The Leader of the Opposition cannot come in here and say that he cares about women MPs when he did over the youngest female MP to get a seat in this House after deserting his home town.

In fact, the Leader of the Opposition could not get through a press conference promoting three women candidates without attacking a current woman MP as a donkey, and then he went AWOL. He hid for a whole week from the gallery. In the last sitting week, he did not stand up for the four days of the sitting week—the courage of the Leader of the Opposition, when all he had to do was stand up and say, ‘I got it wrong. I was mistaken and I’m sorry.’ He could have said that but, no, he hid under the desk, behind the cupboard, in the room, until he thought it was safe to come out. He is the master of overreach. If you want to see the definition of a master of overreach, look at the Leader of the Opposition who always goes too far. He is the boy who cried wolf, and Queenslanders are going to work him out. He is all spin, he is all deception, he is all blaggarding but he has got no content.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BAILEY:** Let us talk about the laptop. He talked about the laptop in press conference after press conference for months and months, and he was found out by the independent CCC. What did he do? Did he come out and say, ‘I’m sorry. I got it wrong’? No. What did he do? He hid, just like he did in the last parliamentary session. When the going gets tough, the Leader of the Opposition gets hiding. That is the way he deals with it.

I will give our record against theirs any day of the week. Unemployment is at three per cent. We are building Rookwood Weir, Emu Swamp Dam and two hydro dams, and they have the temerity to talk about water security. This guy is making it up as he goes along and Queenslanders are going to see through his shallowness, his lack of integrity and his unfitness for leadership.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Before I call the next speaker, I need to say that the level of interjection during that last contribution was extremely high. I will start to warn people. Luckily we have a speaker now who will bring the temperature down a bit!

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance



**Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.15 pm): That speech just came from a minister who announced a budget blowout of nearly a billion dollars on Cross River Rail and then went on leave the next day. They put an acting minister in place after he dropped his next budget blowout—a project that is now costing over \$8½ billion—and then he had to go. Steven Miles was the acting minister the day after the minister dropped his latest budget blowout. This is the man who said that anyone who promises to deliver a project on time and on budget is ‘a BS artist’, and then he stood up 10 times and said that Cross River Rail is on time and on budget.

**Mr BAILEY:** Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Well, if the cap fits, wear it.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** I will take some advice. Minister, that was clearly not a point of order and was frivolous. You are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr Crisafulli:** Ooh!

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, you can join him on a warning. That was completely inappropriate. Member for Kawana, you used some unparliamentary language during that last contribution. I ask you to withdraw and then you can continue.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. I have got great news for members of parliament.

**Mr Harper:** You’re leaving.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No. I am not leaving but you will not be here much longer, mate, I can tell you that. I take the interjection from the member for Thuringowa.

In 11 days, the keys are going to be handed back for Wellcamp, aka ‘Wastecamp’. In 11 days, the government is going to hold a big soiree—and I hope we are all invited to the show—where Premier Palaszczuk and Deputy Premier Steven Miles get this golden \$220 million white elephant key and they hand it back to the family at the Wellcamp facility. There has been \$220 million wasted on this facility.

The government want to talk about cost of living, as the Treasurer did this morning. There is \$500,000 a day being spent by the Queensland Labor government on Wellcamp—to do what? The Premier said in August last year that there were ‘quite a few ideas’ coming through on Wellcamp and what they could use it for. She said there were some really interesting ideas, and then she handballed it to the Deputy Premier. That was in August last year. What are the great ideas? What is Wellcamp being used for—other than a bank account for the Labor Party to deposit \$500,000 of Queensland taxpayer money into every day? And they want to lecture us about cost of living.

The arrogant Treasurer got up this morning and he went through his checks—one, does his button up; two, checks his tie; three, fake smile; four, mirror; and, five, goes on to tell Queenslanders how great it is for them and how great it is to live in Queensland—like there are no cost-of-living issues, no housing issues and no youth crime crisis.


The reality is that under the Palaszczuk Labor government we have seen in the last six months they have said 150 times they would make energy cheaper. Since then it has gone up 22 per cent. Traffic congestion, increased fuel bills, not enough houses which in turn drives up rent, government fees and charges—increased, of course! Rego cost is up 28 per cent under the Labor Party. Licence fees are up 25 per cent. Bulk water prices are up 45 per cent for South-East Queensland homes. Power costs are up 162 per cent under Labor from 2021 to 2022 and they do not think there is a cost-of-living crisis. Under Labor, Queenslanders are paying more. They are paying more for their water, they are paying more for their electricity, they are paying more for their fuel, they are paying more for their rego, and they are paying more school fees. Queenslanders are paying much more under the Labor government in the last eight years. The arrogant Treasurer has the hide to stand up today like there is no issue, like Queenslanders should be thankful they have a Labor government. They are not, I can assure him of that. The chaos, the crisis, the dysfunction of the Labor government, as the Leader of the Opposition says, bears a window into the souls of this government and how they operate.

Take the example of the youth justice crisis. We have been talking about the fact that we introduced an amendment for breach of bail 2½ years ago. They claim they came up with the idea. They copied it word for word. Look at the decision-making. On the 26th, Boxing Day, we had the tragic death. On the 27th and the 28th, where was the Premier? At the Woodford Folk Festival. On the 29th, the Premier stood up and announced the youth justice reforms that the Deputy Premier said they had been working on for months. The RTI documents show that was absolute rot. They concocted it while the Premier was singing *Kumbaya* at the Woodford Folk Festival. That is when they concocted this plan. Then where did the Premier go? On the 29th she came in like a white knight on a horse, saying, ‘I am solving the issues of youth justice,’ dropped the announcement and then got on an international flight and flew to Paris.

She does not care about Queenslanders anymore. The Premier has checked out from this job. The Premier is more interested in the travel, the flights, being 36,000 feet up in the air, than in fixing the issues. She is more interested in the red carpet. She is more interested in the fun of the job. We need a premier who will roll up their sleeves and help Queenslanders in their times of need.

*(Time expired)*

### Oodgeroo Electorate, Candidates

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (2.21 pm): The only chaos and crisis that is occurring is on that side of the House. What did we hear last week? The Leader of the Opposition came all the way down to Redlands, not to announce any policies or anything, but to stop the infighting that is occurring in the Oodgeroo branch. What infighting it is we are seeing down there! All the reports are that on one side of the room are Laming supporters, the other side of the room are the member for Oodgeroo supporters, screaming and yelling at each other. That is what happens when the Leader of the Opposition turns up to the meeting. Imagine what they do when he is not there! The vote came down last week and it was a narrow win. I am backing the member for Oodgeroo. I am in his corner!

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr BROWN:** I will have the member for Oodgeroo in there over Andrew Laming any day of the week. I am backing you, mate. I am backing you. The scary thing is that the member for Oodgeroo only won this vote by a couple of votes. What did Andrew Laming say about the result? He said it was a fabulous result. That says to me that Andrew Laming has a few numbers up his sleeve that he did not turn up to the meeting. Here is the crisis, here is the chaos: two blokes fighting it out for a safe seat. What do they do with the female candidate? They put her into a marginal seat to fight it out. When they

are supposedly supporting women getting into politics, what do they do—these are not my words; these are the words of the Leader of the Opposition—with the once-in-a-generation female candidate? They have to fight it out in the marginal seat. What do they do with the safe seat? The two blokes fight it out going to war with each other. Do not take my word about the shambolic situation down in Oodgeroo. These are the words of the members themselves down there. They called the meeting ‘shambolic’. I cannot use the other term because it is unparliamentary, but I will say it was a ‘No. 2 show’ down there. It is unbelievable to see the war that is occurring down there with the LNP.

Put this on top of the fact that who else is the LNP representative down in Redlands? It is the mayor herself. So there is the drunken mayor, the community service mayor, tipped in alongside the Andrew Laming and the member for Oodgeroo. It says a lot about the situation and the talent in Redlands.


I would like to say again that I do back the member for Oodgeroo. I do hope he gets up. I note that the Leader of the Opposition came down to support the member for Oodgeroo in his attempts to regain the seat. I do not think it has done him any good, but I hope he comes out a fair bit more.

It is a real shame that the only time the Leader of the Opposition comes out to Redlands is to stop infighting within the LNP; not to announce any policies—they do not have any policies themselves—not to talk to constituents, not to have a look at the brand new car park that we just opened at the Redlands Hospital, not to look at the new satellite hospital that we are building down there, not to look at the new school that we building down there, or not to look at the new school halls that we are building down there.

The infrastructure that we are getting on and delivering is in stark contrast to when they were last in government. We get on with it. They fight each other. They have all-out wars down there. We get along with each other—the member for Springwood, the member for Redlands and I—and we are focused on delivering for the people of Redlands.

The only side that has chaos and crisis is those opposite, every single day of the week, and I look forward to the upcoming months to see what the result is in Oodgeroo because every day of their infighting means another day that I can go out there and talk to constituents about everything we are doing, compare and contrast, show that we are delivering, whether it be the hospital, whether it be the TAFE—I know the minister for TAFE is over there. We have absolutely upgraded and transferred. They wanted to close it down and sell it off, but in comparison we are getting on with the business. The chaos and crisis is only on that side of the House. I hope they keep up the fighting with each other.

## Women

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.26 pm): In regards to respect for women, certainly we understand that it does not know political colours. When a woman speaks up and says she has been hurt, when she has been disrespected, when she has been controlled or abused by a man, the first question we ask is certainly not, ‘What political affiliation do you have? What political party do you belong to?’, or worse still, ‘What is the political affiliation of the person you are making a complaint about?’ ‘We see you. We hear you. We believe you’: words I have heard in this House spoken by many on the opposite side, yet when it comes to a woman who has spoken out publicly against a member of their own party—silence, crickets. Once again, we see strong words from those opposite in regards to prevention of violence against women, yet we see no action.

In a government response to *Not now, not ever*, the Premier’s foreword stated—

As a government, we cannot achieve change alone. We need to embark on this journey as a community and together take responsibility for the cultural change we wish to achieve. We must ask ourselves “what can I do?”.

Culture starts at the top, and at the top of this government, the leadership has checked out. Whether you point to any boardroom, any organisation and particularly this government, we know culture starts at the top. The hypocrisy of this Premier and of this Attorney-General when it comes to violence against women has been demonstrated time after time in this House. When does the Premier stand up for women? Only when it does not hurt her own reputation. When does the Minister for Women and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence stand up for women? Only when it does not reflect badly on the government and when she is not too busy playing bullying tactics to the women of the opposite side.

We saw it again last year with the complete debacle of the DNA lab. The government blamed victims; the government blamed police. The government blamed everyone but their own departments. We saw it with inadequate rape kits. Once again, victims were blamed and billed for their own rape kit that was inadequate and not even up to a standard that we should accept. We see it again and again and again.

We see the hypocrisy demonstrated by this government. We saw it again when a member of government, the member for Ferny Grove, came in and criticised one of the women on this side of the House.

**Mr Fumer:** And apologised. And apologised.

**Ms CAMM:** I will take the interjection. The member did apologise, but what did we hear from the women on that side of the House? From the Premier and the Attorney-General there was silence. There was absolutely nothing. There was no calling out of that behaviour. This Premier always has someone else to blame and someone else who will deal with it. Whether it is the Labor Party as it is in this case, whether it is the police or whether it is the Clerk of the Parliament, it is always someone else's fault and it is always up to someone else to take accountability because the Premier will not take accountability and there is a lack of leadership.

It is not for me or others in this House to judge the allegations that have been reported in the media against the member for Ipswich West. I do acknowledge his announcement in the House today. What concerns me is the complete inability of this Premier to listen to women from all backgrounds. A woman is no less a woman because of her political persuasion. A woman is no less a woman because of her religious affiliation. A woman is no less a woman based upon where she lives in this state and a woman's story is no less real, no less traumatic because the person she alleges receiving harm from is from the Labor Party.

This Attorney-General and this Premier are full of hypocrisy. We heard it just then from the member for Capalaba, who took five minutes to speak about our party's internal workings instead of his own community. He called out a long-serving mayor who made her own admission, went through the process, has said sorry and has come out the other side like many people before her. He criticised a woman, a woman member of the LNP, a woman member who is the mayor of a large community, but he cannot look to his own colleagues who have been on drunken nights out and certainly have been charged and had their day in court. The hypocrisy of this government is starting to show and people are awake to it. Those opposite cannot stand up and say they are listening to women when it is only when it suits them.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, you need to be in your own seat if you want to engage in the debate.

**Ms CAMM:** The Premier said that she was very concerned when it came to allegations made against the member for Ipswich West. I say to the Premier if she is so concerned, what action is she going to take? What is the standard that this Premier and this Attorney-General will set, because all we see is lip-service and no action?

## Resources Industries



**Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (2.32 pm): I rise to speak about how we are continuing to deliver for the resource industry throughout Queensland and why it is so important for regions like Townsville. Currently the industry supports around 75,000 good jobs with the majority of these being based in regional Queensland.

As a government we value the resource industry for the jobs it supports directly and indirectly along with the royalties it generates, which support our police officers, teachers, hospitals and infrastructure right throughout Queensland. That is why the Palaszczuk government is backing our critical minerals sector, which is shaping up to be the next big mining boom. That just does not happen by accident.

Today the Treasurer and I announced the next stage of the \$75 million Queensland resources common user facility. The call has gone out for a managing contractor to deliver this Australian first processing facility in Townsville. Once again, Queensland is ahead of the game. There is no comparable pilot or demonstration scale facility anywhere in Australia or in the Asia-Pacific. The state government owned facility will initially focus on vanadium processing with the opportunity to process other critical minerals like cobalt and rare earth elements in the future. We know the North West

Minerals Province has an abundance of critical minerals like vanadium which will be used in products like batteries. In fact, yesterday and today the Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Development Zone, or MITEZ, held a forum focusing on vanadium where a number of proponents are discussing the opportunities on offer in the region.

We know there are great opportunities for good jobs through growing our own critical minerals sector, but the work is just beginning. That is why as a government we are supporting the resource industry to deliver this facility and we will continue to deliver for all Queenslanders. This is unlike those opposite, who have not uttered a single word about this investment. Maybe that is because they are planning to add it to their long list of cuts which we now know includes CopperString 2032, a project which will transform the north-west of our great state. CopperString will allow us to unlock the vast reserves of critical minerals in the North West Minerals Province like copper, zinc, vanadium and cobalt. These are the minerals the world is demanding in order to produce batteries and renewable energy as part of their plans to decarbonise. I have said it before and I will say it again: you cannot have a strong renewable energy sector without a strong resources sector. That is why CopperString 2032 is so important.

It will create opportunities for resource companies to develop these critical minerals projects and the broader North West Minerals Province as well as renewable energy in the area. The member for Traeger gets it. In fact, he thanked the Premier during Townsville Enterprise's Unlock the North event held in Parliament House last sitting week. What did the Leader of the Opposition say about CopperString during the event? Nothing. The LNP have no original thoughts about how to grow the resource industry. They do have plenty of unoriginal thoughts though, and that is to cut the Queensland resources common user facility along with CopperString 2032. It is in their DNA.

As a government we are focused on delivering for all Queenslanders. The Leader of the Opposition is focused on whingeing and whining, cutting, sacking and selling. In fact, he deserves a gold medal for it. Do honourable members know where he will get his hands on one? It will be Ravenswood Gold, which last week officially opened its expansion project, becoming Queensland's largest goldmine. This is an amazing project which delivered 1,000 good jobs during construction and is now supporting hundreds during its operation. More than 1,000 contractors were supported during the mine's expansion while its permanent workforce has increased to more than 430 with a further 220 permanent contractors.

What I would like to see is the gold medals for the 2032 Olympics produced using gold from the Ravenswood mine. This will put the spotlight firmly on the resources industry when all eyes will be on Queensland in 2032 for the Olympics. Queensland is a leader on the world stage when it comes to our resources industry and during the World Mining Congress in Brisbane we will have the opportunity to be right in that spotlight. Holding this event in Queensland recognises our state's strong global reputation when it comes to our resources sector.

Let me say this. The resource industry matters to Queensland and to all Queenslanders. It supports good jobs for thousands of people. That is why the Palaszczuk government is working with industry to help grow it now and into the future.

## Housing



**Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.36 pm): Queensland, as we all know, is in the midst of a housing and homelessness epidemic and this government is deliberately making it harder for people to get into social housing. There are around 200,000 households in housing stress and, according to the Community Housing Industry Association, that number will increase by almost 50 per cent by 2041. Queensland has historic low rental vacancy rates at the same time as more people than ever are relying on the private rental market, a market so weakly regulated that private landlords can exploit renters, drive up rents and kick them out with no good reason. We do not just need more houses that no-one can afford. We need affordable and social housing.

Under Labor's current plans things will only get worse. Over the next few years Queensland will lose almost 6,000 affordable homes from the scrapped NRAS scheme. That is equivalent to almost 10 per cent of all our social housing, but there is no comprehensive rescue plan to buy those houses for social housing. Meanwhile, this government's federal Labor colleagues plan to gamble public money on the stock market rather than just building new public homes, but that is the Labor way it seems. The state government has built just 4,000 units of social housing since 2014. During that same time they have sold more than 2,000 public housing properties into the private market. As far as any of us can tell, their Housing Investment Fund has not yet built a single home almost two years after its inception.

Because of this government, there is a shortfall of 31,000 social homes in Queensland, 46,000 people are on the social housing waitlist and it has almost doubled since 2018. But they have a neat solution to that pesky problem! Instead of housing people on the list, they will just prevent as many as they can getting onto that list in the first place. Over the last few years the government has quietly tightened the eligibility criteria for social housing to obscure the ballooning waitlist numbers. They have repeatedly denied it, but whistleblowers working in the housing department continue to contact me with clear evidence that the criteria have changed. Last year the Queensland Audit Office found that since 2019 the government has only accepted social housing applicants deemed as high risk, meaning countless Queenslanders, people in dire need of housing support, are falling through the cracks when just a few years ago they would have been eligible for social housing.

As well as meeting income thresholds and having a clear need to move, people now need to have multiple and complex wellbeing factors—like being homeless, having been evicted more than twice in the last three years or being unemployed long-term—before they can even register for social housing. This requirement did not exist prior to 2019. Last week the *Guardian* revealed that this tight set of criteria is compounded by the unusually low income thresholds the government sets for social housing eligibility. Limits on weekly gross income for a two-person household are lower in Queensland than in any other Australian state or territory with publicly available criteria, and they are lower by hundreds of dollars. This means that Queensland families like the Orlandos, whose story the *Guardian* reported last week, are being shut out from social housing.

Last year, Susanne and Richard Orlando, who is disabled, were evicted from their Gold Coast NRAS home which they shared with their autistic son, Wayde. They have struggled to find a rental in Queensland's hostile private market and have no income or assets other than Centrelink. They have been told that they are not eligible for social housing because the family earns more than the \$877 per week before-tax threshold. This is Queensland Labor's housing system working precisely as it is designed to. They would rather turn people away into homelessness than simply build more social housing. Q Shelter's Better Together framework, released last month, pointed out that the growth in social and affordable housing supply has not kept pace with demand in Queensland, not by a long shot. The 0.3 per cent annual growth is well below the 6½ to 7½ per cent growth that is required. People are sleeping in cars and tents while this government brunches with real estate lobbyists, making the crisis worse.

Let us be clear: real solutions to the housing crisis are bad for the real estate industry. Public housing and rent caps would make it harder for private property investors to charge extortionate rents. Real solutions are bad for the bottom line of Labor Party donors and the property portfolios of Labor ministers. That is why they do not want real solutions. Real solutions are what the thousands of Queenslanders in housing stress need. That is why the Greens will continue to fight for real solutions to increase the supply of social and affordable housing—real solutions like a rent freeze, a real cap on the amount of rent increases, an empty homes tax on vacant properties and Airbnb short-stays, inclusionary zoning and building more social homes.

### **Liberal National Party, Women; Voice to Parliament**



**Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (2.42 pm): It is always an interesting experience to listen to LNP members' speeches while waiting to give your own speech. I feel quite incredulous at some of the perceptions they have of themselves. I was fascinated to see the member for Whitsunday taking the high moral ground when it comes to political parties supporting women. You have to admire the women in the LNP. It must be pretty tough being in that party if you are a woman. There are literally six of them. When there are six women in the whole party, they cannot take the high moral ground when it comes to women.

The biggest prize always goes to the opposition leader. We heard him speak before about 'everywhere he goes all around Queensland'. I have only noticed him in marginal seats—in their marginal seats or ours. I do not think he cares about the rest of Queensland. He is always talking about how he worries about the things people worry about and how he knows they are so stressed because he has been talking to them. In my experience as a member for parliament, what people really want to hear from politicians is that we have a plan and a policy, that if they have a problem we have a plan to fix it. They want to know where we stand on things and that we have a heart. Earlier the Leader of the Opposition was talking about small business. I do not think he has mentioned small business in any budget reply speech. They certainly have never taken a small business policy to the election.

Those opposite carry on about youth justice. The youth justice minister could have talked for 20 minutes this morning about the list of policies we have. I have only ever heard them say one thing about their plan for youth justice—one single thing. They talk about how much people are worried about youth crime, but they have one thing and they have been saying the same thing over and over again. I have not heard them talk once about their plans for housing. I have heard them attack. I have not heard them talk once about one of the fundamental issues affecting us, and that is housing. They do not have a plan or a policy.

The big question we are all thinking about at the moment is the Voice to Parliament. People need to know where we stand on things; they need to know that we have a heart. This government is absolutely clear that we stand with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and say that they should have a voice on the things that affect them. We know where Peter Dutton stands on this issue. This is the man who walked out in the middle of Kevin Rudd's apology to the stolen generation, to people who had been forcibly taken from their homes as children. Who does that? He has come out and said that they are not going to be supporting Voice. We know that the National Party is not going to be supporting Voice. I do not agree with them, but we are clear on where they stand.

When it comes to those opposite, it is still not clear. We do not know what the LNP in Queensland will do about Voice. The real truth is that the LNP has internal factions. We know that they have fights about targets for women. We know that some of them want to have targets for women and some do not. The opposition leader does not want to upset everybody. He has people who do not want to support Voice and others who do. I will tell members what it looks like in the LNP to stand up for what you believe in and to have a heart. It is people like Ken Wyatt, who was the minister, and Julian Leeser, who was the shadow minister, who have walked away publicly and relinquished their positions. It is people like Pat Farmer, a former federal Liberal MP, who is walking around Australia. They are Liberals with heart.

I do not know if the member for Surfers Paradise has read the Uluru Statement from the Heart yet, but I will never forget the moment last year when he said, 'How should I know how to vote on this when I have not even read it yet?' It is 493 words long. How will the members for Clayfield and Moggill tell their inner-city voters what they are going to do on Voice?

**Dr Rowan** interjected.

**Ms FARMER:** He might pretend that he is not worried, but he is on one per cent. He is so worried. The member for Moggill is absolutely terrified. What will the member for Bonney, who is supposed to be the voice of social conscience, say to his constituents? Those opposite are absolutely terrified. Then there are the ones on the right side, who are edging behind, saying, 'Buddy, you had better not go out and support Voice.' At some time in the immediate future Queenslanders will want to know where those opposite stand. Is it 'yes' or is it 'no' for First Nations people?

## Health System



**Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.46 pm): I start my contribution today with these words: 'just going from one crisis to another'. They are quite profound words, aren't they? A crisis—and not just one but many. It is no small thing—one crisis to another, and another, and another, and another. It is chaos. That is Queensland Health under the Palaszczuk government. They just keep coming, and that is because Queensland Health is in crisis. Do not take my word for it, because the words that I started with—just one crisis to another—are not my words; they are the words of the health minister's chief of staff. I am not sure that truer words have ever been spoken.

The chorus acknowledging the crisis is now so loud that it cannot be ignored. Patients, doctors, nurses, paramedics, allied health staff—they call it a crisis. The minister's own chief of staff calls it a crisis. It is a crisis, yet the minister will not acknowledge it. How on earth can this minister fix the problems besieging our health system if she cannot even acknowledge how dire the situation is? That is a very legitimate question that the minister has not been able to come to grips with. One cannot fix a problem if one is not willing to acknowledge that it is even there, yet that very situation is playing out before our eyes. There are clearly people around the minister who believe it to be true.

It is a situation where the government is lurching from one crisis to another and it has descended into chaos. It seems like the minister is the last person in Queensland who will acknowledge it. That crisis extends to the maternity services on bypass across the state—in Gladstone, Biloela, Cooktown and Chinchilla; it extends to our emergency departments, where thousands and thousands of patients are spending more than 24 hours; and, of course, it extends to the hospital ramps, where ambulance after ambulance sits ramped for hours and hours.



Those paramedics cannot get back out on the road and the patients they are with sit stuck on the stretcher waiting for a bed that could be hours or, in some cases, days away. We have the worst ambulance ramping in the nation here in Queensland, and that is a fact. It is an unwanted title but sadly the Palaszczuk government owns it, and today the extent of the ramping crisis has been totally laid bare. Last year our paramedics sat on ambulance ramps for 147,000 hours. That means that they sat with their patients idling on the ramp for 400 hours every single day in 2022. That has broken the record for the number of hours our ambulances have been stuck on ramps. It is the equivalent of having 40 ambulances off the road every single day. Nearly 49,000 hours were lost across South Brisbane and close to 30,000 hours across North Brisbane. Across the Wide Bay lost hours have increased by 104 per cent since last year. It beggars belief. How did it come to this and how deep does this crisis run?

I want to share with the House the impacts of this, because there are real implications for Queenslanders because the government has lost control of healthcare services in Queensland. Last week on 12 April five-year-old Thomas severely broke his arm at his local park. His mother, Jessica, forwarded us the images of the break, and it is truly horrific how broken poor little Thomas's arm really was. An off-duty QAS dispatch officer was luckily nearby and assisted with the triple-O call and in trying to keep Thomas calm and from inflicting any further damage to his badly broken limb. While on the phone they were told that no ambulance was available and that the wait was likely to be more than an hour. Together, Thomas, his mum, Jessica, and the off-duty dispatcher travelled to QEII's emergency department. After receiving pain medication intravenously and under heavy sedation, doctors worked to try and reset his arm unsuccessfully. Emergency surgery was required and the family was able to organise for Thomas to quickly go into the private system. Here is the kicker: after calling for an ambulance to transfer Thomas, the doctor had to come back in to tell Jessica that again no ambulance was available. With a cannula still stuck in his arm and under twilight sedation, Jessica had to get Thomas into a car to take him to a private facility.

*(Time expired)*

### Gladstone Hospital, Maternity Services



**Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (2.51 pm): Today I rise to talk about maternity services in Gladstone.

**Mr Head:** Finally!

**Mr BUTCHER:** The member for Callide is the last person I want to hear in this chamber today. I said that we would restore these services, and that is exactly what we are doing. Amidst a nationwide shortage of obstetricians, we have secured more doctors and we are an important step closer to returning all services. Women who are in low-risk categories in Gladstone can now have their babies in the hospital that we know and love in Gladstone. We worked continuously to ensure the return of these services by the middle of this year. We know how tough it is, as do those opposite, to recruit specialist obstetricians not only in Queensland but in Australia.

**Mr Head** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Callide, you are warned.

**Mr BUTCHER:** We have even had to spread our net internationally to get obstetricians to come to Australia, and that is progressing well. As we have said, there is still more to do, but this step means that over half of the women identified who would have had to travel to Rockhampton will no longer have to do that. There has been a lot of rhetoric from those opposite making all sorts of claims in my local community, fearmongering that maternity services would never, ever return to the Gladstone Hospital. That was never, ever going to be the case.

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order, member for Mudgeeraba.

**Mr BUTCHER:** We committed to returning services to Gladstone in a staged approach as we said we would do when it was safe to do so, and that is exactly the plan that we have in place which is working right now. To be clear once and for all, in October the Leader of the Opposition came into my community and said to the women of Gladstone that once a maternity service goes on bypass it never, ever comes back. That was a lie and he knew that. He knew that he was lying to the women of my community. I am not sure—

**Mr WATTS:** Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Resume your seat. I will just take some advice before I take your point of order. Member, you have used—

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Mudgeeraba, you are warned. Member for Gladstone, you have used some unparliamentary language. I would ask you to withdraw it.

**Mr BUTCHER:** I withdraw.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Does that satisfy you, member for Toowoomba North? If so, I call the member for Gladstone.

**Mr BUTCHER:** I am not sure what the opposition leader's agenda was, whether it was just to cause fear or to spread more negativity about our health services or simply just dog whistling in my community. It does not matter what his agenda was; it was gutter politics designed to scare the expectant mothers in my electorate and in my community. The Leader of the Opposition should be ashamed and he should apologise to the Gladstone community, especially to the mothers in Gladstone. In response to his fearmongering and that of the LNP, I did put my job on the line. I wanted my community to know how serious I was about getting this issue fixed and I said that we would return this service, and we are. I am not going to stop fighting for my community in Gladstone and the mothers and children in the Gladstone community, and I am not going anywhere. For the information of those opposite, I am going to stick around and assure the mothers and babies in my electorate that the Gladstone Hospital will continue to service the community of Gladstone.

My wife delivered two babies in the Gladstone Hospital and we have also had two beautiful little granddaughters recently, so I know how tough it has been for mothers in the Gladstone community. That is why I have been fighting so hard to make sure we get the staged approach right and we started to deliver on that staged approach, and that is exactly what we are doing right now. I know how important it is to have those services so that mothers are able to birth there so that they have their support network around them with family close by. There is no doubt that the bypass has certainly caused serious distress to pregnant women and their families in my community and I wish to acknowledge the anxiety of those expectant mothers and want to apologise for that. I also want to thank them for their patience and their understanding while we worked through this staged approach to get maternity services back in Gladstone.

I also want to thank those in my community who have advocated for the return of this service. I have met with many mothers in my office who have talked to me about this issue and returning those services, and advocate groups have certainly been looking to ensure that these services come back. Most of all during this whole time I want to thank the nurses and the maternity staff who have been helping the mothers and expectant mothers in the Gladstone region and ensuring that those delivering in Rockhampton were looked after and that they had the support needed from not only the Rockhampton Hospital but also the nurses and midwives from Gladstone who were travelling with them to ensure that those births were done safely and in a timely manner. As I said, we are working on a staged approach. We are delivering the service back to Gladstone and those opposite should be ashamed of themselves for saying that we are not.

## ACTING SPEAKER'S RULING

### Same Question Rule



**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the government has circulated amendments proposed to be moved to the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022. Government amendment No. 2 seeks to amend sections 91, 105 and 277 of the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 to adjust provisions relating to rent increases and the ending of residential tenancy agreements. I note that sections 91, 105 and 277 were considered by the Housing Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, which was passed in the same session of this parliament.

Standing order 87 provides that, once the House has resolved a matter in the affirmative or negative, the same question shall not again be proposed in the same session. Standing order 150 provides that no amendment shall be moved which is inconsistent with one already agreed to by the

House. Government amendment No. 2 proposes amendments to sections 91, 105 and 277 that are inconsistent with amendments previously considered and agreed to by the House in the same session of parliament. This is contrary to standing orders 87 and 150. Accordingly, I rule that the same question rule is enlivened by government amendment No. 2. A motion to suspend standing orders 87 and 150 would be required for this amendment to be considered.

## MOTION

### Suspension of Standing Orders



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.00 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, with respect to the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill, standing orders 87 and 150 be suspended to allow the bill and any amendments circulated by the minister to be moved and considered.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION (EXPENDITURE CAPS) AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 939, on motion of Dr Miles—

That the bill be now read a second time.



**Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.00 pm), continuing: In continuing my contribution to this legislation, this is an incredibly important aspect and one which the Liberal National Party fully supports, which is why, as articulated by the shadow minister for local government, the Liberal National Party will be moving its amendment to include this statutory review.

Queenslanders deserve nothing less than to know that their democratic institutions and the processes of electing their representatives are sound and capable. A government that is committed to integrity, transparency and accountability would ensure that having made a substantial change to its electoral system it would review these changes to ensure they properly serve the community. As we know, when the Labor state government last made significant changes via stage 2 of the Belcarra report, it promised a government review within two years. Queenslanders are still waiting for that review.

The Liberal National Party is not opposed to this bill. That being said, there is no doubt that the introduction of a comprehensive expenditure caps scheme for local government elections is still a significant change to the electoral system in Queensland. Accordingly, the Liberal National Party has every right to be concerned with the Palaszczuk state Labor government's track record and history of electoral changes that have been made in the state of Queensland. Who could forget, with less than 20 minutes notice, Labor's complete overhaul of the voting system for Queensland state elections, which was solely for the benefit of the Labor Party.

Further, there are still concerns that the Palaszczuk state Labor government's severe and one-sided laws allow Labor, through the unions, to collect millions of dollars more than other parties to be spent on elections. Labor and the unions combined already have an election spend advantage of 26 to 1 at Queensland state elections and this legislation will allow the same arrangement for Brisbane City Council and other local government elections as well.

In my remaining time I wish to stress the importance of the Palaszczuk state Labor government ensuring that the operation of the upcoming local government elections are properly resourced with all participating fully aware of their obligations with appropriate training provided. The Electoral Commission of Queensland has already advised that, whilst it is confident it will be able to administer this new scheme and provide the appropriate training to candidates and parties, it will require additional staffing and budgetary resourcing to meet these objectives. With only a year before the next local government elections time is fast running out. Queensland cannot again become a national embarrassment, as it was in 2020 when the local government elections were beset with a multitude of operational issues due to Labor's failure to ensure adequate resourcing of the Electoral Commission of Queensland. It is incumbent on the Palaszczuk state Labor government to ensure that these reforms


are implemented properly and carefully and with a strong attention to detail. It is also vitally important that a comprehensive statutory review takes place after 12 months of the local government elections. I encourage all members of the Queensland parliament to support the Liberal National Party's amendment.

Whilst on the subject of local government, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the dedication and service of two outstanding local government councillors, Councillor David McLachlan and Councillor Peter Matic, both of whom have announced they will not recontest the 2024 local government elections. Both Councillor McLachlan and Councillor Matic have served the people of Brisbane and their respective wards of Hamilton and Paddington for 16 and 17 years respectively and both councillors have been instrumental in delivering significant public transport, parks and local road improvements throughout their communities and worked tirelessly for the people of Brisbane during its significant weather and flooding events. I thank them for their service and wish them all the best for the future.

Finally, I wish to briefly address the amendments as introduced by the Deputy Premier pertaining to tenancy and housing. The inclusion of these amendments is totally representative of this third-term Labor government's chaotic and dysfunctional approach to good policy and good government here in Queensland. As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for housing and public works, the member for Everton, alluded to earlier in this debate, the real reason why these amendments have been rushed through and included with this totally unrelated legislation is because the Labor state government does not want these amendments to be subjected to the full scrutiny and proper parliamentary committee processes. This is certainly no way to govern Queensland. Labor has rushed through these amendments because it has to be seen to be doing something. It has failed to act over a long period of time and now it is trying to urgently rush these through without proper scrutiny. Queenslanders know that this Labor state government has failed to comprehensively address Queensland's housing and rental crisis, a crisis that has occurred under the watch of this Labor state government over the last eight years.

Since coming to power in 2015 this Labor government has overseen a 33 per cent decrease in the trend of lot approvals, which is equivalent to 60,000 houses that could have been built but have not been built because Labor will not address social and affordable housing. This is a crisis that continues to worsen under this Labor state government. Yet again, as these amendments show, Labor has failed to strike an appropriate balance between the rights and responsibilities of both renters and landlords in Queensland. At a time when rental market vacancy rates are the tightest they have ever been, when we are seeing almost daily stories of Queenslanders struggling to find a rental property—they are sleeping in tents or in their cars—Queenslanders deserve better than the rushed and ill-thought-out, last-minute amendments that have been added to this legislation.

The Labor government could have properly planned and considered these amendments by going through the proper scrutiny and oversight mechanisms that exist here in the Queensland parliament. They have failed to do that and that is why we have a housing affordability crisis here in Queensland combined with the cost-of-living crisis which this Labor government is completely out of touch with. They are not listening to Queenslanders when it comes to these issues. Queenslanders are struggling. At the last minute we have seen this included within this totally unrelated legislation. If the government were properly planning and considering how to respond to these issues, both housing affordability matters related to those who are renting as well as cost-of-living pressures, it would consider it more thoughtfully and go through the proper and rigorous process to ensure that the right policy framework was implemented to ensure that it delivered for Queenslanders.

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (3.07 pm): If the LNP do not want to support that part of the bill that the member for Moggill has talked about then do not support it and go back into their electorates, especially the inner city Brisbane electorates, and tell people in vulnerable rental situations why they do not want to back it. They should not be coming in here beating their chest and saying, 'We would have done great rental reform. It should be going through this process and that', and then vote for it. Actually stand up for it. It reminds me of a certain Leader of the Opposition who does not want to make a stand on the Voice. Those opposite are a very confused party at the moment and are in a bit of warfare. On a slight matter of indulgence, it is nice not to be the most marginal seat in Queensland any more. That is now the member for Oodgeroo with two votes. It is very liberating.

The Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill is an important piece of legislation because it creates fairness at the local government level. Quite often we hear councillors talk about being the government closest to the community. I will not challenge that. Many councillors come from grassroots community organisations. They are a mum or dad who may

have launched a petition about a particular road. When they want to put up their hand they should be encouraged to go through an election campaign based more on ideas than on donations and expenditure. This legislation brings back that level of fairness so that local government campaigns do not become about money in the pocket and what you are willing to spend but more about ideas and what is best for the local community and, specifically, for local divisions. The LGAQ very much agree with this. They mention in their submission to the committee that at the previous 2020 local government elections in Townsville one group who came together expended \$539,914 and their mayoral candidate, in addition to that, expended \$99,000. This bill is about making it fairer, about a contest of ideas, as it should be, especially at the local government level.

With the local government elections coming up, the people of Bundaberg are very keen to know how this legislation will reform the council. The Bundaberg mayoral cap falls under band 2, which will allow mayoral candidates to expend \$68,900. That is based on an amount of \$1 per elector for local governments with 30,001 electors to 150,000 electors. It is important for people in all local government communities, especially Bundaberg, to know what the new cap for their mayoral candidates is. For councillors it is \$15,000, which is in line with the sliding scale for local governments in divisions or areas that encompass not more than 20,000 electors. Generally, in Bundaberg there are about 6,800 electors in each division, which is what this is based on, so it is \$15,000 for councillors and mayoral candidates get \$68,900. I think that is fair and reasonable. In Bundaberg what we need is a contest of ideas on the ground and not a contest where big business backs one or two particular people.

It is important that there is a training element to this. The member for Bancroft spoke about the importance of training. It is important to make sure that councillors and potential councillors are trained not only in local government matters and the act but also in expenditure. If it is your first-ever election campaign it can be quite difficult to understand the financial impost and what you can receive through donations and what you can spend. We want to ensure that a local government election is clear and easy for all candidates who wish to put up their hands.

I will touch quickly on concerns raised by the Queensland Law Society in the public briefing, in particular, around the wording 'electoral expenditure' in section 109A and 'campaign purpose' in section 109B, more specifically as it relates to section 109B(1)(c). Their concern was about third parties that may participate in a campaign or make a general statement during a campaign. The Queensland Law Society's concern was around charities, local community groups and organisations wishing to publish material saying 'make sure that at this local government election you support candidates who support koalas'. That is my example. The Queensland Law Society was worried that local charity groups and community organisations would be at risk under this legislation, if they were to go over their caps, of being hit with a penalty unit.

It was very good to have the Electoral Commission come to the briefing later on as they made it very clear that they do a dominant purpose test to make a determination about what the material is actually campaigning for. It has to be very specific, which is what the bill will ensure. It would not be a broad-bush simple statement like 'make sure you vote for the environment', because clearly the environment is not a candidate. However, if a local church group or organisation were to nominate a particular candidate then, of course, the dominant aspect of that campaign is to see an individual elected as opposed to a general cause or belief.

I will quote Mr Thurlby on two matters. He said there is a dominant purpose test—

... for a purpose of promoting an issue of public policy and that is the dominant purpose, then it will not be electoral expenditure even if it is also for a campaign purpose.

He went on to say—

As a general response, again without seeing the specifics of any particular material, I think if a candidate was specifically named that is a very different type of material as opposed to, 'This is an issue you should consider when voting,' ...

Members need not take my word for it; those are words from the Electoral Commission of Queensland. They made that very clear and the concerns of the Queensland Law Society have been directly responded to on that particular matter. I think that is very important.


I move onto the LNP's amendment, which is an amendment for the sake of an amendment. Perhaps they got to a point where they said, 'We don't have any more speaking notes. What do we need to do? Why don't we just put in an amendment?' The committee has already ensured that 12 months after the 2024 elections the department and the Electoral Commission of Queensland will do a review. When the department and the Electoral Commission submit their review, guess what? The committee will be able to see that and the committee, if they so wish in the future, will be able to call in the department and ask the department questions. To legislate that there will be a review 12 months after the 2024 local government elections is just an amendment for the sake of an amendment. The

department and the ECQ are already going to do a review. Why then would you legislate for a committee to do the job that the committee is doing anyway? I think they scratched their heads and said, 'What can we do? I've got it! By jingo, I've got it! We will put in an amendment.'

I will touch very briefly on housing. Only the Palaszczuk Labor government is actually taking steps towards rental reforms, social and affordable housing and making sure that we look after the more vulnerable in Queensland. Across the chamber we have the Greens who are backing in their federal comrades as they try to block \$10 million in housing investment. On the other side we have the LNP who are in cohorts with the Greens. Some might say they are not green with envy but are a little bit teal with envy about what the Greens are doing federally. We do know the record of the LNP when it comes to housing. When they were in government they cut 94 per cent of construction. Cutting 94 per cent of housing construction is the record of the LNP under the Campbell Newman government. As I raised in the last sitting week, between 2012 and 2014 the LNP did not deliver 10 social homes but only commenced 10 social homes.

**Mr Sullivan:** The whole time.

**Mr SMITH:** I take that interjection. In three years they only commenced 10 social homes—not completed. In one financial, the previous financial year, in Bundaberg the Palaszczuk Labor government delivered 18 social homes. The Labor government completed 18 social home projects as opposed to the LNP which only commenced 10 in three years. It is only the Palaszczuk Labor government that is delivering on rental reform, that is delivering cost-of-living ease and that is delivering for the battlers who are the new face of vulnerability because the private market has crashed. Guess what? We have the Housing Investment Fund to help generate the private market as well.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.16 pm): The Gregory electorate covers nine local government areas and part of a 10th shire as well. In many ways, it is the level of government that my constituents have the most dealings with and it is fundamental to sustaining our quality of life in rural and regional Queensland. In other words, it is a big deal.

Of course, Queenslanders know how this Palaszczuk Labor government fiddled with the councillor complaints system to the point where it broke. We saw an outstanding local leader in Central Queensland, Margaret Strelow, a former mayor of Rockhampton, resign in protest at what was widely seen as her being targeted by the Labor Party that she once loyally supported. Then we saw Councillor Sean Dillon, Mayor of the Barcaldine Regional Council, investigated for doing his job and, as it turned out, being right about how to deliver COVID vaccines in the Barcaldine shire. We saw the OIA, which is responsible for overseeing the councillor complaints system, so under-resourced that complaints were left hanging over councillors' heads and overshadowing council elections.

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr MILLAR:** I take that interjection. I am not making it up. Those are facts. Who can forget when Labor tried to introduce compulsory preferential voting for local government elections in 2019? The backlash from both the local government sector and the ratepayers of Queensland was so severe that the Palaszczuk government was forced to abandon the plan at the last minute. They removed the provision during consideration in detail when the bill was debated in this House. Such a provision offended Queenslanders because they do not want to see party politics creep into local government.

The LNP has been consistently supporting councils' collective positions on their voting systems. I am concerned about how this bill's provisions around third-party expenditure will unfold on the ground. When we cap expenditure for candidates we need to pay real attention to campaigning by third parties, at both state and local government levels. It is at the local government level that third parties such as unions can potentially capture elections and, by doing so, capture the local council.

The committee's third recommendation has crucial importance to today's debate. The committee recommended that the department consider conducting a review of the bill's operation within 12 months of the 2024 local government elections and that the key findings of the review be published. I will emphasise that by saying it again: that the key findings of such a review be published. The government is rightly famous for the number of reviews it undertakes and its reluctance to publicly release the findings. I believe a review after the 2024 local government elections is absolutely imperative and, as such, it should be part of the legislation.

The type of review is as important as the timing. I do not think it should be a departmental review where ministerial spin doctors can get to edit the report before publication. Such a review should be conducted by the parliamentary committee itself, with any and all submissions published on the

parliament's website and public hearings held. The publishing of submissions is vital so that ratepayers can see both what is happening in their shire and whether that experience was shared by ratepayers and other shires.

As I said in my opening remarks, we cannot forget when the Palaszczuk government in the dead of night—with less than 20 minutes notice—completely changed the voting system for state elections. Given this shameful record, I am not surprised that this legislation contains a handy little provision which will allow the state government of the day to change the definition of 'electoral expenditure' by regulation alone, with no oversight from parliament or its committees. Mark my words: this is not accidental or incidental. It is a provision which will allow the state government of the day to manipulate the system to benefit its candidates and its preferred groups.


In its submission to the committee the Queensland Law Society also expressed this view, saying that the ability to change the definition of 'electoral expenditure' by simple regulation does not have sufficient regard for the institution of parliament. There would be difficulties for the media in even reporting such manipulation of the system because there would be no capacity for a body such as the Electoral Commission of Queensland to investigate the effect of such a change. This brings me to the second recommendation of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee report. It states—

That the Minister include training on electoral expenditure caps in the training and professional development requirements for councillors and local government candidates.

While this bill does much to bring the conduct of state government and local government elections into alignment, every member in this House knows firsthand that it is a complex and complicated system. In local government elections we are hopefully attracting candidates from right across the community of ratepayers, representing a range of occupations and concerns. In order to attract quality candidates representing ratepayers, candidates need to know that they can safely navigate within the system. They cannot feel that it is so complicated that they put their personal reputations at risk by even standing as a candidate. Training of candidates is therefore vital in sustaining quality local governments in Queensland.

The Electoral Commission of Queensland in its submission expressed confidence in its ability to provide the necessary training to candidates and parties but also made it clear that its confidence was based on the assumption of additional full-time-equivalent staff and adequate budgetary resourcing to accomplish that. This is absolutely vital and it should form a key area for the review of the impact of this system after the 2024 local government elections. Even with a solid educational program in place, experience shows us that candidates and third-party campaigners are going to need guidance during the conduct of campaigns. We do not want to see a situation where they have nowhere to turn for guidance without risking prosecution or needing funds to pay for the legal advice. This could be easily resolved if candidates or groups of candidates were able to take their intended campaign materials to the Electoral Commission of Queensland for preapproval and prequalification of what constitutes electoral expenditure and what does not. Not only would this reassure political candidates that they can navigate this system without risking reputation or prosecution, it also means that the Electoral Commission of Queensland would not have to deal with a backlog of requests for rulings during the conduct of an election campaign.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the potential politicisation created by this bill of the four large, undivided councils of Gladstone, Noosa, Mackay and Toowoomba. There is an effect of tying the expenditure caps to the number of electors. In Toowoomba, because there are 115,000 electors, a local government candidate has their campaign expenditure capped at only \$30,000, but the geographic reality is that those electors are spread across an area equivalent to nearly three state electorates. In those electorates each independent candidate would be able to spend up to \$90,000, but if there was one in each electorate that would be \$180,000. Clearly, this creates a major incentive for local government candidates to form teams to pool their electoral funds in order to get sufficient coverage of their electors. Sadly, this is the thin edge of the wedge that will inevitably see those councillors become politicised. I think that is regrettable. There are members of the House who can speak to this better than I can, but I would like to put on the record that most Queenslanders deplore any further politicisation of local government.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (3.24 pm): Not only was this an election commitment to the people of Queensland, but local government expenditure caps have been the subject of considered consultation and development. Local government expenditure caps are all about creating a fairer, accountable and transparent system, a playing field that is levelled with equal opportunity, participation

and conduct. This is a system that takes the big-money, cashed-up influence out of politics and, in doing so, increases confidence in the system. It is clear that there is broad support for this system here in Queensland. In fact, I talk to a lot of elected officials, and I struggle to recall a conversation with anyone who does not support this model and the reforms in this bill.

I was on the committee for a time when it commenced its public inquiry into expenditure caps in 2019 and 2020. The report was initiated by the recommendations of the Crime and Corruption Commission's Belcarra report. I recognise and acknowledge those who have engaged in the large amount of work that has been undertaken to get to this point. In particular, I acknowledge the always phenomenal and committed contribution of our Executive Director of Strategy and Service Delivery, Local Government Division, Bronwyn Blagoev, who is with us today.

Other than the actual amount of the caps, the proposed scheme for local government is consistent with the key features of the state scheme including third-party registration, a seven-month capped electoral expenditure period, indexation of caps, penalty and recovery provisions, compliance and record keeping. Unlike the state scheme, the proposed caps for mayors and councillors are grouped into tiers. This recognises the different shapes and sizes of Queensland's local governments and their local government areas.

While we have heard much from those opposite around the difference for caps for undivided and divided councils, the department, on the back of its extensive consultation, has determined that there is not sufficient evidence that this is required. The application of scaled caps acknowledges that the number of electors varies in Queensland's local governments. Specifically, the councillor candidate electoral expenditure cap for the Toowoomba local government area sits in band 3, the highest band for council candidates outside Brisbane City Council. This band currently only applies to Queensland's largest undivided councils, providing an expenditure cap in Toowoomba of \$30,000. Candidate expenditure levels disclosed in Toowoomba's 2020 quadrennial—

**Mr Watts:** Twenty-six cents a voter.

**Ms BOYD:** Listen up, member for Toowoomba North. I am sure you will learn something here. I am very confident that the honourable member will learn something here. Candidate expenditure levels disclosed at Toowoomba's 2020 quadrennial election indicate that this cap is not overly restrictive. If the scheme had applied at the 2020 election, only two of the 30 councillor candidates—both successful—would have exceeded the cap of \$30,000. These two candidates' expenditure would have averaged approximately \$15,000 over the cap. The remaining 28 councillor candidates would have averaged approximately \$25,000 under the cap. During consultation on the scheme, which included consultation—

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Ms BOYD:** There are still some more lessons for the member for Toowoomba North on this. If the member just wants to pipe down, I am sure he will be able to listen. Two ears, one mouth.

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Order! Member for Toowoomba North.

**Ms BOYD:** During consultation on this scheme, which included consultation on the electoral cap levels, stakeholders did not raise any concerns about caps for the Toowoomba local government area. I hear the nattering of the member for Warrego. She might want to listen to this bit: notably, the Toowoomba regional council carried a motion in February to consider moving to a divided council structure. If implemented, this would impact on the expenditure caps for each councillor candidate. In terms of the amendment proposed by the member for Warrego—this is a real doozy—

**Ms Leahy** interjected.

**Ms BOYD:** One wonders whether the member for Warrego, if she was not admonished and kicked off committees in her very first term, might have picked up some lessons here at all. In terms of the amendment proposed by the member for Warrego in relation to a statutory review, the committee concluded that a review would be best carried out by the department as the policy lead in conjunction with the Electoral Commission of Queensland as the regulator of the scheme.

**Ms Leahy** interjected.

**Ms BOYD:** Still talking, member for Warrego. Listen up. We support recommendation 3 of the report on the bill. During the last sittings I spoke about our inquiry into the OIA and how much we recognise good practice and good sense in reviewing frameworks to ensure they meet their policy intent.



**Ms Leahy** interjected.

**Ms BOYD:** Still talking, member for Warrego. Only one person has a microphone here. The ECQ, of course, will conduct—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. Members on my left, I have asked for order. I would like to hear the member on her feet. Member for Pine Rivers, if you could focus on executing your speech that would be fantastic.

**Ms BOYD:** Thank you for your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker. We support recommendation 3 of the report on this bill. As I said, I spoke only last sitting week about our inquiry into the OIA and how much we recognise the good practice and good sense in reviewing frameworks to ensure they meet their policy intent.


The ECQ will, of course, conduct compliance activities for the scheme during and following each local government election. Where was the opposition on this point when we implemented our expenditure caps at a state level? We are working to general alignment with our state expenditure caps scheme that is already in place and—spoiler alert for the member for Warrego—there is no provision in the state scheme for any kind of statutory review.

The Parliament of Queensland Act specifically stipulates that portfolio committees can initiate inquiries into any matters they consider appropriate. The parliamentary committee can already initiate a review into the operation of electoral expenditure caps, regardless of the express provision in the bill. Just so it is very clear for the member for Warrego—I think we need to break this down into very simple terms—if we have the department completing a review, if we have the ECQ completing a review and if we have the provision for the committee to initiate a review, I completely agree with the member for Bundaberg that this is an amendment for the sake of amendment.

I am keen to move on to amendments that matter in this place—effective amendments and our rental reforms that will change the lives of people in my local community. Stabilising rental increases in the private rental market will make an enormous difference to the lives of my community members. A single rental increase each year will ensure certainty for my community in an economic climate where cost-of-living increases are having an impact on some of the most vulnerable members of my community.

Only yesterday I received a text message from a friend of mine—a single mum with two small children, not yet school age, who is a teacher. She was letting me know some news that she was ecstatic about. She had just renewed the lease on her three-bedroom home in Pine Rivers for the next 12 months for \$460 a week. I share this because I felt, in that moment reading that text message, the same thing she felt—relief and jubilation knowing that this meant certainty and security for her and her family.

We in Labor have a strong record of delivering safeguards, good minimum standards and fairer rental agreements and frameworks for Queenslanders. Our work in this space is not complete. Be it local government elections or a roof over people's heads, these reforms deliver fairness and level the playing field for Queenslanders. I commend them to the House.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (3.33 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022. The committee report states that it presents a summary of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee's examination of the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill. The committee has recommended that the bill be passed.

The policy objectives of the bill are to: establish an expenditure cap scheme for Queensland local government elections; and reinforce the equitable conduct of Queensland local government elections and minimise the risk of unequal participation in the electoral process. The bill follows a public inquiry conducted by the Economics and Governance Committee into the feasibility of introducing expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections. The committee report also states that the bill received widespread support.

What the committee report does not state is that the long title of the bill will be amended to include the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 and the Residential Tenancy and Rooming Accommodation Regulation 2009. There is a very good reason for that. We were only made aware of those amendments this morning when Minister Steven Miles came into the House and tabled his amendments.

There is a committee process that we follow for legislation in this House. I heard the member for Bundaberg say that we should just support the legislation—this is a great idea. I do not care what the idea is. There is a process to follow. They should go to a committee. The people who own houses for rent would be very interested in this. It is not as though if the legislation were presented to the committee that it would fail because every committee report under this government has as its first recommendation that the legislation be passed. It would get through the committee as the chair has the casting vote—four to three. It would be passed. It was not like it would be defeated. Why the government would bypass that process goes straight to the integrity and accountability of this government.

**Ms King** interjected.

**Mr WEIR:** I will take the interjection from the member for Pumicestone. It has nothing to do with that; it is about the process. If it is a good piece of legislation put it before a committee and bring it into the House. That is what should have happened.

The bill is modelled on the scheme that applies to state elections and includes the following: a sliding scale of electoral expenditure caps for mayoral and councillor candidates based on elector numbers in recognition of the different sizes of local governments in Queensland; the ability for groups of candidates to pool their expenditure caps within a local government area and up to a certain capped amount; the ability for political parties and their endorsed candidates to pool their expenditure caps within a local government area and up to a certain capped amount; applying expenditure caps to associated entities and a registration system to monitor the electoral expenditure of third parties; and aligning key definitions such as 'electoral expenditure', 'campaign purpose', 'third parties' and 'associated entities' with definitions provided under the state scheme.

The caps would be across a number of bands. They are: band 1, up to 30,000 electors would receive \$30,000; band 2, 30,000 to 150,000 electors would receive \$1 per elector; band 3, 150,000 to 200,000 electors would receive \$150,000 plus an additional 50 cents per elector for each elector over 150,000; and band 4, over 200,000 electors would receive \$175,000 plus an additional 25 cents per elector for each elector over 200,000. The Brisbane City Council would receive \$1.3 million. The councillor candidate expenditure caps are: band 1, up to 20,000 in an LGA or a division is \$15,000; band 2, 20,000 to 39,999 in an LGA division is 75 cents per elector; and band 3, 40,000 or more in an LGA division is \$30,000. The Brisbane City Council is \$55,000 per ward.

The bill also provides for a group of candidates, or a registered political party and their endorsed candidates, to pool their electoral expenditure caps within a local government area. This is not an uncommon practice. In recent elections we have seen a number of regional councils running group tickets.

Some submitters spoke of the challenges that exist between divided and undivided councils. The electorate of Condamine lies entirely within the Toowoomba Regional Council boundaries, which is an undivided council. There is one mayor and eight councillors. This means that prospective councillors will be capped at \$30,000 to deliver their campaign message to 115,153 electors from Yarraman to Clifton, Millmerran to Quinalow and, of course, the major city of Toowoomba. It is interesting to note that there are five state electorates that sit within the Toowoomba Regional Council—Southern Downs in the south, Condamine covering a vast area, Toowoomba North, Toowoomba South and Nanango. They all have a footprint in the Toowoomba Regional Council. This is a big challenge for any new candidate. Incumbents have a huge advantage. This goes to the contribution of the member for Pine Rivers.


Incumbents under this scheme have a huge advantage. That is what happened in the recent council elections. To quote averages is to misrepresent what happened in the last council election in Toowoomba. Those new councillors spent vastly more than the incumbents. Incumbency is a huge advantage.

The Toowoomba Regional Council voted against divisions only a few years ago after pressure from the regions for the issue to once again go to a vote. Given this new funding cap and that the majority of voters are in the city of Toowoomba, it will be interesting to see if this issue will be visited once more. I am not stating a position on whether I support divisions or not. Some areas that have divisions believe they are a little parochial and those that do not have them would like to have them.

The Toowoomba Regional Council, as I have already stated, has a lot of regional towns and those towns feel as though they are not being fairly represented. They would obviously like to see divisions in the Toowoomba Regional Council. What we need more than that is for candidates from those regions to come forward and to get elected so that they can deliver for those regions. That is my concern with this legislation.

The LNP have stated that we will not be opposing the bill, but the shadow minister, Ann Leahy, will be moving an amendment that a statutory review be conducted by the relevant parliamentary portfolio committee within 12 months of the 2024 local government elections. I think that is essential. There will definitely need to be a review after the next election. As I said, we are not going to oppose this, but for large undivided councils like Toowoomba I do think we will see some problems.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (3.40 pm): I rise in support of the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022. We are being lectured by that side about local government reform! Who remembers the local government reforms that were brought in during the Newman era? The Leader of the Opposition was the then minister who brought in those reforms that created a lot of trouble in local governments around Queensland.

We are lucky that we can go back a long way. Who remembers the government prior to the Goss government coming to power in Queensland? I grew up in Longreach. I think Longreach had one councillor and the rest were rural and regional councillors with that voting system. It is only the Labor government that has brought reform, and good reform, into local government elections.

I take the interjection from the member for Bancroft when he said before that the LNP do not want politics in local government. The only politics they do not want in local government is that of Labor or working class people. I take that interjection from the member for Bancroft because he is absolutely spot on. That is all they want. They want to stay in their own little bubble and keep local government for their own mates.

What they do not realise is that councils are more than rates, roads and rubbish. Take the Fraser Coast Regional Council as an example. It is one of the biggest employers in the region. It employs a lot of people. When we elect people to council—I agree with the member for Bundaberg—we have to elect people who have ideas and who are there for their communities, not people who have the biggest chequebooks so they can spend.

In the committee report there was unanimous support amongst inquiry participants for the introduction of an expenditure caps scheme in Queensland. I have been talking to people across the Fraser Coast. They are in line with this and think that what we are doing is correct. They want to see people at the community level in local government who are there for the community. We know that the LNP use councils as their nursery. That is where they bring a lot of their candidates through. That is their nursery for candidates.

**Mr Harper:** There's a nursery over there!

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I take that interjection from the member for Thuringowa. It is a bit of a nursery over there. Some of their ideas have not matured. Let's just say that. Their ideas for the people of Queensland have not matured.

They talk about caps. Let's look at the Fraser Coast Regional Council. The average division has 7,800 voters. You could throw a blanket over them. You really could. That is how small they are compared to state and federal electorates. Let's be honest, if you cannot get around to see 7,800 voters throughout your four-year term with a \$15,000 cap, there is something wrong with you. With \$15,000 and that many people in a division, you can letterbox and do whatever you like, particularly with Facebook and other social media. It is a load of rubbish to say that caps will hinder democracy. That is absolute garbage. It will not hinder democracy. What it will do is heighten democracy because we will get decent candidates. We do not want to talk about the Fraser Coast Regional Council. Have a look at the Fraser Coast Regional Council. We have had a mayor who has been sent to jail. There is a councillor there at the moment who is an absolute disgrace to our community.

**Mr Whiting:** An embarrassment.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I take that interjection from the member for Bancroft. He is an embarrassment for our region and an embarrassment for the people who live in our area. That is why we need major reform in local government. This is a start to make sure that we keep everything on track.

Let's have a look at the rent provisions in the bill before the House—what I call the fair renting reforms. I stand here in amazement when those opposite lecture us about when they were in power. Remember the reforms they wanted to bring into housing when they were in power? If you were in a housing commission house or unit, you had to open up your back bedroom and take people in. You could not go on holidays. Do you remember that? I see the former minister sitting over there. You could not go on holidays. I have never seen anything so bad. I can remember campaigning about that in the 2015 election. People were terrified that there would be a knock on the door—that Housing would send

someone around with two bags who would say, 'Hey, we're moving in,' because Housing said you had to rent out the back room. They were getting it ready to sell. They were 'unshackling' housing in Queensland. They were going to do some 'pruning'. They were going to sell off housing in Queensland.

I was listening to some of the speeches where they said, 'This does not go on.' I was listening to the member for Pine Rivers before. A lady came to me who had had two housing contracts in six months where the rent had gone up \$120 each time. That is what happened to a single mother in my area. It is disgraceful. It is only a Labor government that makes changes for the better for people. They said, 'We haven't had this come through.' Well we have unfortunately. I have seen it every day.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** 'Tiny Tim' has just spoken. He is talking about his reforms when he was housing minister.


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

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Pause the clock.

**Mr POWELL:** The member needs to refer to members by their correct title.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I agree. Member for Maryborough, you do need to use correct titles in this House.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I withdraw. We on this side of the House look after people. We take seriously the concerns of people when they come to us and tell us about rents and what is happening to Queenslanders. A Labor government makes sure that people are looked after, and that is what we are doing. I commend both ministers for this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (3.47 pm): As other members of the LNP have noted, we are not opposing this bill, but we are proposing an amendment to the bill which will require a statutory review of the Local Government Regulations within 12 months of the 2024 local government elections. That is a very sensible amendment that the member for Warrego will be moving because we have seen so many mishaps when it comes to legislation from this government in this House in the last eight years, especially in local government.

**Ms Leahy** interjected.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I take the interjection from the member for Warrego. Of course one of the best ones that we had was the 'pineapple' laws where the person who came second in a mayoral race could become the mayor if the other person resigned within a particular time frame. That led to the absurd situation where Chris, the 'Pineapple', in Rockhampton should have been sworn in as mayor. I do not know whether those laws were stupidly or deliberately put in place by the government.

**Mr Watts:** We told them they wouldn't work.

**Mr KRAUSE:** We did warn them that they were not going to work and that they would have bad consequences. Chris should have been sworn in as mayor but for whatever reason the government decided to retrospectively remove his right to be sworn in as mayor. Don't get me wrong. I do not support Chris, the 'Pineapple', becoming mayor of Rockhampton but that was the law and it was a ridiculous law passed by this government. We should have a mechanism to review these laws because inevitably this legislation will have unintended consequences.

If there is one good thing about the bill before us and the foreshadowed amendments the minister is going to introduce about rental laws, it is that the government is not introducing compulsory preferential voting in local government elections like they did for state elections with 18 minutes notice. That was an abysmal abuse of this parliament and our electoral system. They are not doing that today, but I think having these rental law amendments introduced by way of amendment is a disgrace. They are the types of laws that should go to committee. Time after time we have seen the government bring in amendments like this outside the long title of a bill—deliberately, I have no doubt—to avoid the committee scrutiny process. We all know that the Labor government is feeling pressure from the Greens when it comes to issues like this which the Greens have been prosecuting. There is a lot of pressure on people in rental accommodation, and we understand that, but the government is trying to protect themselves from parliamentary scrutiny from the opposition. That is a disgrace. There should be a review of these laws after 12 months of operation.

I have a concern about the caps that are being put in place and the way in which they are working. Actually, my concern is more so with the way they are working than the caps themselves. This is something that other members of the LNP have highlighted. It will put in place a system that, by its design, will encourage groups to be formed in local government. It is the politicisation of local


government that I am concerned about. Across our state, by and large we have local governments that are not party political, Brisbane City Council being the main exception to that rule. That is how, as I see it, most Queenslanders want it to remain. This system will encourage groups to form because there is a clear incentive to do that to obtain maximum bang for your buck under the caps that are being put in place.

Politicising local government would be a backward step for the people of Queensland, and it is something that the electors of Tamborine Mountain rejected this weekend past in a council by-election. There was a party running and they were roundly rejected by the electors of Tamborine Mountain. I congratulate the new councillor for division 1 in Scenic Rim, Councillor Amanda Hay, who was elected with about 57 per cent of the primary vote on Tamborine Mountain following the resignation of former councillor Derek Swanborough after 60 or 70 complaints to the OIA were made about him in the last couple of years. That is another topic for another day when it comes to the OIA.

I have no doubt there will be unintended consequences when it comes to the rental laws as well. Other members have highlighted the fact that when you make a rental increase possible only once a year, of course if people need to increase their rent that increase will be larger if it can only be done once a year. Unintended consequences have also arisen from past government reforms when it comes to making periodic tenancies more difficult to end for landlords. That is inevitably going to lead to the termination of fixed-term tenancies on the date they have to end because there is no option. There is no feasible option for people to enter into a short-term periodic tenancy when it comes to the laws as they stand now because of changes made by the government.

In my own electorate I have heard of cases where people have had their lease suddenly ended at the end of a fixed term with no option to hold over even for a few weeks while they find a place. Because of the way it is set up, no lessor wants to allow a periodic tenancy to emerge because they are almost impossible to end. There are unintended consequences to these things, so I would urge the government to tread very carefully and review those provisions after they have been operating for a while too, because sometimes these provisions impact the people whom we are trying to assist in ways that were not foreseen.

As I have said, the LNP is not opposing the bill, but I really urge the government to take on board the option to review the local government provisions after 12 months of operation—that is, after next year's local government elections and before we go to the elections in October 2024—to ensure we are getting the settings right when it comes to expenditure caps, the way they are designed and other impacts on local government. It is the level of government that is closest to our people, closest to voters. It should be possible to enter not only by people who form groups to pool their resources. Whether they be parties, unions or other strong advocacy groups, there should be a place and a mechanism in this legislation for the individual who just wants to stand up for their community to be on a level playing field, a level footing with the other people involved in the process, to have their best opportunity to put their view forward to their community and to stand up for them.

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (3.55 pm): I rise in support of the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022. This legislation will establish an electoral expenditure caps scheme for local government elections which will first apply at the 2024 local government quadrennial election. It will apply to all electoral participants, including: councillor and mayoral candidates, groups of candidates, political parties and third parties participating in an election. The proposed local government election expenditure caps scheme was modelled on the state electoral caps scheme already in place under the Electoral Act 1992.

Other than the actual amounts of the caps, the proposed scheme for local government is consistent with the key features of the state scheme, including: third-party registration; seven-month capped electoral expenditure; indexation of caps; penalty and recovery provisions; compliance and record keeping. Unlike the state scheme, the proposed caps for mayors and councillors are grouped into tiers, which recognises the different shapes and sizes of Queensland's local governments and their local government areas.

This bill aims to give effect to changes by ensuring mayoral and councillor candidate expenditure caps will be determined by the number of electors across the LGA in which the mayoral or councillor candidate contests the election except for Brisbane City Council, which is a set figure. There will be allowances for the grouping of candidates and those candidates that are endorsed by political parties, which in Queensland at the time of this bill being debated is only within a small number of LGA areas. The bill also contains amendments to third-party donor registration to align with the state system with a relevant threshold of \$6,000, with the registered third-party expenditure cap being set at 100 per cent

of the mayoral cap in the relevant LGA without the ability for caps to be pooled across the LGAs. Other amendments include the indexation of electoral expenditure caps and compliance and enforcement provisions.

In the Deputy Premier's introductory speech the Deputy Premier advised that the objectives of the bill were to ensure a consistent, transparent and open local government electoral system. I support the comments of the Deputy Premier, and in particular I would like to add my own perspective to this debate stemming from my former role before entering this place as a former candidate for local government and a member of the department of local government. In a regional context, my own experience of working in the department of local government, but also being a local government candidate, showed it was very clear that for potential candidates there was an uneven playing field for individuals based on the amount of funding they could spend in an election campaign.

During my time as a departmental officer one of my responsibilities was to manage the rollout of the So you want to be a councillor? program information sessions in regional areas of the Wide Bay-Burnett and central regions of our state—which, by the way, were a huge success, in my judgement, in helping potential candidates for local government to determine whether the job was for them or otherwise. I urge the Deputy Premier to give consideration to continuing this program of information sessions across our state prior to the 2024 local government elections to ensure potential candidates are fully informed of the pros and cons of running for this very important level of government within Queensland—I note that I trained the member for Gympie when he ran for the council, which was probably a mistake—and in particular in rural and regional areas, which have their own set of unique circumstances for potential candidates.

There is great work being done by the department of local government by extraordinary staff. They are a credit to the public service. They are frank and fearless champions of our local democracy. Every one of them tries very hard to ensure that candidates in the future are well informed before they make that decision to stand for council, but I am a little biased.

From my experience talking with many potential regional candidates over a number of local government elections, it became very clear that candidates who would struggle to fund their own campaigns or who did not have considerable backing from a benefactor were already at a disadvantage in regard to their success or otherwise. Whilst this did not necessarily deter a popular and well-known individual from running, it was very clear that those individuals who sought to serve their community at a local government level were further disadvantaged by their inability to fund their campaigns.

Many potential candidates would confide in me after an information session and say that they would make a determination to contest or otherwise based purely on the costs associated with running for local government. Some would say that the cost of campaigning alone—in regards to time and travel across in many cases vast rural and regional areas as well as managing their finances within their own personal lives—put them at a disadvantage against those who had effectively unlimited budgets due to their wealth. It was unfortunate that during my time as a departmental officer I saw individuals who were very talented and would have brought a great benefit to their local communities by being in the contest for a position on their local council were incapacitated in their desire to serve their communities because their opponents had the ability to simply outspend them.

I am also fully supportive of this legislation because of my lived experiences and my desire to see individuals have a level playing field. I particularly think of those of a younger age or from a lower socio-economic background who have not yet been able to accumulate enough wealth or potential funding for themselves to be in a position to run a successful race for a position on their local government and are then eliminated simply because their opponent can outspend them. This was so when I had my first shot at local government over two decades ago. As a first time candidate, I was confronted with the incapacity at that time to be able to run for a division of my local government because, as a working man with a young family, my ability to be able to raise enough funds to challenge my wealthier and well-established opponents was just a bridge too far.


Any way you look at this, I think having a system that promotes this is not a good outcome for democracy in our state. I believe that this legislation goes a long way towards ensuring that we can give access to individuals who believe they can make a difference in their communities. The capacity to outspend should never override the genuine capacity to serve. I have no doubt that no-one here would agree that wealth should be a sole determiner for representation. I firmly believe that we do not want a situation like that in our state—where people with enormous capacity to serve and do good for their communities and the people of Queensland are restricted simply because they do not have the wealth and the financial ability to outspend other candidates. We hope it will never befall our state that

we get to the point where we have a democratic system like that in America where only the very wealthy or the very privileged can ever become an elected community representative. The numbers that are thrown around in America regarding the costs associated with running for their councils, state seats or federal seats are simply eye-watering with regard to the level of wealth, privilege or pure dollars needed to get anywhere near being a potential candidate, let alone a successful candidate.

We should be pushing back at every opportunity now and into the future against that sort of a model because this is not what we want for a thriving democratic Queensland. We as legislators should never allow this form of elitism to happen to our democratic system, particularly at the elected level that is closest to our communities. I am all for the capping of electoral expenditure. I believe it levels the playing field, I believe it builds a better democracy, and I believe it gives every person in Queensland, and indeed the voters, an opportunity to stand and select individuals to represent and lead in their communities based on their capacity to be leaders and to serve their communities, and not on the depth of their or their mates' pockets.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the Deputy Premier and the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for the work they have done on providing a working set of recommendations. I would like to particularly thank all the participants for their contributions to this legislation and acknowledge the work done by the committee secretariat. This legislation meets its intent and creates a more modern legislative framework to underpin local government democracy within our state.

In the time I have left, I would like to talk to the amendment that was brought in by the Deputy Premier this morning. The member for Maryborough and the member for Bundaberg clearly articulated what this amendment is about. This amendment to reduce the frequency of rent increases to once a year to stabilise rents in the private rental market is a good thing. We need it. Like the member for Maryborough, I have had constituents come to my office who have been in tears with regard to the amount of rental increase that has been brought before them in only a six-month period. They would have one increase and then get another increase six months later. I believe this amendment is in the best interests of the tenants, and I fully support the amendment. I support this bill.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (4.05 pm): The Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022 was introduced to implement the expenditure caps for local government elections recommended by the Economics and Governance Committee during the 56th parliament. To do this, the bill amends the Local Government Act, the City of Brisbane Act and the Local Government Electoral Act. As we have heard, these caps will apply to councillor and mayoral candidates, groups of candidates, political parties and any third parties that incur electoral expenditure, such as associated entities, not-for-profits and unions. The caps will vary according to electorate size. Therefore, the Electoral Commission of Queensland will publish enrolled numbers and relevant caps.

Furthermore, the bill also aligns this scheme to the state electoral scheme of capped expenditure periods, indexation systems and definitions. The period for which the expenditure cap applies is approximately seven months, as it has been aligned with the state scheme. It should be noted that it is only approximately seven months because the start of the period is set as the first business day after the last Saturday in August in the year before an election year. Therefore, like Easter, the start dates can move around varying the time frame somewhat.

There was mixed feedback on the cap length, and we have heard a lot in the chamber on that already. The Local Government Association of Queensland maintain that the capped expenditure period must be for the whole four-year period of the local government term to absolutely ensure a level playing field. They gave the example of a Townsville election where outside donations from a mining company meant one candidate had election expenditure four times that of another. The Queensland Council for Civil Liberties put forward the opposite—that the length should be cut down to four months before the election based on a review in the UK that voters are unlikely to be influenced outside that time period. The department kind of went between the two differing viewpoints, aligning with the state election capped seven-month period as the best option. They also said that the bill addresses the potential stockpiling of electoral material by counting money spent at any time on electoral material that is used during the seven-month capped period. It would be interesting to see how that is monitored.

Regarding third parties' electoral expenditure caps, the Queensland Law Society raised concerns that some of the terminology—such as 'otherwise influence voting'—is open to interpretation and the provisions could drive away third party not-for-profits from participating in elections, even when it is legal, due to uncertainty in interpreting the legislation. For those of us who have been through multiple elections, we have lived through the interpretation of the legislation and some of the interesting

outcomes of those. In response, the department said that these terms were aligned with the terminology for state elections and that any legal interpretation can be brought to the terms of this bill, and they will work with the Electoral Commission to provide clarity on enforcement of the scheme. The committee highlighted that comprehensive and accessible training on the operation of the act will be necessary for candidates and councillors to meet their obligations and recommended as such, and that was a good recommendation.

There was a statement of reservation that focused on the needs of rural local government areas. As it pointed out, 70 per cent of local government is undivided, with councillors representing often large geographical expanses—and we heard the member for Condamine mention this—containing multiple media regions which should be reflected in the caps. This should be addressed. The committee recommended that the operation of the bill be reviewed after 12 months, and the disparities that have been outlined should be considered as part of that review.

An issue raised in a submission was that independent candidates cannot lawfully hold a raffle to raise funds for their campaign as they are not an eligible organisation according to the definition included in the Charitable and Non-Profit Gaming Act 1999. Again, this must be addressed, if it has not been already, to ensure a level playing field at all levels of government. I found it interesting as an independent in the last state election that the rules around raffles basically meant that we would need the full name and address of any person who bought a \$1 raffle ticket. That makes it very difficult.

Overall, the introduction of local government electoral caps will be of benefit to our democracy in Queensland. However, from my experience, the expenditure cap is still too high for the smaller shires, and, as a previous councillor, I know that \$30,000 is a lot of money for everyday Queenslanders, especially those who are not the incumbents who want to represent their community by running as a local councillor. The price of a new car might be fine for a career politician or those aligned to parties, or to third parties, however not for our grassroots candidates. Really, we should be looking at this. We need our local governments to be community focused, represented by genuine independents and not party-driven. This does not make for good collaborations.

Ensuring the integrity of our elections and democracy is vitally important, as is our committee process, which I have spoken on numerous times, and I am not going to go there, as well as the needed transparency in relation to voting processes, which I am going to go there. The ability to cast your vote via post has increased as a result of the pandemic with a form of hoodwinking that is unacceptable where political parties offer applications for postal voting utilising their own reply paid envelopes. Queenslanders assume the reply paid address is the Electoral Commission when it is not. Who knows what information is harvested before these are sent on to the commission? This is what the Australian Electoral Commissioner said last year before the federal election about this practice—

It's legal but it is potentially misleading and we're concerned.

Also—

People have a right to know what they're doing with their personal data. The AEC takes privacy seriously and operates under the Privacy Act, political parties don't have to.

And—


Political parties send postal vote applications to residents every election but the increased variation of channels and wording this election, combined with the environment, is of concern.

The government should act right now to address this issue. In approaches to the Attorney-General, who stated that it is a matter for individual electors how they choose to apply for postal votes, and our approach to the Queensland Electoral Commissioner, who said that there was no need for legislative changes, we have not been able to resolve this. Why requests to simply insert the name of where these applications are going is not agreed to is unfathomable, and I really do not understand it. It does not cost anyone, including government, any money. It is just one line on an envelope above the reply paid number—not hard at all—and provides total transparency. Is that not what we are trying to get to?

Regarding last-minute amendments to this bill which are unrelated and around rentals, it should have gone through the proper process. Given the housing crisis, any efforts are welcomed, however to assess what unintended consequences could arise in just a couple of hours—and that is all I had—is not possible. It is almost like shutting the gate after the horse has bolted. Everyone has known for years of this crisis, yet here we are at the last minute looking at an amendment. We need much more.



In closing, I would like to thank the good work of the committee which reviewed this legislation and particularly all Queenslanders who took the time to share their views with the committee and, through them, with this parliament. May we see fewer party aligned candidates in local government elections, further decreasing in expenditure and campaign materials as annually supported in the Noosa Community Survey. Every year the vast majority want to see a decrease and much more transparency in all levels of government. There is nothing for us to lose and so much to gain.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (4.13 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. In recent years the Queensland government has been delivering a rolling reform agenda across the local government sector to strengthen transparency, accountability and integrity in this very important level of government. As we know, we have seen a number of inquiries into local government, including the Crime and Corruption Commission's Operation Belcarra which identified a range of opportunities to strengthen the local government sector, including the need to have elections contested on a level playing field with equal participation available to all.

Local governments are responsible for the good governance of local and regional communities. In performing this role, local governments execute a range of functions, including planning and monitoring, service delivery, and lawmaking and enforcement. They also play an important advocacy role, representing the interests of their community in negotiations with state and federal governments and the non-government sector. They are a vital economic contributor to our state, with more than 42,000 people employed by Queensland's councils. It is imperative that those charged with the responsibility of leading councils—elected mayors and councillors—should have the confidence of the communities they serve, and this begins before they are elected.

Operation Belcarra was established as a result of the numerous complaints about the conduct of candidates for several councils in the 2016 local government elections. In general terms, allegations were made that some candidates, some of whom were elected or re-elected to council, had purported to be Independents, but were in fact part of an undeclared group of candidates that shared campaign resources and funding sources, had failed to properly declare donations they had received, had misled voters by publicly denying they had received funding from certain sources, and had real or perceived conflicts of interests because they had received donations from property developers with business interests subject to council consideration.

One of the key recommendations of the CCC was to consider the feasibility of introducing expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections. I am pleased to see this bill will ensure an expenditure capped scheme for Queensland local councils and councillors is introduced and appreciate it has broad support from stakeholders. This creates consistency for candidates, parties or entities that operate in both local and state elections and also ensures the Electoral Commission of Queensland is able to better monitor the scheme for both state and local government elections.

I believe the scheme that is being proposed and which is modelled on that applying to state elections is thoroughly workable, including offering a sliding scale of electoral expenditure caps for mayoral and councillor candidates, based on electoral numbers, in recognition of the different sizes of local governments in Queensland which would see a number of bands created based on the number of electors, with Brisbane City Council wards being afforded a greater councillor cap. The proposed local government scheme is intended to align with the state scheme where practical and appropriate. However, unlike the state scheme, the proposed cap for mayors and council candidates does recognise, as I said, those differences in the elector numbers and the varied shapes and sizes of Queensland's 77 local governments.

The scheme also allows for: the ability for groups of candidates to pool their expenditure caps within a local government area and up to a certain capped amount; the ability for political parties and their endorsed candidates to pool their expenditure caps within a local government area and up to a certain capped amount; applying expenditure caps to associated entities and a registration system to monitor the electoral expenditure of those third parties; and aligning some of those key definitions such as 'electoral expenditure', 'campaign purpose', 'third parties' and 'associated entities' with the definitions provided similarly under the state scheme.

The length of the expenditure cap period was an interesting debate which the parliamentary committee considered with inquiry stakeholders giving mixed feedback, some calling for it to be extended, while others suggesting it should be shorter. The LGAQ's position that the capped expenditure period should apply for the full local government term, that is four years, was not supported; nor was the Queensland Council of Civil Liberties' proposal for a shorter capped expenditure period of four months based on a UK government review. I think the position settled on by the committee and by

the government of seven months is appropriate, given it aligns with the length of the existing state scheme, is easier to operate and is not adding an additional burden to the Electoral Commission of Queensland in terms of those additional resources. As the ECQ noted—

A longer capped expenditure period would most definitely have a greater resourcing implication from our point of view from a real-time monitoring perspective, from a compliance response perspective and from a candidate support perspective.

I am also pleased to see clause 24, which provides definitions within the Local Government Electoral Act for electoral expenditure and campaign purpose to now align with the Electoral Act. This is an area of some conjecture and I think clear advice would ensure that there is no confusion on what can be included, especially for new candidates contesting elections for the first time. I also support the committee's comment that this training be ready by August 2023 to align with the calculation and publication of the expenditure caps for participants to ensure there is enough time to understand the requirements.

I noted the member for Scenic Rim talked about the need for review of the laws and he cited issues with our government's drafting of local government legislation. I was a little bit surprised that the member would raise this issue of flawed legislation because it is not hard to remember—and I remind him of the time in government—when the state's first law officer at the time, the member for Kawana—and I quote this from an article in the *Brisbane News* in 2014—saw that—

... one signature law struck down as "invalid", another quietly repealed before it suffered the same fate, and a third facing a massive High Court challenge...

The member for Kawana then tried to distance himself from the legislation by saying that he did not 'go around and personally draft legislation'. It sounds like he did not actually read his own draft legislation either. 'Pot kettle black' for the member for Scenic Rim to be indicating that there are issues with flawed legislation and that we need some kind of review of that.

I believe we have come a long way since the 2016 local government elections, which elicited grave concerns around the conduct of candidates and led to serious implications for a number of local governments across South-East Queensland. The new electoral expenditure cap scheme will be another significant milestone in ensuring confidence in the local government sector, promoting greater equity by levelling the playing field and providing a fair opportunity for all who wish to represent their community in the upcoming local government elections and beyond. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (4.19 pm): I rise today to speak on the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022. This bill is a key piece of legislation that holds the power to influence the course of our local government elections. As the member for Southport and an LNP representative, I emphasise our commitment to integrity and transparency in government, including local government. Ensuring our local government elections are equitable and devoid of undue influence is crucial.

The bill's objectives are to: implement the government's policy regarding the recommendations made by the Economics and Governance Committee in report No. 47 to the 56th Parliament, *Inquiry into the feasibility of introducing expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections*, the committee report submitted on 15 September 2020; to incorporate the results of further analysis and consultation in the final structure of the local government electoral expenditure cap scheme; and to promote and uphold equitable conduct during Queensland local government elections by reducing the risk of unequal participation in the electoral process, including uneven financial competition among candidates, and ensuring fair opportunities for participation.

The LNP is not opposed to this bill or the implementation of electoral caps in local government elections. However, we must guarantee that the new system undergoes review and prevents the state government from exploiting the system to favour particular candidates or groups—something that the current government has a history of doing. That is why it is important that we adopt the amendments that have been proposed by the member for Warrego to amend section 206A. A statutory review following the 2024 local government elections aligns with the expectations of Queenslanders of a responsible government. We are calling on support for the proposed amendment that a review within 12 months of the 2024 local government election be conducted and, more importantly, that that review be tabled in the Legislative Assembly so there is complete transparency of the findings and opinions of those who conducted the review.

While making considerable changes to the electoral system we need to ensure its effectiveness for the community. Regrettably, the previously promised government review within two years of the last significant change in local government, stage 2 of Belcarra, never occurred. The LNP has consistently supported council's collective stance on their voting systems. However, Labor's stringent donation laws

ensured that, through unions, Labor can collect significantly more funds than the LNP. Labor and the unions could potentially outspend the LNP in a state election by a ratio of 26 to one, and this will now apply to the Brisbane City Council elections as well. How can the Labor government expect Queenslanders to believe they are a party that supports fair elections when they will happily manipulate legislation to maintain power?

Allowing the definition of electoral expenditure to be changed solely by regulation would empower the government to modify the definition of electoral expenditure to advantage one campaign style over another. We have witnessed Labor's tendency to create electoral changes that benefit themselves and, as it turned out, the Greens. If you ask me, this is why the Labor government cannot be trusted. In 2019 Labor attempted to discreetly introduce compulsory preferential voting for local government elections despite widespread opposition. The backlash was so strong that the minister withdrew the proposal and removed the provision during the detailed consideration. Councils continue to oppose compulsory preferential voting in their elections.


This government is notorious for prioritising announcements over delivery, and the subject of local government is no exception. Over 600 days have passed since the Deputy Premier promised reform to overly stringent conflict of interest rules for council with no results. Six months have passed since the report into the Office of the Independent Assessor was submitted, and the House is owed an update from the Deputy Premier on implementing the committee's recommendations. A concerning aspect of the bill is the ability for a group of candidates to combine their spending caps across divisions. This implies that a party like the Greens could run token candidates in unwinnable divisions, pooling their caps into the two or three divisions they genuinely intend to target. This exemplifies how legislation can be exploited for political gain.

The 2020 local government elections experienced numerous operational issues due to inadequate resourcing of the Electoral Commission of Queensland. Issues included delayed publication of voting data, and Antony Green notably called it the most significant failure he had witnessed. The narrow terms of reference for the parliamentary committee's inquiry hindered the recommendation of necessary changes. We must avoid repeating the mistakes of the 2020 elections by properly resourcing the ECQ. If the government plans to implement this new scheme for the upcoming local government elections next year, they must prepare training materials as soon as the legislation is enacted. The ECQ must receive adequate resources in this year's June budget to ensure they can provide proper training and manage the system effectively.

Queenslanders deserve efficient elections that bolster confidence in the democratic process. As we proceed with the bill's implementation it is vital to focus on serving the people of Queensland, maintaining transparency, fairness and equal representation for all Queenslanders. Unlike the current government, we the LNP are devoted to these principles and will persist in holding accountable the government responsible for fulfilling its commitments.

I want to emphasise the LNP's unwavering commitment to integrity and transparency across all government levels. We support the implementation of expenditure caps in local government elections, but we must remain watchful to ensure government does not exploit the system to its advantage. Conducting a comprehensive statutory review after the 2024 local government elections is crucial for preserving the integrity of our electoral system.

We must guarantee that the ECQ is adequately resourced and that the necessary training materials are provided to facilitate the seamless transition to the new system. Queenslanders have the right to expect fair, transparent and efficiently managed elections and we are obliged to deliver on that expectation.

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (4.27 pm): I rise to speak on this bill in respect of the amendments relating to limiting rent increase frequency. I do so not because I do not consider the other aspects of the bill very important, but I know for my community this is an absolutely critical issue. When the Premier announced recently that this was a policy she would be bringing to the House, I know I received an enormous reaction from people in my community.

Many people might think that the electorate of Bulimba is a very affluent electorate. There are certainly a number of affluent streets and suburbs in my community. However, equally, there is a number of people who are really doing it tough. I want to acknowledge that the issues of both accessibility to rental accommodation and affordability of rental accommodation are absolutely critical. They are certainly the overarching issues for the people who are at the crisis end of the housing issue—


families who do not have a roof over their family's heads, people who are homeless for extended periods of time. That is an issue that affects all of us and certainly the people of my community. They are closely monitoring the initiatives that this government is putting in place to address it.

I want to acknowledge my Bulimba Electorate Youth Advisory Panel. I think many of us in this House—in fact, you and I, Madam Deputy Speaker—have talked about the real despair that many young people feel about rental affordability and the possibility for them to have their own home. When I was doing the interviews for my Bulimba Electorate Youth Advisory Panel and I asked each one of those applicants what was the most important issue for them and for their peer group, the ability to live in, whether renting or buying, their own home and whether they would ever be able to do that was a huge thing.

On top of the many practical initiatives and the significant billions of dollars worth of funding which this government has allocated to the housing issue—the Housing Summit and the housing round tables that have occurred—there are many other initiatives. We know that there is not one single thing that will fix this issue, but we have doubled the Housing Investment Fund by \$1 billion, to \$2 billion. We have 1,200 new social and affordable homes from the Housing Investment Fund. We are supporting private renters with the immediate housing response for families funding of \$26 million. We have delivered changes to enable the better use of secondary dwellings like granny flats and we are delivering further support for specialist homelessness services. I acknowledge the Brisbane Youth Service, which has just acquired the use of a property in my community. It was great to talk to Pam Barker from the Brisbane Youth Service the other day about how my community can support young people in that facility. She spoke of making sure the workers in her agency are shielded against the despair they are often seeing.

This amendment today, which limits rent increases to once a year, is just one of the many initiatives we are putting in place to respond to community concerns about the impact of current market conditions and cost-of-living pressures on renting households in Queensland. I know that a number of people have said, 'This is great, but why can't we limit the amount rents are put up by?' The economic advice is that that could be counterproductive and it may mean there are fewer dwellings in the market. There is a range of other reasons.

We are now progressing the stage 2 rental law reforms. I pay tribute to the housing minister for the significant reforms she has made in this space. I look forward to hearing from my community about issues like installing modifications and making minor personalisation changes—all of those things that contribute to a place being a home. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (4.32 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022. I note from other speakers that the objectives of this bill are: firstly, to implement the government's policy regarding the recommendations of the Economics and Governance Committee in its report titled *Inquiry into the feasibility of introducing expenditure caps for Queensland local government elections*; secondly, to reflect the outcomes of further analysis and consultation in the final design of the local government electoral expenditure caps scheme; and, thirdly, to ensure and reinforce the equitable conduct of Queensland local government elections including by minimising the risk of unequal participation in the electoral process, including uneven financial competition between candidates, and ensuring a fair opportunity to participate. I thank members of the committee for their work on this bill, in particular the deputy chair, the member for Lockyer, Jim McDonald, and my fellow Gold Coaster, the member for Burleigh, Michael Hart.

The opposition, as we have heard from others, supports integrity and transparency at all levels of government, and it is vitally important that our local government elections are fair and free from undue influence. The Local Government Association of Queensland, LGAQ, recommended a broad review of the expenditure caps scheme after the 2024 local government elections, with the review to examine how the expenditure caps apply to undivided local government areas such as Toowoomba, Southern Downs and Noosa. There is concern that the expenditure caps will not be enough for council candidates campaigning in undivided local government areas, LGAs, particularly in large and remote areas in Queensland's regions. For example, the electoral expenditure would be stretched across the entire LGA and some large undivided councils could have as many as 16 media markets.

The spending caps for individual councillor candidates are maximised at \$30,000. This creates an anomaly in the case of the four large undivided councils—Gladstone, Noosa, Mackay and Toowoomba. In Toowoomba, for example, there are over 115,000 electors. Therefore, one candidate can spend only \$30,000 in an area covering nearly three state electorates whilst a state Independent

candidate in one of these seats can spend \$90,000. There is a significantly strong incentive to form groups and share resources according to the priority of the election of relevant group members. I note that in three of these councils—Mackay, Noosa and Toowoomba—it is possible that these caps are in place to incentivise group campaigning and politicise these particular elections.

The opposition, as has been noted, will move an amendment to require a statutory review to be undertaken by the relevant portfolio committee within 12 months of the 2024 local government election. A statutory review after the 2024 local government election is exactly what Queenslanders would expect of a sound government. When the government last made significant changes in local government, stage 2 of Belcarra, they promised a government review within two years. I note that never happened.

Twenty-four submissions were received on this bill, including five from mayors and councillors. The ECQ submitted that, whilst they are confident in their ability to administer the scheme and provide the necessary training to candidates and parties, they will require additional staffing and budgetary resourcing to accomplish these objectives. If the government intend to roll out this new scheme for the upcoming local government elections next year, then they must have the training materials ready to roll out as soon as possible once this legislation is passed.

The 2020 local government elections were plagued with operational issues due to improper resourcing of the ECQ. There were issues with the timely publication of voting data, and even worse were the narrow terms of reference for the parliamentary committee's inquiry, preventing many of the required changes being recommended. The CCC considered the proposed amendments and formed the view that, overall, they increase consistency between the state and local government election regimes and declared their support.

The LGAQ generally supported the policy framework settings adopted in the bill but made a number of recommendations, including that the capped expenditure period be extended to the entire four-year term. Whilst the Queensland Law Society was generally supportive of the bill, it raised the issue that the definition of electoral expenditure can be changed by regulation. In their view, this did not have significant regard to the institution of parliament.

I share the concern of other members about the history of electoral changes that I have seen in my time in this place. We know that the voting system for state elections was changed by the Labor Party in a previous parliament solely to benefit themselves but, as it turned out, the Greens. We also recall that in 2019 Brisbane Labor tried to slyly introduce compulsory preferential voting for local government elections despite sector-wide opposition to the idea. The criticism was so harsh that the then minister abandoned the idea and removed the provision during consideration in detail. Councils remain opposed to compulsory preferential voting in their elections. The LNP has been consistent in supporting councils' collective position on their voting systems.

I briefly turn to the changes that have been made to the suggestions that were originally from the government about proposed rental caps. The member for Everton, the shadow minister for housing, made a very good contribution in this area before. The government went from talking about rental caps to CPI increases to saying 'we are now going to have an annual increase'. I fail to see how this will do anything to help with the current crisis that is affecting us. On the Gold Coast, where we do not have enough social and community housing—and have not had for some time—it remains to be seen how this will help. It is clear that Labor needs to do more, especially for those of us on the Gold Coast.

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.38 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022. This bill continues the government's reform agenda for the local government sector and delivers on our 2020 election commitment to the people of Queensland to implement electoral expenditure caps for local elections.

The government's reforms have been guided by principles of integrity, transparency, diversity and consistency. This bill establishes an electoral expenditure cap scheme for local government elections which will apply at the next local government quadrennial elections, due in March 2024. The cap scheme will apply to all electoral participants including candidates for councillor and mayor, groups of candidates, political parties and third parties participating in an election.

Other than the actual amount of the caps, the proposed scheme for local government is consistent with the key features of the state scheme, including third-party registration, a seven-month capped electoral expenditure period, indexation of caps, penalty and recovery provisions compliance; and record keeping. However, unlike the state scheme, the proposed caps for mayors and councillors

are grouped into tiers which recognise the different sizes of local governments and local government areas across Queensland. I support the bill and I note that the committee made four recommendations, including that the bill be passed.


Turning now to the rental reform amendments also included in the bill, all Queenslanders should have access to safe, secure and affordable housing. We know that availability of affordable housing is a major issue in the community and indeed across the country. It is certainly one issue my constituents are talking to me and to my office about. During a recent mobile office blitz across all of the suburbs of my electorate, it was an issue raised with me by at least half of those who came to talk to me, predominantly about interest rates and mortgage stress. We know that that is something that is being felt keenly by people across Queensland and across the country.

While I appreciate that those macro policy issues around interest rates are not in the purview of state governments, it is certainly something that is having an impact and our government is listening and acting in the areas where we can. Our government's action to limit the frequency of rent increases to once a year for all residential tenancy agreements and rooming accommodation agreements is about stabilising rents in the private rental market. A limit on the frequency of rent increases is the next step in our rental law reforms, which have already sought to make it fairer for renters through measures including stronger eviction safeguards, establishing minimum housing standards for rental properties and making it easier to have pets, which we know through a growing body of evidence has a significant positive impact on mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

Another way the Palaszczuk government is working to address housing affordability issues is through the delivery of more social housing dwellings. In my electorate of Nudgee there are a significant number of social housing dwellings and we have seen a continued significant investment in dwellings since being elected in 2015, having delivered 82 new social housing dwellings. This investment has included 21 new apartments in Nundah and 37 apartments in Zillmere. These are ideally located in areas with accessible, affordable public transport services nearby and appropriate shopping precincts. A further 17 new units are currently under construction across two projects in Zillmere.

I know from talking to social housing tenants in both those areas of Nundah and Zillmere and indeed across all suburbs which have investment from our government just what having access to housing means to them—not only housing but the updated designs and innovations in how we design these units are making a real difference to those living in them. They are not only safe places to live but they are really beautifully designed. I think that is absolutely about the dignity of housing and the people who live in these properties who take great care of them, because they do appreciate what it has brought to the safety and provision of their families and children.

I want to acknowledge the significant investment, time and effort of our housing minister. I talk to her often about the issue of safe housing and appropriate housing for young Queenslanders and vulnerable Queenslanders. She is always willing to talk about the new ways that we can provide appropriate housing of varying mixes in terms of both apartments and appropriate housing but also single-bed units and homes for the significant increase we have seen in single women who are living alone. Many of them are aged and want to live in complexes with other women of a similar age. I have seen more and more of those innovations in my community. They have been incredibly well received. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (4.43 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022. According to the bill's explanatory notes accompanying the bill, there is a concern for potential inclusion of costs for office accommodation and paid campaign staff which have not been included in the legislation. I noted in the OSCAR submission that there have been incidences where, for example, a landowner or landlord supplies commercial office space to a candidate but does not charge commercial rent. This should be declared. Similarly, if candidates have campaign staff in said offices, they should also declare any payment to them. In local government elections it would be fair to say that very few candidates would have election offices. Where either a mayoral or a councillor candidate has office space during an election this should be declared, as it is either being funded by the candidate's election funds or is being provided as a gift in terms of part or full rent for the term of the election. An example of such is where a shopping or theatre or office centre owned by a developer allowed a candidate office space for more than 12 months leading into the election. Under the ban on developer donations, such approval would now probably be given by centre management, avoiding the developer ban. The amount of rent paid, if any, was never disclosed to the electors. It is evident that this expense should be included in the cap for electoral expenditure.

Similarly, most candidates in local government elections have volunteer staff. Where paid staff are used, that should also be declared. An alternative may be to allow any candidate to have undeclared office accommodation and/or staff for the period from when the election is called until election day. By not including accommodation in the election expenditure cap immediately, the candidate availing themselves of such opportunity has a clear advantage over the candidate operating from their home. A similar advantage applies to the use of paid staff. It could be seen that the bill is encouraging more party political and groups of candidates nominating for elections as opposed to genuine community Independent candidates.

The individual mayoral cap amounts for larger councils and the timing of the application of expenditure caps is another issue that needs to be addressed. The Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs proposed a maximum figure of \$100,000 for mayoral candidates while the LGAQ proposed a figure of \$200,000 for mayoral candidates. These amounts make it unaffordable for most potential candidates and will result in only wealthy and very well-funded candidates contesting mayoral elections with any expectation of being successful. For the majority of candidates, election spending for the 2020 local government election was significantly lower than the caps currently proposed. Again, OSCAR's submission highlights an unintended consequence where more party aligned candidates standing for mayoral positions can take advantage of financial support from their political party. Local government should be free of party endorsed and funded candidates. In addition, Brisbane Residents United's submission shines a light on the lack of regulation for industry associations and incorporations. These are the biggest players in Queensland elections. A closer examination into ways in which corporate income is used on electoral expenditure could be restricted or, at the very least, disclosed transparently.

I have serious concerns over third parties that could embark on media campaigns to further their cause or to run a negative campaign against a particular candidate or group of candidates. There is no legislation to address the revolving door between industry and government which leads to inside relationships without due regard being given to the public interest. As outlined in the Queensland Law Society submission, the concern is that the current bill will have a chilling effect on the participation of not-for-profit and charity organisations in the debate and the development of social policy. The amended drafting reflected in this bill introduces a number of additional uncertainties about the scope of the third-party registration framework due to the following concepts: proposed sections 109A(5) and (6) to the LGEA could be left to the court's interpretation to decide when the purpose of a third party's expenditure is indeed electoral expenditure; and the insertion of proposed new section 109B(1)(c) into the LGEA suggests that a third party's expenditure could be considered expenditure for a campaign purpose even if there is no mention of a particular political party or candidate in the material produced. QLS is correct in that—

... this legislation will inhibit the legitimate and valuable voice of charities and not for profit organisations in modern Australian political discourse and debate, because of an organisation's fear of inadvertently advocating in a way which is perceived 'to otherwise influence voting at an election'. This risk is heightened when under this bill, it does not matter if the material in question does not even mention a particular party, candidate or group when the position is expressed.

Community groups are well placed to identify issues of concern and should be encouraged to create community conversations to make change on matters that affect them—that is, rates, land valuations, costs of living, social issues like domestic violence, health and many other issues that we go through during these elections.

The bill should be renamed the 'non-local government bill' as its one purpose is to eliminate independent councillors and replace them with party members. The way the allowances and wages are set up, only party groups would be capable of organising their way into council, which is a damn shame. Independents have always been the way local government operates. They are local and because of that they know more about our local issues and the solutions to fix them. Party tickets, as favoured in this bill, just do not get the same results and they cost more, especially when the elected mayor is in conflict with the majority of elected councillors.

I bring to the attention of the House the situation with committees and the amendments introduced this morning. In the past I have often said that a crossbench member should have the casting vote as the chair. It would make it a fairer and more democratic process. That will always be a difference of opinion. At the moment it is heavily weighted. In my opinion, it would be nice to go the other way and give crossbench members the opportunity to be the chair of the committee.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Member for Mirani, I draw you back to the bill, please.

**Mr ANDREW:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker.



**Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (4.50 pm): I am pleased to support the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill. It is a bill that delivers on our 2020 election promise to implement electoral expenditure caps for local elections which will first apply at the 2024 local government elections. Introducing expenditure caps is important for ensuring the equitable conduct of Queensland's local government elections and there is also broad support for it. All Queenslanders rightly expect that local government elections are democratic and fair. They deserve to have mayors and councillors who are truly representative of their communities. Expenditure caps will level the playing field and improve representation on our councils by ensuring that everyone is given a fair opportunity to participate in the electoral process. By taking the money out of politics the expenditure caps schemes will stop candidates with the deepest pockets influencing the outcome of our elections.

The electoral caps scheme for local governments is a much needed reform. It will help restore people's trust in democracy and encourage greater civic participation. The proposed expenditure caps in this bill are modelled on the state electoral caps scheme that is already in place. Its features are consistent with the state scheme which includes third-party registration, a seven-month capped electoral expenditure period, indexation of caps, penalty and recovery provisions and compliance and record keeping.

Unlike the state scheme, the proposed expenditure caps for mayors and councillors are grouped into tiers in recognition of the different shapes and sizes of Queensland's local government and their local government areas. This will mean that mayoral candidates for the Ipswich City Council will have an indicative spending cap of just over \$133,000 based on the number of enrolled voters in the 2020 election. Councillor candidates will have an indicative spending cap of just over \$25,000. When the former Ipswich mayor Paul Pisasale ran in the 2016 council election he spent over \$150,000 on his re-election campaign and he amassed over \$219,000 in donated funds. A sizeable proportion of those donations were from property developers. This campaign war chest gave Mr Pisasale an enormous advantage over his two other opponents and he ended up getting over 80 per cent of the vote. A little over a year later he resigned as mayor after the CCC raided his home.

One of the Palaszczuk government's biggest successes has been our project to deliver electoral reforms that make Queensland's elections fairer and more equitable. In 2018, upon the recommendations made in the Operation Belcarra report, we banned political donations from property developers to both state and local government officials and candidates, and I can tell members that this reform has really resonated with the community. In 2019 we implemented the second stage of the Operation Belcarra reforms which aimed to restore accountability, integrity and transparency in our local government elections. Those reforms introduced real-time electoral expenditure disclosures, required candidates to disclose their interests upon nomination, provided for greater transparency for councillors operating as a group during elections, and required more information from candidates about donations, gifts and third-party expenditure. Queenslanders deserve to have greater faith that their elected officials are representing them with the utmost integrity.

The Operation Windage investigation into the Ipswich City Council demonstrated a widespread culture of governance and integrity failures, inappropriate workplace interactions and misuse of council funds and assets. It led to 16 people, including council employees, two mayors, two chief executive officers and one chief operating officer, being charged with 91 criminal offences, including official corruption. This was a council that did not represent the Ipswich community's interests because it was filled with too many people who were busy filling their own pockets. At the local government level we want a diversity of candidates who are passionate about their communities. Often those people do not have a large wealthy donor network they can tap into and they have to work hard at raising campaign money themselves through fundraisers and raffle drives. Taking the money out of campaign spending gives these people a fairer chance to contest at the next council election.

Another key element of the scheme is the expenditure caps for groups of candidates or for registered political parties and each endorsed candidate. These groups of candidates and political parties within a single LGA will be able to pool individual caps of all candidates in the group. This will allow candidates to organise coordinated group or political party campaign activities, such as joint advertising or shared how-to-vote cards. The bill also includes procedures for adjusting group or political party caps when the group membership or party endorsement changes. Another element is the registration of third parties with the Electoral Commission if they incur more than \$6,000 in electoral expenditure. The cap for registered third parties is equivalent to the mayoral electoral expenditure cap which would apply in the relevant local government area. Unregistered third parties cannot exceed this electoral cap of \$6,000.



This bill will ensure that the local government electoral expenditure caps will be indexed in line with the consumer price index, and information about the expenditure caps for each election must be published on the ECQ's website and provided directly to each candidate in each election. A seven-month capped electoral expenditure period will be introduced in the bill for local government quadrennial elections, which are typically held on the last Saturday in March. This means the capped electoral expenditure period will start on the first business day after the last Saturday in the August preceding the election and end on polling day.

The reforms introduced in this bill are another step in our ongoing agenda to make elections in Queensland fairer, more accountable and truly representative of our diverse communities. All of our local councillor candidates deserve a fair opportunity to represent the communities they are passionate about, and these proposed expenditure caps will be a step in the right direction to levelling the playing field. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (4.56 pm): I rise to address the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill, a bill that seeks to implement expenditure caps for local government elections and ensure all candidates have a fair opportunity to participate in local government elections, so it begs the question why the government has come in here with completely unrelated amendments that seek to hobble Queensland mums and dads who own a rental property. Not only are they unrelated to the subject matter of the bill; the government has even had to get permission to move the amendments because the same question has already been put to the parliament this term. It smacks of the chaos and the confusion all too often on display with this Palaszczuk Labor government. All too often the best that the Premier can deliver for Queenslanders is ill-conceived policy ideas on the run and thought bubbles.

Rather than deliver a real plan that will address the housing crisis affecting so many Queensland communities, rather than delivering more supply and working collaboratively with Queensland councils, the state government has decided to attack self-reliant Queenslanders who own an investment property. We know the Greens hate those who own investment properties, but based on the evidence presented by the Premier and those opposite in recent weeks it looks like Labor does too. How reducing the confidence of Queenslanders to invest in residential property is going to encourage more people to invest their hard-earned savings in building new rental properties remains to be seen. The amendments here today look a lot more like a response to a media problem than a substantive plan to address a critical problem facing Queenslanders, facing small businesses and facing communities right across the state.

The member for Nudgee, the Minister for Children and Youth Justice, said interest rates were responsible, she tried to blame macro-economic factors and she said that these were about making it fairer for renters, but the reality is that the kinds of provisions the Premier has been talking about—such as rental caps—make it harder for those who want to invest in rental property and drive more stock onto the market. These provisions disadvantage property owners—property owners who are nurses, doctors and tradies. In a previous debate in this House the member for Cooper spoke succinctly and passionately about her journey to be a property investor and I thought she said it very well: the majority of property owners are not wealthy multimillionaires; they are mums and dads, they are hardworking tradies, doctors, nurses and administrators who are just trying to get by, trying to be self-reliant and trying to set themselves up for the future. Unfortunately, what we have seen is this government seeking to attack those same people. Put simply, Queenslanders deserve better.

I turn to the substantive issue that is before us, which is local government expenditure caps. At the outset I will say that integrity and transparency in government are fundamental to ensure public confidence in our democratic institutions. Unfortunately, too often they have been lacking from this state government. That concept includes local government. Transparency and integrity are fundamental to ensure public confidence at a local government level as well. Just as they should be at every single level, local government elections must be free and fair. They must be free from undue influence. While we are not opposed to the implementation of expenditure caps for local government elections, we do have concerns in relation to the effect of some of the provisions contained in this bill.

When viewed through the lens of ensuring public confidence in free and fair elections, the fact that this legislation will enable Labor and their union masters to outspend other political parties by a ratio of 26 to one in the Brisbane City Council election is simply unacceptable. The same situation exists at a state government level, and Labor is seeking to extend it to the Brisbane City Council and use it to their advantage. This is an electoral fix designed to favour Labor at the expense of other political parties,

plain and simple. Not only has Labor tilted the odds in their favour through previous changes to electoral donation law; now they seek to further tilt the odds in their favour at the expense of Queenslanders, and Queenslanders deserve better.

I have heard what those opposite have said. I think it was the member for Pumicestone who talked about the LGAQ's position on this bill. We agree with the LGAQ that there should be a parliamentary review of this legislation 12 months after the next local government elections because far too often we have seen this government ignore the sorts of mechanisms that will ensure that provisions such as these will work.

**Mr Healy** interjected.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** I hear the member for Cairns interjecting. I understand he is the future mayor of Cairns. He is sick of selling his soul by representing Labor.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Cairns, I have warned you three times. You are now under an official warning.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** I hear the member for Cairns interjecting. As I understand it, he is the future mayor of Cairns. That is the word on the street. We know that he is sick of selling his soul for Labor gerrymanders and wants to jump ship to local government. All power to him. I would not want to sell my soul either. The reality is that the people of Cairns and the people of Queensland deserve free and fair local government. Local governments perform a very important role in Queensland and right across the nation. We really need to ensure that the system is free and fair.


The member for Ipswich spoke about expenditure caps 'levelling the playing field'. She spoke of raffle drives, grassroots campaigning and fundraising. That begs a question. If the unions—all 25 of them, or 26 if you include the Labor Party—can each spend \$1.3 million, that means \$33.8 million for the Brisbane City Council. That is what Labor's masters can spend and they have said they are just an arm of the union movement. That is what they can spend in the Brisbane City Council when other political parties can spend \$1.3 million. If that is not a gerrymander then I do not know what is.

Rather than making it harder for Queenslanders to represent their local communities, the state government should be seeking to reduce the burden on councillors who represent their local communities. At the moment we have a perverse situation where local government councillors are required to meet a far higher standard of behaviour than state government ministers. Surely if we expect councillors to meet a certain standard then the Minister for Local Government and all state members of parliament should be held to the same standard. However, right now they are not. Right now the Minister for Local Government is held to a lesser standard than a councillor in a western Queensland council. It is simply not good enough.

In a small western community with less than 200 electors, you have to ask yourself why anyone would subject themselves to the current regime by representing their community. Why would they work for their community as a local councillor when they are going to be put through the bureaucratic burden and the hurdles that currently exist? The OIA has been an abject failure. It seems that this government is intent on waging war on local councils. They want to make it harder for people to run for local government. We need as many candidates to put up their hands for local government elections as possible so we get the best representatives for our communities. Frequently being a local government councillor is a thankless task. Not every local government councillor is on the Brisbane City, Sunshine Coast or Gold Coast councils. Those are large councils and it is a full-time job, and it should be. However, with many of the councils that we are talking about it is a vocation. It is a calling to serve your community. You have to ask why someone would put themselves through it when those opposite seem intent on destroying the fabric of local councils.

It is for all of those the reasons that we need a parliamentary review after the next local government elections. I call on the government to support the amendment that will be moved by the shadow minister for local government. We want to see a parliamentary review supported by the parliamentary committee. They should be reviewing this legislation 12 months after the next local government elections. We do not want some bureaucratic oversight. The parliament should be reviewing this through the committee system and that will ensure that we can assess the effectiveness, fairness and impartiality of these laws. I know some of the provisions will be changed by regulation. I have serious reservations with respect to those provisions. The LGAQ support a committee review 12 months after the elections. On this side of the House we think that is an appropriate course of action.

While we will be supporting the bill, I call on those opposite to support the sensible amendment that will be moved by the shadow minister for local government and to listen to the voices of the people in this space. The government should listen to the LGAQ and the councillors who made contributions. I know that all members of the House have strong relationships with their local councillors. To be frank, you would be crazy not to because they are closest to the community. My local councillors, Councillor Christian Dickson and Councillor Ted Hungerford, are two of the people with whom I work closest. I think that is what our community expects. We should be making their jobs easier, not harder. We should be ensuring that they are able to meet the demands of their communities and no more so than in places such as Boulia, Richmond and the Diamantina shire. Those are the areas where people are doing it for the love of the community. It is a community service. I call on those opposite to keep them in mind when they are forming legislation and keep them in mind when considering whether they will support the opposition's amendment for a parliamentary review 12 months after the next local government elections.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (5.06 pm): Unfortunately, as there is a guillotine looming on this bill other members and I will not have the chance to speak as fully as we would like. I want to comment on a few aspects of the legislation before us. This morning the Deputy Premier tabled an amendment to be inserted into the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill that will amend a totally different piece of legislation. The legislation that he seeks to amend relates to residential tenancy laws and the introduction of a rental cap so that a landlord cannot increase the rent on their property under a 12-month period. We are yet to see any information from the government as to how many people are in rental properties with less than 12 months tenancy where this legislation will apply.

We are yet to see information from the government about how much private rental stock has been taken out of the housing market. That is a significant question because we know that there is a lack of supply and that that is the primary reason that rents have been going up by so much. All members of parliament know that there is a housing crisis. The housing crisis has been looming for some time and has now hit the fan because of a lack of supply. I cannot find the promised land supply monitoring report that the government was supposed to release last year. The last one I can find is the 2021 land supply monitoring report, but there is supposed to be one for last year. We do not have a clear picture from the government on the quantum of the lack of supply of land let alone the lack of supply of housing. Those who are paying the price for that lack of supply are the homeless who are living in tents, living in their cars and desperately rocking up to the limited rental stock that is available only to find that there are 30 or 40 other people competing for the same rental stock.

This amendment before the House does not address the fundamental issue that is causing the hardship, which is lack of supply. It also does not address the fact that there are people pulling their rental stock out of the market and selling it because they are scared about what this government will do in terms of fiddling in their rights as a private landlord. I have rental property listed on the pecuniary interests register, but this legislation does not effect what needs to be effected, which is the opening up of supply. The best way to put downward pressure on rents is to have more housing supply. On the Sunshine Coast alone there are about 7,500 to 8,000 more people a year than before COVID, yet only about 2,000 to 2,500 new homes are released per year. There is a significant difference between the population increase and the release of new housing, yet the government is behind on its own reporting mechanisms in terms of new land supply.

Until we start to see fair dinkum, transparent information about the release of new housing supply and about the barriers to private investment—people are getting out, we hear in record numbers, of private investment—this is all tinkering at the edges and failing to deal with the fundamental issues. It is failing to deal with the hardship caused by a crisis in housing that has been looming for the past seven to eight years and now is—

**Ms Grace:** Oh, rubbish.

**Ms SIMPSON:** It is a crisis in housing, Minister.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Members, we will not have any cross-chamber arguments, please.


**Ms SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is a crisis in housing, and it is a crisis because of a lack of supply. The fact that this government is so out of touch, so chaotic and embroiled in multiple crises—whether it is the crime crisis, an issue of integrity crisis or the housing crisis—means that it is out of touch with what is happening to everyday Queenslanders. We see desperation on the part of people who never envisaged they would be homeless or forced into a situation where 30 or 40 people

are competing for the one rental property. This legislation does not fix that. If we want to fix the rental and housing crisis, we need to start to be fair dinkum about releasing new, timely supply and looking at the barriers that are scaring people out of the private market.

Only a few days ago there was a story about Airbnb. We do not know the full extent of people moving into the Airbnb sector. It causes a lot of disruption in communities when residents find party houses next to them and there is a lack of mechanisms to deal with some of the inappropriate uses of those properties. However, there was an interesting comment from the owner of a property now being rented on Airbnb. That person said that the reason she had taken her house out of the residential rental market and put it on to Airbnb was that she was scared about this government and what it was doing.

I believe we need fair laws. We also need to listen to those who are mainly providing the rental stock. Build to rent is nice but, once again, it is tinkering around the edges of the systemic problems that have seen record numbers of people getting out of that market. About 70 per cent of homes are owner occupied and about 30 per cent are rental stock. It varies a little bit in some regions. On the Sunshine Coast about 72 per cent are owner occupied, many with big mortgages, with the balance being rental stock. As more people have sold those homes, fewer of those properties, not only on the Sunshine Coast but throughout Queensland, have come back into the rental market. We need to remove the barriers to private investment so that more people have a home.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time limit for this stage of the bill having expired, I call the Deputy Premier to reply to the second reading debate.

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (5.13 pm), in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022. In my opening remarks I reiterated that every Queenslanders deserves the best representation they can elect as well as every opportunity to be on their council. This bill comprehensively addresses recommendations from a wideranging inquiry by a parliamentary committee. It will minimise the risk of uneven financial competition among candidates in council elections.

I would like to address some of the specific matters raised by members during the debate. The government recognises that it is good practice to review legislative frameworks, including reviewing if they are appropriately achieving their policy intent. The State Development and Regional Industries Committee concluded that a review would be best carried out by the department as the policy lead in conjunction with the Electoral Commission of Queensland as regulator of the scheme. The ECQ will also undertake compliance activities for the scheme during and following each local government election. Findings from these compliance activities will also inform evaluation of the scheme's performance over time.

The local government expenditure cap scheme also aligns with the state expenditure cap scheme that is already in place. Consistent with the state expenditure cap scheme, the bill does not include provisions for a statutory review. The government supports recommendation 3 of the committee's report on the bill—that the department consider conducting a review of the electoral expenditure cap scheme within 12 months of the 2024 local government elections and that key findings of the review should be published.

A departmental review of councillor and mayoral candidate expenditure at the 2020 local government quadrennial elections has indicated that there is not sufficient evidence that differentiated caps for divided and undivided councils are required. However, to address differences in Queensland's local government areas, the scheme applies scaled caps acknowledging that the number of electors varies across Queensland's local governments. The cap levels have been determined to appropriately balance capping extreme levels of expenditure incurred by a minority of participants without imposing onerous caps on the majority of participants which would unduly restrict their ability to conduct campaign activities.

I note that a number of contributions referred to the Toowoomba local government area. The council candidate electoral expenditure cap for the Toowoomba local government area sits in band 3, the highest band for councillor candidates outside Brisbane City Council. The band currently only applies to Queensland's largest undivided councils, providing an expenditure cap of \$30,000. Candidate expenditure levels disclosed at Toowoomba's 2020 quadrennial election indicate that this cap is not overly restrictive. If the scheme had applied at the 2020 election, only two out of the 30

councillor candidates would have exceeded a cap of \$30,000. These two candidates' expenditure would have averaged approximately \$15,000 over the cap. The remaining 28 councillor candidates would have averaged approximately \$25,000 under the cap.

In addition, during consultation on the scheme, which included consultation on the expenditure cap levels, stakeholders did not raise any concerns about the caps for the Toowoomba local government area. Notably, Toowoomba regional council carried a motion in February to consider moving to a divided council structure. Changing the cap levels would have an impact on the expenditure caps for councillor candidates. The purpose of the cap is to limit excessive expenditure to ensure even campaign contests. A cap would be ineffective if it were set at a level above what anyone would spend anyway.

I note that the State Development and Regional Industries Committee was satisfied that the level of caps for mayoral and councillor candidates were appropriate and were underpinned by a comprehensive modelling and consultation process. It is important to reiterate that the committee has noted broad support for the scheme which has been made clear through a widespread and rigorous consultation process, with regular engagement with key stakeholders throughout the bill's development. Importantly, the committee's report noted unanimous support amongst inquiry participants for the introduction of an expenditure cap scheme in Queensland. This bill ensures a fair opportunity to participate in the local government electoral process.

As I outlined earlier, the government will move amendments to the bill to limit the frequency of rent increases from every six months to once a year for residential tenancies and rooming accommodation agreements. Around one-third of Queensland households rent. For most households, rent is the single biggest expense in their household budget. The government is taking immediate action to support renters now. Acting quickly to limit rent increases is a critical government response to community concerns about the impact of current market conditions on renting households and to give a fairer go to Queensland renters. The majority of landlords do the right thing, but taking immediate action will protect Queensland renters from landlords who are not operating fairly. The housing pressures we are seeing are not unique to Queensland and are being experienced by all states and territories. These amendments to limit rent-increase frequency will bring Queensland into line with other Australian jurisdictions.

These amendments balance the rights and interests of Queenslanders who rent and property owners and investors to maintain rental supply. I note that some contributors called for data to support these amendments. The Residential Tenancies Authority advised that in 2022 the number of tenancy agreements that saw more than one increase was over 24,000. In addition, in 2022 the RTA received almost 9,000 calls about rent increases, which demonstrates the size of this issue in the community. The government has taken decisive action to increase supply, affordability and diversity. These amendments are an immediate action to stabilise rents in the private rental market.

I would like to once again acknowledge the contributions of stakeholders to the many engagement processes undertaken in recent years on the local government expenditure caps reforms. I would particularly like to thank the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Electoral Commission of Queensland for their input into these reforms. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—



**Dr MILES** (5.21 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

**Dr MILES:** I move the following amendment—

#### 1 Clause 2 (Commencement)

Page 10, line 7—

*omit, insert—*

- (1) This Act, other than parts 4A and 4B, commences on a day to be fixed by proclamation.
- (2) Parts 4A and 4B commence on 1 July 2023.

I table the explanatory notes to my amendments and a statement of compatibility with human rights.

*Tabled paper:* Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022, explanatory notes to Hon. Dr Steven Miles's amendments [\[499\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Bill 2022, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Dr Steven Miles's amendments [\[500\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 56, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Ms LEAHY** (5.22 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

**AYES, 39:**

**LNP, 34—**Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

**Grn, 2—**Berkman, MacMahon.

**KAP, 1—**Dametto.

**PHON, 1—**Andrew.

**Ind, 1—**Bolton.

**NOES, 50:**

**ALP, 50—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 57—



**Mr WATTS** (5.27 pm): I just wanted to point out to members that Toowoomba, as an undivided council, has 115,000 electors. The member for Pine Rivers made several comments that there would be enough money with the cap. For the record, that would mean that at an election the member for Pine Rivers could only spend \$8,606. Her spend at the last election was \$1.57 per person, yet she thinks a councillor in Toowoomba should only be able to have 26 cents to spend per person. I put it to the member that 603 per cent more in allowance is available to her than to my councillors.

**Dr MILES:** I fear the member may not have been here when I responded to this point in my speech in reply to the second reading debate. The candidate expenditure levels disclosed at Toowoomba's 2020 election indicate the cap is not restrictive. Only two of the 30 candidates would have exceeded a cap. These two candidates would have averaged approximately \$15,000 over the cap. The remaining 28 councillor candidates would have averaged approximately \$25,000 under the cap.

In addition, during consultation on the scheme, which included consultation on the cap levels, stakeholders did not raise any concerns about the cap for the Toowoomba local government area. I noted earlier that Toowoomba regional council carried a motion in February to consider moving to a divided council structure. I think the point is that the purpose of a cap is to limit excessive expenditure to ensure even campaign contests. A cap would be thoroughly ineffective if it were set at a level above what anyone would spend without it.

Clause 57, as read, agreed to.

Clause 58, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—



**Dr MILES** (5.30 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

**Dr MILES:** I move the following amendment—

**2 After clause 58**

Page 161, after line 14—

*insert—*

**Part 4A Amendment of Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008**

**58A Act amended**

This part amends the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*.

**58B Amendment of s 91 (Rent increases)**

(1) Section 91(4)—

*omit, insert—*

(4) The day stated in the notice must not be earlier than the later of the following—

- (a) 2 months after the day the notice is given to the tenant;
- (b) the end of the minimum period before the rent may be increased under section 93.

(2) Section 91(6), after paragraph (a)—

*insert—*

- (aa) the increased rent is not payable before the end of the minimum period before the rent may be increased under section 93; and

(3) Section 91(6)(aa) and (b)—

*renumber* as section 91(6)(b) and (c).

**58C Amendment of s 93 (Minimum period before rent can be increased)**

(1) Section 93(1) to (5)—

*omit, insert—*

(1) A lessor or lessor's agent must not increase the rent payable by a tenant under a residential tenancy agreement less than 12 months after—

- (a) the day of the last increase for the agreement; or
- (b) if there has not been an increase for the agreement, the first day the tenant was required to pay rent under the agreement.

Maximum penalty—20 penalty units.

(2) If at least 1 tenant's right to occupy the same premises is continued across 2 or more residential tenancy agreements, subsection (1) applies as if the agreements were a single residential tenancy agreement.

(3) For subsection (1), it does not matter whether or not the lessor or agent who increases the rent is the same person as the lessor or agent who last increased the rent.

(4) Nothing in this section prevents the lessor or agent from giving notice of an increase in rent within the 12 months mentioned in subsection (1) provided the increase does not take effect until the end of the 12 months.

(2) Section 93(6)—

*renumber* as section 93(5).

(3) Section 93—

*insert—*

(6) In this section—

**increase** includes purportedly increase.

**58D Amendment of s 105 (Rent increases)**

(1) Section 105(2)(b), ' , not earlier than 4 weeks after the day the notice is given,'—

*omit.*

(2) Section 105—

*insert—*

(2A) The day stated in the notice must not be earlier than the later of the following—

- (a) 4 weeks after the day the notice is given to the resident;

- (b) the end of the minimum period before the rent may be increased under section 105B.
- (3) Section 105(4), after paragraph (a)—  
*insert—*
- (aa) the increased rent is not payable before the end of the minimum period before the rent may be increased under section 105B; and
- (4) Section 105(4)(aa) and (b)—  
*renumber* as section 105(4)(b) and (c).

**58E Insertion of new s 105B**

After section 105A—

*insert—***105B Minimum period before rent can be increased**

- (1) A provider or provider's agent must not increase the rent payable by a resident under a rooming accommodation agreement less than 12 months after—
- (a) the day of the last increase for the agreement; or
- (b) if there has not been an increase for the agreement, the first day the resident was required to pay rent under the agreement.
- Maximum penalty—20 penalty units.
- (2) If at least 1 resident's right to occupy the same room is continued across 2 or more rooming accommodation agreements, subsection (1) applies as if the agreements were a single rooming accommodation agreement.
- (3) For subsection (1), it does not matter whether or not the provider or agent who increases the rent is the same person as the provider or agent who last increased the rent.
- (4) Nothing in this section prevents a provider or agent from giving notice of an increase in rent within the 12 months mentioned in subsection (1) provided the increase does not take effect until the end of the 12 months.
- (5) In this section—  
*increase* includes purportedly increase.

**58F Amendment of s 154 (Increase in rental bond)**

Section 154(a)—

*insert—**Note—*

See sections 91 and 105 for the requirements to be met before rent may be increased.

**58G Amendment of s 277 (Ending of residential tenancy agreements)**

Section 277(b) and (c), 'before'—

*omit, insert—*

after

**58H Insertion of new ch 14, pt 7**

Chapter 14—

*insert—***Part 7 Transitional provisions for Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Act 2023****575 Limit on frequency of rental increases applies to all agreements from 1 July 2023**

- (1) Sections 91 and 93 as amended by the 2023 amendment Act apply to all residential tenancy agreements in effect after 30 June 2023 regardless of when the agreements started.

*Note—*

If a term of a residential tenancy agreement is inconsistent with section 91 or 93, as amended, the section prevails and the term is void to the extent of the inconsistency. See section 54.

- (2) Section 105 as amended by the 2023 amendment Act, and section 105B inserted by the 2023 amendment Act, apply to all rooming accommodation agreements in effect after 30 June 2023 regardless of when the agreement started.

*Note—*

If a term of a rooming accommodation agreement is inconsistent with section 105 or 105B, as amended, the section prevails and the term is void to the extent of the inconsistency. See section 76.



- (3) In this section—

**2023 amendment Act** means the *Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Act 2023*.

**576 Amendment of section 277**

- (1) The replacement of section 277 by the 2021 amendment Act, and the amendment of section 277 by the 2023 amendment Act, are taken to have not affected the ending of a residential tenancy agreement on a day before 1 July 2023 if—

- (a) the lessor or lessor's agent gave the tenant a notice to leave under section 326 and the tenant handed over vacant possession of the premises; or
- (b) the tenant gave the lessor or lessor's agent a notice of intention to leave under section 327 and the tenant handed over vacant possession of the premises.

- (2) In this section—

**2021 amendment Act** means the *Housing Legislation Amendment Act 2021*.

**2023 amendment Act** means the *Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Act 2023*.

**Part 4B Amendment of Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Regulation 2009**

**58I Regulation amended**

This part amends the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Regulation 2009*.

**58J Amendment of sch 1, pt 2, cl 10 (Rent increases—ss 91 and 93)**

- (1) Schedule 1, part 2, clause 10(3)(b), '6 months'—

*omit, insert—*

12 months

- (2) Schedule 1, part 2, clause 10(5), after paragraph (a)—

*insert—*

- (aa) the increased rent is not payable before the end of the minimum period before the rent may be increased under section 93; and

- (3) Schedule 1, part 2, clause 10(5)(aa) and (b)—

*renumber* as schedule 1, part 2, clause 10(5)(b) and (c).

**58K Amendment of sch 1, pt 2, cl 36 (Ending of agreement—s 277)**

Schedule 1, part 2, clause 36(1)(b) and (c), 'before'—

*omit, insert—*

after

**58L Amendment of sch 2, pt 2, cl 10 (Rent increases—ss 91 and 93)**

- (1) Schedule 2, part 2, clause 10(3)(b), '6 months'—

*omit, insert—*

12 months

- (2) Schedule 2, part 2, clause 10(5), after paragraph (a)—

*insert—*

- (aa) the increased rent is not payable before the end of the minimum period before the rent may be increased under section 93; and

- (3) Schedule 2, part 2, clause 10(5)(aa) and (b)—

*renumber* as schedule 2, part 2, clause 10(5)(b) and (c).

**58M Amendment of sch 2, pt 2, cl 42 (Ending of agreement—s 277)**

Schedule 2, part 2, clause 42(1)(b) and (c), 'before'—

*omit, insert—*

after

**58N Amendment of sch 3, pt 2, cl 34 (Ending of agreement—s 277)**

Schedule 3, part 2, clause 34(1)(b) and (c), 'before'—

*omit, insert—*

after

**58O Amendment of sch 3A, pt 2, cl 33 (Ending of agreement—s 277)**

Schedule 3A, part 2, clause 33(1)(b) and (c), 'before'—

*omit, insert—*

after

**58P Amendment of sch 4, pt 2, cl 8 (Rent increases—s 105)**

- (1) Schedule 4, part 2, clause 8, heading, 's 105'—  
*omit, insert—*  
**ss 105 and 105B**
- (2) Schedule 4, part 2, clause 8(5), after paragraph (a)—  
*insert—*
  - (aa) the increased rent is not payable before the end of the minimum period before the rent may be increased under section 105B; and
- (3) Schedule 4, part 2, clause 8(5)(aa) and (b)—  
*renumber as schedule 4, part 2, clause 8(5)(b) and (c).*

**Mr MANDER:** This amendment goes to the core of the changes that the government is proposing which is no longer allowing six-monthly rental increases but on a yearly basis only. Since this has not been scrutinised by any committee and there has been no proper examination, I have a couple of questions for the minister which I would appreciate if he could answer.

What modelling was done that would advise us how renters are advantaged by having annual rent increases rather than six-monthly rent increases? For example, if in the past you had a 2½ per cent rent increase every six months and now you have at least a five per cent rent increase every year, how does that benefit renters?

The other question to the minister is with regard to current rental contracts. If there is a rental contract in place at the moment which designates that there will be a rental increase, say, on 18 August, does anything in this bill prevent the original intent of that contract from being carried out? Will that still be able to happen? Does this mean that from 1 July that contract is null and void and they will be subject to a 12-month increase rather than what is already in the contract?

These are real questions and real issues that I think people deserve to know, particularly landlords who have entered into contracts with goodwill—

**An opposition member:** In good faith.

**Mr MANDER:** Yes, in good faith—I take that interjection—and I think that is reasonable. The whole tenet of my question is: what tangible benefit will renters receive from these changes that the government is making which will simply allow rental increases to happen annually rather than every six months?

**Mr HART:** I did not get the opportunity to talk during the debate. I was on the State Development and Regional Industries Committee. It would have been really good if this amendment had come to the committee to have a look at. The government has not consulted with anyone on this amendment. I would like to add to the questions that the member for Everton has put forward.

My understanding is that this comes in on 1 July. If somebody raises their rent a number of times between now and 1 July, will the government be monitoring that or doing any modelling to see what actually happens there? I have a real concern that the government's legislation will trigger multiple increases or higher increases in rent and that it will have an adverse effect—in fact, the opposite effect—to what the government thinks this amendment will have. I would appreciate an answer from the Deputy Premier to that as well.

**Dr MacMAHON:** These amendments at best are completely meaningless and at worst are going to make things worse for renters. For anyone on a 12-month lease, this is the status quo—no change. This is business as usual. From the data we have seen, the majority of Queensland renters are on 12-month leases. This will mean nothing to them. For any renters watching this today, if you are on a 12-month lease, know that the government today are doing absolutely nothing for you. For anyone on a six-month lease, what this amendment does is create a perverse incentive for a landlord or a real estate agent to kick someone out because the 12-month period only applies if you have the same tenants in a property. If you kick someone out after six months, you could still increase the rent.

Since Labor have failed to end no-grounds evictions and the end of a lease is still grounds for eviction, what do you think is going to happen in six months time for people on six-month leases? They will be getting kicked out so the rent can go up. More importantly, there is no limit on the amount by which rent can go up—no limit. There is nothing to stop landlords jacking up the rent by 20 per cent, 30 per cent, 40 per cent. We saw that in the media recently with the Deputy Premier's own rental property in West End—jacking up the rent there. There is nothing to stop the amount by which rent can go up.

I would like to draw attention to the explanatory notes that clearly say there has been no consultation—no consultation whatsoever. Not only did this not go through a committee; no-one from the government bothered to speak to a single renter. The housing minister could not be bothered to speak to a single renter about what these amendments will mean. I am dumbfounded. I cannot believe that it is only me and the member for Maiwar who could be hearing stories from renters like this. Let me share this. Because you did not consult with anyone, let me share this story with you—

I have lived in my current property for two years. I've been through floods and a leaking roof for six months. During this time my housemate and I have undertaken significant repairs and maintenance at our own cost because the owner doesn't reply, including fighting a massive mould infestation and we were told that our rent at \$465 would be increased to \$620—a 33 per cent increase.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Dr MacMAHON:** This is in a mould infested property. Let me read you some other stories because you did not consult anyone. This is someone who wrote in from the electorate of Greenslopes about the rent freeze—

My husband and I are expecting a baby. As the main income earner, that will mean going on maternity leave. I'm extremely nervous about any increase in rent that I know is likely to happen before our lease is renewed. Things will already be financially tight for us but with the added pressure of a rent increase this will certainly lead us to not being able to afford health insurance.

A renter in Cooper said—

My rent has increased by 15 per cent since last year—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr BERKMAN:** I will take the opportunity to add to the member for South Brisbane's contribution given how little time we have to contribute on this. I am sure I was not the only person who when this announcement about so-called rent caps was made it actually gave me a moment to pause for hope. I should have known immediately that it was false hope because that is routinely the case with these sorts of thought bubble announcements.

We have been on the record for some time and are the only party that is actively advocating for rent controls including rent caps and a rent freeze. I will be very careful not to stray into anticipating debate in respect of the private member's bill that the member for South Brisbane has introduced. What we know is that this is not a rent cap as it was described. It is a fake rent cap that does nothing to actually affect the amount by which rent could increase. The reality for renters now is that extreme inflation in the rental market is the real problem. The frequency of rent increase I have not heard—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek your clarification about whether this is pre-empting debate on the bill that is before the House.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** I will take some advice. We were actually considering that. The general tenet of this debate is somewhat similar to the other bill that is before the House. The member has noted that he is attempting to not pre-empt the debate or anticipate the debate. I ask the member to continue in that vein and to try to stay relevant to this bill without anticipating debate on the other bill. I know that is going to be a tricky line to tread. I am sure you will give it the best go you can.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I will give it a red-hot go. The fundamental point is that the frequency of rent increases is not the key issue for renters: it is the amount by which rents are increasing at the moment. We know that the amount of rent increases, the rate of rent inflation, is far outstripping CPI at the moment, and that is in an extraordinarily inflationary environment. How people in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis are supposed to keep up with that is a real challenge, and this bill does absolutely nothing to address it.

I would say as well that the way this has been presented is quite reminiscent of the supposed end to no-grounds evictions we saw in the last round of rent reforms. The government has in reality done nothing to end no-grounds evictions. They have just added an additional basis for eviction, which is the end of a tenancy. There need be no more substantial reason than that, so renters remain as insecure in their homes as they did before that last round of rental reforms. We were told then they were ending no-grounds evictions. Nothing of the sort happened. We are told now that the government is introducing rent caps to protect renters. Nothing of the sort is happening this time. As the member for South Brisbane mentioned, this in fact does the opposite. It risks creating a perverse incentive for landlords to end leases at the end of a shorter six-month period because they will then be entitled to increase the amount of rent. This is worse than just fake reform. It is absolute rubbish and it leaves renters more exposed.

As far as I can tell, we still have no information on just how few renters—even if it were to offer some assistance—it would assist. What proportion of leases are six-month leases? I rented for many, many years, and I cannot recall an occasion when I ever had a six-month lease. Annual leases are always the way it is done. Frankly, I would like it if the minister could give us an answer on that.

*(Time expired)*

**Dr MILES:** I will do my best to address the points that have been raised by various members on this amendment. The amendments to limit rent rise frequency are designed to bring Queensland into line with other jurisdictions. To address one of the elements that the member for Everton raised, other jurisdictions that have had this system in place for some time have not reported experiencing increases higher than otherwise at the time of the signing of a new 12-month lease. Clearly, at the time the landlord offers the lease for renewal to the tenant they need to do so. Market forces require them to do so at the market price at that point in time, not anticipating what it might be in six months time.

As I outlined earlier, the RTA advised that in 2022 the number of tenancy agreements that saw more than one increase in a 12-month period was over 24,000, which goes to points raised by the member for Everton and the member for Maiwar. The member for Burleigh asked how this impacted existing leases that might terminate in the period less than 12 months after the laws come into effect. The effect of this will be that as those leases roll over they will not be able to increase the rent if they have experienced a rent increase in less than the past 12 months. For example, if they signed a six-month lease in March that comes up in August, they will not be able to experience a price increase in August. They will not be able to experience a price increase until March.

In relation to the contribution from Greens political party members, I note that the claims of the member for South Brisbane regarding no-grounds evictions are incorrect, and the minister has interjected to that effect. I would also urge them to consider that this is one element of a wide range of reforms that the minister has today commenced consultation on. This is one element of the stage 2 rental reforms. What we just saw from the Greens political party was their continued opposition to the good, demanding the extreme, opposing incremental progress even though they know there is more to come, but doing so for their own political benefit and grandstanding. The member for Maiwar said that the frequency of increases is not even an issue. Well, tell that to the 24,000 people who experienced more than one rent increase in 2022. I would simply urge—

**Dr MacMahon** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Order!

**Dr MacMahon** interjected.

**Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Member for South Brisbane, you are warned under the standing orders. I called the House to order and you continued to interject.


**Dr MILES:** I urge the public to ignore the grandstanding from the Greens political party and participate in the consultation process on the further rental reforms the minister announced today.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 59, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading


 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (5.46 pm): I move—

That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

### Long Title

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (5.46 pm): I move the following amendment—

**3 Long title**

Long title, 'and the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011*'—

*omit, insert—*

**, the *Local Government Electoral Act 2011*, the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* and the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Regulation 2009***

Amendment agreed to.


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

Motion agreed to.

## HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 29 November 2022 (see p. 3644).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (5.47 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the Health and Environment Committee in conducting its inquiry into the bill and thank the committee for its report tabled on 24 February 2023. The committee made five recommendations: the first was that the bill be passed. I appreciate the committee's support for the bill. I table the government's response to the committee's report on the bill. I will speak to the committee's recommendations in more detail shortly.

*Tabled paper:* Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 29, 57th Parliament—Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, government response [\[501\]](#).

The Palaszczuk government is committed to the ongoing improvement of Queensland's healthcare system to ensure it continues to deliver the best possible health outcome for the community. Queenslanders are fortunate to have access to world-class health care. The Palaszczuk government is making every effort to ensure our health system embraces opportunities for efficiencies and advancements and keeps up with best practice. This bill updates health portfolio legislation to ensure it is contemporary, effective and appropriately supporting our hardworking public health workforce.

The bill also amends the Recording of Evidence Act 1962 to establish a statutory framework for prescribed tribunals. The bill will amend the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to require hospital and health boards and hospital and health services to proactively consider ways to support the health, safety and wellbeing of their staff. Hospital and health service staff are crucial to the success of Queensland's public health system and they need to know that their wellbeing is a priority. Making hospital and health services and hospital and health boards directly accountable for their staff's health and wellbeing in legislation is an important step towards creating healthier, more supportive work environments for healthcare workers. Queenslanders can only be healthy and stay healthy if we have a healthy workforce to support them.

The bill will require boards and HHSs to promote a culture and implement measures within their HHS to support the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff working in public sector health services. This will bring staff wellbeing considerations to the forefront of planning and service delivery for Queensland's public health services in recognition of the unique challenges this workforce faces. The new obligations will contribute to the Palaszczuk government's efforts to grow the health workforce in Queensland and retain and support staff once they join this workforce.

Security officers working in Queensland's hospital and health services play a vital role in ensuring these facilities are as safe as possible for patients, staff, families and visitors. This can be challenging. Healthcare workers and health security officers are often dealing with people in stressful, unpredictable

and potentially volatile situations. The bill will amend the Hospital and Health Boards Act to make clear that health security officers cannot provide a direction for a person to leave hospital and health service land if the person requires emergency medical treatment.

The bill will also amend the Public Health Act 2005 to insert the Queensland Health Primary School Nurse Health Readiness Program, known as the vision-screening program, as a program to which student information can be disclosed under the act. This will enable vision-screening nurses to oversee the consent process for vision screening and follow up with families without relying on school staff. The amendments will reduce the administrative burden on school staff and nurses and maximise the number of children who are screened for the leading cause of preventable vision loss. Ultimately, this will promote better health and educational outcomes for children in Queensland.

The bill will amend the Public Health Act to modernise and increase the data notified to the Queensland Cancer Register so that it can provide a better picture of cancer and cancer related treatments in Queensland. The bill will introduce notification requirements for diagnostic imaging practices and expand notification requirements for pathology laboratories and hospital notifiers. These changes will result in significantly more data being notified, improving the completeness and quality of cancer data in Queensland. This data will be used for research into the cause of cancer and for programs to educate the Queensland community about the risks of cancer.

The bill will amend the Recording of Evidence Act 1962 to establish a new statutory framework for recording the proceedings of prescribed tribunals and providing access to copies of records and transcriptions of the proceedings. The existing framework under the act is not readily adaptable to smaller tribunals, such as the Mental Health Review Tribunal, that have particular requirements and often do not sit in a regular controlled premises, such as a courtroom.

The new framework established by the bill preserves the requirement for the recording of all relevant matters in proceedings of prescribed tribunals but will allow more flexibility in how they may be recorded and how the records of proceedings may be provided. Under the new framework, a prescribed judicial person for a prescribed tribunal may arrange for the recording of proceedings and the transcription of records. The prescribed judicial person must ensure arrangements are in place for providing copies of records or transcriptions of records.

The new framework provides safeguards to protect the privacy, safety and wellbeing of persons referred to in records or transcriptions of records by providing that access to a copy of a record or transcription may be restricted by legislation or an order of a court tribunal or judicial person. The tribunals to which the new framework will apply will be prescribed by regulation. It is intended the Mental Health Review Tribunal will be a prescribed tribunal.

The bill also amends the Mental Health Act 2016 to ensure there are no barriers to the Mental Health Review Tribunal transitioning to electronically record its proceedings and share records of hearings. It is intended that electronic recording of proceedings will be the default position of the Mental Health Review Tribunal. However, the bill allows for another method of record keeping to be used if there are compelling reasons that make electronic recording inappropriate, such as where it would cause significant distress to a person appearing before the tribunal. In recognition of the sensitivity and typically closed nature of the Mental Health Review Tribunal proceedings, the bill limits who the Mental Health Review Tribunal can provide electronic records or transcriptions to. The amendments aim to promote fairness, accountability and accessibility in proceedings about the treatment of vulnerable people in our community.

The bill will also amend the Mental Health Act to allow adults with capacity to waive their right to legal representation by any means, including verbally. Waivers will no longer have to be provided in writing if the Mental Health Review Tribunal is satisfied it would not cause injustice to the person. The requirement for a waiver to be in writing can be an administrative burden for patients and create unnecessary delays. It has resulted in situations where the tribunal has had to adjourn a proceeding until a written waiver can be completed. During an adjournment period, a person's involuntary treatment can continue without independent review, or access to important treatment may be delayed. Given the importance of the right to representation, the bill inserts safeguards to only allow a verbal waiver in place of a written waiver if the tribunal is satisfied that this would not cause injustice to the person. This may include, for example, where the proceeding is electronically recorded.

The bill will also make amendments to the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 to allow information to be disclosed to protect the health and safety of the community. The bill will ensure that Queensland Health can disclose confidential medicines and poisons information to a hospital and health service, the Veterinary Surgeons Board of Queensland and law enforcement agencies for regulation, safety and

compliance purposes. The amendments will also enable members of the public and wholesalers to verify whether a person they are dealing with has appropriate approvals to deal with medicines or poisons.

The bill will authorise the chief executive of Queensland Health to disclose information from the substance authority register by providing information directly to a person or publishing information from the register on the department's website where it is in the public interest and to disclose information from the administrative action register directly to a person where it is in the public interest. The public interest test is a high bar that protects the privacy of health practitioners and primary producers with substance authorities while ensuring that members of the community can have access to information that could help them to avoid public health risks. The bill will also make other technical and clarifying changes to improve the operation of the Medicines and Poisons Act.

The bill will amend the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 so that the consent processes for organ donation that apply in public hospitals also apply in private hospitals. This will mean families in private hospitals can provide verbal consent to organ donation followed by written consent. Grieving families will no longer have to deal with intrusive paperwork at a difficult time, removing a barrier to successful organ donation. The bill will also remove the requirement for a Queensland doctor to be granted a ministerial permit before they can obtain tissues supplied under the Therapeutic Goods Administration Special Access Scheme. Omitting this duplicative approval process will allow life-saving products to be supplied more efficiently to people who require them.

Finally, the bill will amend the Water Fluoridation Act 2008 to remove the requirement that fluoridation decisions must be notified in a newspaper and replace it with a requirement that the decision be made publicly available. It will also make two technical amendments to the Radiation Safety Act 1999 to improve the operation of the act and its interaction with the Radiation Safety Regulation 2021.

Turning to the committee's report and recommendations on the bill, I acknowledge the work of the committee and the secretariat and thank the stakeholders who provided valuable feedback during the committee's inquiry. As I have already mentioned, the committee recommended that the bill be passed and I appreciate the committee's support for the bill.

The committee recommended at recommendation No. 2 that hospital and health services and hospital and health boards regularly report on their progress on supporting staff health, safety and wellbeing at a minimum in their annual reports. The government supports recommendation No. 2 in principle. Subject to the passage of the bill, I will write to hospital and health boards and hospital and health services to bring the committee's recommendation to their attention and encourage them to include updates about their efforts to support staff health, safety and wellbeing in their annual reports.

The committee's third recommendation requested that I outline the process for assessing any requests for disclosure of information on the administrative action register under the Medicines and Poisons Act, as proposed by clause 13 of the bill, and how the chief executive will determine whether it is in the public interest to disclose information.


The policy intent of this amendment is to allow delegated decision-makers to consider the risks associated with providing information from the administrative action register that are relevant to each case and have discretion about whether or not to provide information based on a public interest test. A form will be available on the Queensland Health website for people to use to make formal requests for information from the register. A public interest decision tool will be developed to assist Queensland Health decision-makers to make sound decisions. Decision-makers will be provided with guidance and training on applying the public interest test to respond to requests for confidential information from the register. Factors such as the nature of any health risks to the public, the level of the health risks and the risks of harm to the person whose information may be disclosed will all be relevant to whether it is in the public interest to disclose information. Decisions to disclose information will be made on a case-by-case basis.

In addition, the process for assessing any requests for disclosure of information on the administrative action register will consider: whether the information is publicly available elsewhere; who the person requesting the information is—for example, are they a member of the public seeking information for general knowledge or a health professional seeking information about a member of the health profession for the purpose of treating patients; the reason for requesting information; any risks associated with giving the information; relevant human rights and whether the benefits gained by giving the information outweigh any risks associated with giving the information. The process for assessing requests for disclosure ensures that, if a decision is made to provide information, it is in the public interest to do so.

The committee also, at recommendation 4, recommended that resources for technical or administrative support be provided to the Mental Health Review Tribunal to make recordings and transcriptions of proceedings. Queensland Health has worked closely with the Mental Health Review Tribunal since it trialled electronic recording in 2020 and during development of the bill to ensure that the tribunal has the capacity to electronically record proceedings and appropriately share records. The tribunal has advised that, subject to the passage of the bill, it will commence electronic recording as soon as the new legislative framework has commenced. No barriers to this have been identified. The tribunal will have the resourcing and skills to make recordings in-house. It already owns the recording devices it will require and is developing a training package for members about conducting recordings. The tribunal intends to appoint a dedicated staff member to support the recording process. Other costs of implementing electronic recording will be met through existing Queensland Health budgets.

The committee's final recommendation is for Queensland Health to consider as a priority the inclusion of all basal cell carcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas as notifiable cancers in future amendments to the Public Health Regulation 2018. As the committee noted, Queensland has the highest rate of skin cancer in Australia. Queensland Health's approach to date has focused on obtaining data for the particular types of skin cancers with the worst outcomes for Queenslanders such as melanoma and rare cancers. This is in line with most Australian cancer registries which do not routinely collect data for any types of basal cell carcinomas or squamous cell carcinomas of the skin. Queensland Health will consider as soon as possible whether to amend the Public Health Regulation to make all basal cell carcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas notifiable skin cancers. As someone who has had all three, I welcome them considering this. This will include careful consideration of the resource impacts for Queensland Health and health providers, and whether the extra information would create benefits for effective system planning, preventative interventions and resource allocation at this time.

The amendments in this bill are designed to ensure Queenslanders have access to high-quality health care, up-to-date practices and streamlined procedures. They also aim to promote healthy and supportive work environments to safeguard the mental health and wellbeing of our doctors, nurses, midwives, allied health professionals and our administrative and support staff working in hospitals. Our frontline health workers show up every day to keep us healthy and provide support to Queenslanders during stressful and difficult times. This bill will help to ensure this crucial workforce continues to get the support they need to stay healthy and well. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them again for everything they do. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (6.03 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 and do so as the opposition shadow spokesperson for health and ambulance services and medical research. To be clear from the very start, the LNP will not be opposing this bill. It is not a controversial piece of legislation by any stretch of the imagination which is why the opposition will not stand in the way of the provisions included as part of the bill. Those provisions for the most part are technical. In most instances, on face value they appear to make some relatively minor modernisations across legislation within the health portfolio. Most of the technical changes appear to be relatively common sense in an effort to stay up to date with the delivery of health care in a modern Queensland. The opposition will not seek to hinder those changes on their passage through the House here this week.

It has been a little over four months since the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 was introduced to parliament on 29 November last year. The bill amends eight acts across the health portfolio which are as follows: the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, Medicines and Poisons Act 2019, Recording of Evidence Act 1962, Mental Health Act 2016, Public Health Act 2005, Radiation Safety Act 1999, Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 and Water Fluoridation Act 2008. I will address some of those amendments in more detail throughout my contribution tonight. I note that the bill was referred to the Health and Environment Committee for consideration which tabled its report on 24 February 2023, and I would like to thank the committee for its report and in particular thank the members for Southport and Bonney for their time taken on examining the bill throughout the committee process.

With regard to Hospital and Health Boards Act amendments relating to staff wellbeing, much of the government's focus with this bill has been on the provisions involving the changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, so that is where I, too, will begin my address and what I will spend the most time on tonight. I do so because it gives me a good opportunity to talk about our frontline health workforce, my colleagues in our healthcare facilities right up and down this state and the incredible work which they do day in and day out.



The amendments to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 are designed to strengthen protections for the physical and psychological wellbeing of the public health workforce by requiring Hospital and Health Services, the HHSs, to proactively consider the health, safety and wellbeing of staff of public sector health service facilities. I note that the bill will require Hospital and Health Services, along with their boards, to proactively consider staff wellbeing. That is all well and good; there are no issues from our side on that front. Like I said earlier, we will not oppose this. These staff have shouldered a heavy burden in the face of the recent pandemic and before that. I have been on the record many times in this place acknowledging the work they did in the face of what was a concerning unknown back in 2020. That event shone a light on what they do each and every day which is truly incredible work. I wish it did not take a pandemic for the world to see it, but now we all know just how special our clinicians are. We are grateful for them and the often selfless work which they do.

As somebody who has worked in health care most of my life and who has had family do the same, I know the pressures of the job. I know the stress. I know the pains. I know the heartache. I know the frenetic pace. I know the call bell which seems like it may never stop ringing. I know the feeling of being overwhelmed by it all. I know the fatigue. I know the skipped breaks. I know the meals that never get eaten. I know the long night shifts. I know the tiresome day shift. I know the day shift that turns into a night shift. I know the sacrifice. I know because I have lived it and my sisters have lived it. There are thousands and thousands of Queenslanders who do that work every day without fail, and it is quite incredible. Let's be honest: it is not easy work. It is hard work, but it is rewarding work. It is a calling to work in the field of health care. For those who it calls, it can give an indescribable sense of joy and fulfilment. It really is a job like no other. I am immensely proud to call myself a nurse and those Queenslanders also working in the field should be immensely proud, too. Nurses, doctors, paramedics and allied health staff—every last one—should be proud.

They should never go to work and feel threatened or harassed or abused or bullied. That is just not on, not ever. I know that examples of that type of behaviour were raised through public hearings and public submissions on this bill. It is not okay that that happens. In fact, it is disgraceful that frontline health staff should ever be subject to behaviour like that, but it does happen, so having protections and safeguards in place for them is very important.

We have noted the support from stakeholders for these amendments. We have reflected on them ourselves and that is why we will not oppose the changes that the government has put forward. However, ensuring that there are proper follow-ups for harassment, bullying and abuse are but one part of the problem, and I think it is important in this House tonight that we have a candid debate about why our frontline staff are feeling that angst, burnout and fatigue which we now hear about all too often.

There are no two ways about it: our frontline health staff in Queensland are getting smashed out there every shift, every day—paramedics, doctors, nurses, allied health staff down to the last woman and man. We are consistently told by whistleblowers that it is bedlam on a daily basis. That is why they are feeling burnt out and exhausted. It is not an exaggeration; it is very legitimate. They are fatigued, they are stressed and there are high levels of burnout amongst the workforce. I note the comments by the QNMU and the AMAQ throughout the committee process who conveyed these very same messages.

I want to put on record today that I am extremely concerned about the collective feeling that has been conveyed to me and my opposition colleagues by those on the front line. It is a collective feeling of hopelessness. It is a feeling that the situation will not improve. There are decades and decades of experience walking away from the sector seemingly weekly and it is damaging. The government can come back in here today and give themselves a big pat on the back for these amendments that seek to promote a culture that supports staff wellbeing. They are well intentioned: I do not doubt it. I know that in the minister's explanatory speech she mentioned that this was the part of the bill she was most proud of, and that is fine.

However, let's all be honest with each other here today. The root cause of the angst, the burnout and the fatigue felt by our frontline health staff is not borne from the fact that wellbeing protections did not previously exist. Their angst, burnout and fatigue are a result of the broken system in which they are working. They are feeling burnt out because there are record numbers of patients waiting longer than 24 hours in emergency departments and they cannot find a bed for them. They are feeling fatigued because the health system where they work has the worst ambulance ramping in the country and they have to deal with the ramifications of that. It means 400 hours that were lost on the ramp every day last year. They are feeling exhausted because the number of patients they treat who wait longer than clinically recommended to see them has surged.

Our frontline staff feel that way because they feel like the system is working against them. They do not feel listened to, they do not feel heard and so many of them have just had enough. I get it. We have a health system here in Queensland which has not kept pace. Those opposite have had the reins for more than eight years and it has taken them that long to get serious about building the health infrastructure which Queensland so desperately needs. It took them eight years to come up with that plan and now they want another eight years to try to implement it. If the government were really serious about the wellbeing of our frontline health staff they would have been getting on with delivering the beds needed to meet the demand of our population years ago. A contented clinician is someone who feels they can safely and adequately look after their patients with the right tools and resources at their disposal, but that is not happening.

I want to put on record my genuine concern for the wellbeing of staff at the Gladstone Hospital, particularly those working in the hospital's maternity unit. I cannot begin to imagine the stress those staff have been under for more than 280 days working in those circumstances. It would be draining. Likewise, I feel for the staff in Rockhampton who have been effectively running a birthing service for two towns for the better part of the year. Let's also not forget the women, their unborn babies and their wider families who have also been caught up in this situation. I know the staff at those facilities would be putting the wellbeing of their patients ahead of their own wellbeing such is their dedication to the care they provide.

That is but one example across the state where the staff cannot care for their patients as they wish they could, and that would be taxing on their wellbeing, make no mistake. We have a situation where things are at crisis point right across the state. I know the minister might not want to admit it, but it is. It is a crisis. Our health system here in Queensland is in crisis and it is causing a crisis of low morale in our frontline staff. The minister's own staff said it best when they said the health portfolio was 'just going from one crisis to another'. Truer words have not been spoken.

Our frontline health staff need empowerment, not platitudes. The opposition has been clear about that throughout this entire term of government. Efforts to ensure the wellbeing and safety of our frontline health staff in this bill, whilst well intentioned, will not make their jobs easier. It will not stop the burnout. Without addressing the root cause of the problem and genuine empowerment to implement local solutions for local patients by local staff, I fear the feelings of burnout and fatigue amongst that workforce are destined to continue.


As I mentioned at the start of my address, other than the amendments to the Hospital and Health Boards Act which I have just outlined, there are seven other pieces of legislation which this bill amends. Many of those amendments are inherently technical, so I will briefly touch on each of them.

The LNP does not oppose the amendments to the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019. The amendment seeks to ensure information contained on registers about approvals of persons working with medicines or poisons and administrative actions taken against persons who have dealt with medicines or poisons in an improper way can be disclosed. I note the concerns of the AMAQ and the QNMU during a draft bill consultation around these provisions. I also note the committee's recommendation around requesting that the minister clearly outline the rationale for how a decision to disclose information in the public interest is made and I do note the minister's recent contribution in the second reading debate.

The amendments to the Recording of Evidence Act 1962 are not opposed by the opposition nor are the amendments to the Mental Health Act 2016, the Radiation Safety Act 1991, the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 and the Water Fluoridation Act 2008. The amendments which allow the screening of children for preventable vision loss by authorising the disclosure of student information from schools to Queensland Health's vision-screening health service under the Public Health Act 2005 will also not be opposed by the LNP.

These amendments also seek to modernise the Queensland Cancer Register so that it more accurately reflects the incidence of cancer by extending notification requirements. The LNP note that the Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association supported the provisions of the bill which modernise capturing the incidence of cancer, however did flag that substantial work would be required to meet these requirements across Queensland's radiology practices. They shared some reservations about whether this could be feasibly done in the time line set out. Those are genuine concerns and the LNP hope the government has plans to adequately address the valid issues which have been raised for when these changes come into effect. The LNP also notes the committee recommendation that Queensland Health consider including all basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas as notifiable cancers in future amendments to the Public Health Regulation 2018. That seems a fair and reasonable recommendation given the high incidence of skin cancers here in Queensland.

In the Minister's explanatory speech the minister talked about reforming Queensland's health system. The minister said, '... our government is committed to significant reform in Queensland Health.' If that were the case, it certainly will not be done through this bill. There is some work to modernise existing processes and systems in this bill, but there is no significant reform. That rhetoric does not match the reality. The centrepiece of the bill, being the changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, are well intentioned but they are not system reform. Those amendments do not address the root cause of the widespread burnout and fatigue among our frontline health workforce. That is evidently clear. The root cause of the burnout and fatigue is the crisis situation played out across our health system each day, but this piece of legislation will not alleviate those issues.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (6.17 pm): With the indulgence of the House, I congratulate you, Madam Deputy Speaker, on your elevation to the role of Deputy Speaker for this sitting. I will try not to be warned by you, but it is always a challenge and difficult when I follow the member for Mudgeeraba.

I rise to support the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. From the start I would like to thank and acknowledge all of my fellow committee members: the members for Pumicestone, Lytton and Mirani, the deputy chair, and the member for Bonney. I thank the secretariat as well. We recommended that the bill be passed and I thank the minister for responding to the other four recommendations in her earlier contribution.

The objectives of the bill are: to facilitate initiatives that promote Queenslanders' health, to support the provision of health services in Queensland and to improve the operation of health portfolio and related legislation. The bill proposes amendments to eight acts in respect of the following—and I want to particularly start with the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011—staff health, safety and wellbeing measures. Having come from a health background myself of 35 years—

**Ms Pease:** Oh really?

**Mr HARPER:** Yes—I thank the minister for making this a priority for our hardworking, dedicated health professionals right across this state, particularly after their extraordinary work during the COVID pandemic and their ongoing work in an ageing and growing population which, by its very nature, is placing more pressure and increased demand for services right across our broad health network. They should all be commended.

Whilst the bill addresses those multiple acts, this is the one I want to talk about the most. As the member for Mudgeeraba noted, the submission from QNMU to the inquiry noted the results of their own membership surveys identified workplace violence, demanding workloads, fatigue and burnout as well as wellbeing issues for their members. Similarly the AMAQ observed in its own survey, the 'resident hospital health check'—and I commend the AMAQ for passing their survey back on to the HHSs to keep them informed about staff wellbeing concerns.

As members can see, submitters were supportive of the proposal in our report to require hospital and health services to promote cultures and implement measures that support the health, safety and wellbeing of public sector health staff. I recognise my own HHS in Townsville. In particular, I applaud their annual staff excellence awards where staff across the health service are recognised for their hard work. I know that the minister attends those awards; they are fantastic. I also recognise and congratulate our board chair, Tony Mooney, for continuing these events to recognise and promote a positive environment in our HHS in Townsville. Some of the Queensland Health recommendations for wellbeing activities include wellbeing check-ins, peer support programs, flexible work arrangements and promoting staff consultation measures. I can say that a lot of those measures were implemented in QAS many years ago, particularly the peer support program. It is great to see these programs expanded into the hospitals.

The bill amends the act to address security guard powers at health facilities regarding the power to direct persons to leave public health premises. Having worked in the emergency department, I am acutely aware that at times it can be a very challenging environment. No health worker should have to put up with people who are intent on being a nuisance or, worse, abusive or violent. They are there to treat and help patients in a safe workplace. I recognise and acknowledge the security officers at our hospitals and the work they do to keep health workers safe.

Section 183 of the act currently authorises security officers to direct a person to leave HHS land if they are causing a public nuisance, being disorderly or creating a disturbance. Security officers may also direct a person to leave in related circumstances where an officer reasonably believes or suspects

that a person has caused a public nuisance, has posed a threat to the safety of anyone else on the land or has no lawful justification or excuse to be on the land. During the examination of this bill, it was good to get clarity from Queensland Health that security officers will not be responsible for making clinical decisions about patient care. A person's medical need in emergency care is an objective determination that will continue to be based on clinical advice, with security officers acting on the clinical assessment and direction of clinical staff.

The bill amends other acts such as the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019, including disclosures of confidential information about persons working with medicines and poisons. The bill allows Queensland Health to disclose confidential information about individuals who work with medicines and poisons where it is in the public interest or for regulation, safety and compliance purposes. It establishes a statutory framework for recording and giving access to transcripts of evidence and clarifies who can access copies of transcripts. It supports the Mental Health Review Tribunal's transition to implementing electronic recording of its proceedings, in line with the contemporary recording practices of courts. The committee's report recommended that resources for technical and other administration support be provided to the Mental Health Review Tribunal to make such recordings and transcripts of proceedings.


The bill also amends the Mental Health Act and allows adults with capacity to communicate their waiver of the right to representation in the Mental Health Review Tribunal's proceedings by any means including verbally, rather than by a mandated written waiver as occurs now.

The bill allows schools to disclose information about Queensland Health's vision screening health service. The bill—this is very important—extends the notification for requirements to the Queensland Cancer Register and enables the collection of additional data. I am going through some processes now. In fact, this week I have to obtain further advice on some biopsies that I have had. Of course, in North Queensland we are always exposed to harsh conditions, and I think it is a great further recommendation made by the committee relating to the Queensland Cancer Register, which is one of Australia's largest population-based cancer registers, established under the Public Health Act.

Diagnostic imaging practices are currently not required to make notifications to the QCR, and the current requirements for hospital notifications of relevant cancer treatments are also limited. It will require pathology labs to notify all cancer related pathology results of examinations following a primary cancer diagnosis, even if that result does not show cancer. Importantly, it will require hospitals to notify the QCR of an individual who attends a hospital for any reason and is diagnosed for cancer at the hospital or receives cancer related treatment. The new notification requirements are intended to give a comprehensive coverage of cancer incidence and to allow QCR to monitor the progress of a disease after diagnosis, evaluate treatment effectiveness and monitor any remission periods.

Cancer Council Queensland submitted its support for the bill's goal of improving the completeness of quality cancer data in Queensland and recommended that the definition of notifiable cancers be expanded to basal cell carcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas. Again noting that Queensland has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world, the committee supported that suggestion and recommended that Queensland Health consider as a priority the inclusion of all BCCs and SCCs as notifiable cancers in future amendments of the Public Health Regulation Act.

Identifying risk factors for vision problems in young children and referring them for follow-up can improve their engagement, concentration and behaviour at school and, accordingly, their long-term educational outcomes. The bill maintains the existing privacy protections for information sharing and safeguards that are under the Information Privacy Act. If a parent does not consent to the screening or to their child's information being shared with the vision screening program, they can advise the school. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (6.26 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, I wish to add my congratulations to you on your elevation today to the role of Acting Deputy Speaker. I rise to speak on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which proposes largely commonsense and practical modifications to eight acts within the health portfolio. While these modifications aim to enhance our healthcare system—I note that the LNP will not oppose the bill; in fact, we made no dissenting report or statement of reservation—we must acknowledge that these amendments will not resolve the core issues affecting our health system and its workforce. I add my thanks to my fellow committee members for the work undertaken on this particular review of the legislation. I would now like to outline the main amendments in this bill and examine their potential impact on our healthcare system.

Changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 aim to reinforce protections for the physical and mental wellbeing of public health workers. We recognise and support the outstanding efforts of our frontline health staff, particularly during the recent pandemic; however, these amendments will not

tackle the underlying cause of burnout and exhaustion amongst healthcare professionals. Instead, we must address the systematic problems in our health system and empower frontline staff to create local solutions for local patients. Time permitting, I would like to speak more on that subject.

Amendments to the Public Health Act 2005 authorise the disclosure of student information from schools to Queensland Health's vision screening health service to screen children for preventable vision loss. These amendments also modernise the Queensland Cancer Register to better represent cancer incidence by extending notification requirements. The LNP obviously supports this change.

Changes to the Recording of Evidence Act 1962 seek to establish a legal framework for recording prescribed tribunal proceedings and providing access to recordings and transcripts. Modifications to the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 focus on enhancing information disclosure concerning the approval of individuals working with medicines and poisons and administrative actions taken against those who have mishandled them. Additionally, these amendments clarify the definitions related to fumigation, pest control and primary producers.

The changes to the Mental Health Act 2016 clarify access to records or transcripts of Mental Health Review Tribunal proceedings and change the requirements for adults waiving the right to representation in such proceedings. Changes to the Radiation Safety Act 1999 introduce a new offence for failing to ensure a person does not receive an excessive dose of ionising radiation and allow exemptions for low-risk radioactive materials from current requirements. The modifications to the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 alter requirements for doctors to purchase human tissue products approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration's Special Access Scheme and ensure consistent consent processes for human tissue and organ donations across public and private hospitals. Amendments to the Water Fluoridation Act 2008 eliminate the need for water fluoridation decisions and implementation notices to be published in print newspapers.

The Health and Environment Committee has made five recommendations, including support for the bill's passage. The LNP also acknowledges the recommendation that Queensland Health consider making all basal cell carcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas notifiable cancers in future Public Health Regulation amendments given the high incidence of skin cancers in Queensland. Skin cancer, as all of us know, is one of the most prevalent cancers in our state and it is vital that we can address this. While the LNP supports the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, we must recognise that these amendments will not resolve the larger issues affecting our healthcare system. As an opposition we commit to working with the government to enhance our healthcare system, investing in infrastructure and the resources to support our healthcare workers and to meet the growing demands of our population.

Unfortunately, the current government has failed to work for Queenslanders in improving and fixing the burnout that is within our current healthcare system. I refer very briefly to the submission made by the Queensland nurses union. I note that in its submission it supports the amendment regarding the health and wellbeing obligations of hospital boards. To read from its submission—

This Amendment addresses a previous concern raised by the QNMU regarding the wellbeing of health staff, concern associated with significant and ongoing member feedback.

I can only wonder how often it has raised those concerns over the last 30 years with this current Labor government and its predecessors, as they have largely held control of the health system over the last 30 years. Its submission continues—

QNMU regularly runs a membership survey identifying key areas of concern by members. Over recent years workplace violence has featured with rates around and above 50% ...

More concerningly, it continues—

In the most recent 2022 survey, 78% (n=5,050) of respondents cited Dangerous Workloads, and 76% (n=4903) Moral Distress and Fatigue as key issues. This level of distress clearly will not only impact on staff, on prospective staff but also the patients in our health system and highlights why the QNMU sees the move for a formal, enforceable approach to the introduction of wellbeing plans for staff as of the highest priority.

During the course of the public briefing we were encouraged or permitted to ask questions of Queensland Health. One of the questions I raised in respect of the amendments that place an increased obligation on our health and hospital boards was this: isn't this just rules about rules? I note that the submission from the Australian Workers' Union essentially said that. It said—

... the wellbeing of Queensland's public health workforce is already dealt with in Queensland legislation. Specifically, it is the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 ...

I understand that there would be no-one in the chamber today who would be opposed to taking greater steps towards looking after the health and wellbeing of Queensland workers. I will now quote from the *Hansard* transcript from the public briefing. My comments were simply this—

I fully appreciate the need to have sound practices in place in terms of the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff.


I went on to say that, however, any general manager, CEO or board has an almost automatic obligation to look out for the best interests of their staff. That point was also raised, as I said earlier, by the Australian Workers' Union. As I said—

Isn't this just another set of rules about rules? Shouldn't we just be getting on with looking after our staff?

That is particularly interesting in light of the recent Queensland Audit Office report, *Health 2022*. It made the observation—this is a public document, so I am not quoting from anything that was discussed more recently in committee in private or in closed sessions—in its report on a page—

During 2021—22, there were large increases across all HHSs and the department in staff sick leave and overtime, and most HHSs also recorded an increase in frontline contractor expenses due to system capacity issues. The total amount of unused staff recreation leave is increasing. This indicates that the HHSs' workforce is under significant pressure.

We do need to take greater action in looking after our staff. We are dealing with significant global trends and we did hear from the Department of Health in a public briefing that the demand for labour across the world is increasing and that in America alone there are some 300,000 vacancies across health services, so we need to do better in addressing the labour force challenges that the Queensland Audit Office has raised and that this report and this legislation seek to raise, because without a clear strategy to improve staff health and wellbeing across the system we will not attract the staff we need to meet the demand.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (6.36 pm): I stand today to speak to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill amends seven health portfolio acts to support the provision of health services in Queensland and makes technical amendments to ensure legislation is contemporary and operates as intended. These are the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, the Public Health Act 2005, the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019, the Mental Health Act 2016, the Radiation Safety Act 1999, the Transplantation and Anatomy Act 1979 and the Water Fluoridation Act 2008. The bill will also amend the Recording of Evidence Act 1962 to establish a statutory framework for recording the proceedings of prescribed tribunals and providing access to copies of recordings and transcripts of the proceedings. It is intended that the Mental Health Review Tribunal will be a prescribed tribunal under the new framework.

The amendments in the bill have been informed by consultation and between September and October 2022 over 220 stakeholders were invited to participate in the consultation process on the bill. The committee itself received 12 submissions and I want to take the opportunity to say thank you to all of the submitters who made the effort to contribute a submission and put forward their opinions. I also want to acknowledge the work of my parliamentary colleagues on the Health and Environment Committee, particularly the chair, Aaron Harper, the member for Thuringowa, and all of the other parliamentary committee members. I also want to take the time to thank the secretariat. It has done a great job and I appreciate all of the work that it has done.

The bill itself will make important changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act to strengthen protections for the physical and psychological wellbeing of workers in Queensland public health services, including clinical, administrative and operational staff. I want to take a moment to thank all of our workers in the HHSs and Queensland Health for everything that they do each and every day, particularly the workers who have dedicated much time in my electorate such as the wonderful staff at Gundu Pa and maternal child health services. I also want to take a moment to acknowledge the great staff who used to work at the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit until it was closed down by those opposite and when 85 residents lost their homes that day with the stroke of a pen. While talking about chaos and crisis, we all know what those opposite in the LNP are capable of doing.

The public health workforce operates in what is often a high-pressure, challenging environment. The importance of public health workers' contributions to the Queensland community became even more visible during the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill requires the HHSs to proactively consider the need to support and implement measures that support the health, safety and wellbeing of staff in Queensland public sector health service facilities, including staff who perform community or home-based work. This requirement is intended to complement and contribute to broader compliance activities required under existing work health and safety legislation.

Under the Medicines and Poisons Act, Queensland Health maintains a register containing information about licences and authorities granted to persons who may deal with medicines and poisons and a register with information about administrative action taken against persons who have dealt with medicines and poisons in an inappropriate way. To enable the public, wholesalers and retailers to verify whether a person they are dealing with has appropriate approvals to deal with medicines or poisons, the bill inserts an authority for the chief executive of Queensland Health to disclose information from the registers to an individual seeking the information if it is in the public interest. Information from the administrative action register may be disclosed by giving information directly to a person who makes an inquiry. Information from the substance authority register may also be disclosed by giving information to a person or by publishing the register or part of it on Queensland Health's website if it is in the public interest. The public interest test will enable a range of factors, including the likely impact on a holder of an authority, to be considered in determining whether it is appropriate to disclose the information.

The bill also makes two key changes to the Public Health Act and these are to allow student information to be shared between schools and public dental and immunisation programs to support positive and important outcomes for children. The Queensland Health Primary School Nurse Health Readiness Program, or the vision screening program, is a public health program that screens the Queensland prep student cohort each year for the presence of lazy eye and other risk factors subject to parental/guardian consent. As the Public Health Act does not cover the vision screening program, schools cannot provide the program with information about families who have not returned an electronic or paper form that provides or refuses consent for the child to be screened unless the family has consented to the information being shared. The bill allows schools to disclose student information to the vision screening program. The act and the Public Health Regulation 2018 specify the particulars that can be disclosed, such as the name and date of birth of the student and the parent/guardian contact details. The student information will allow vision screening nurses to oversee the consent process for vision screening without having to rely on school staff. These amendments will reduce the administrative burden on school staff and nurses and maximise the number of children who are screened for this preventable vision loss.


The Public Health Act establishes the Queensland Cancer Register and requires a broad range of information to be notified to the QCR. The notification requirements in the act reflect the types of health facilities involved in the diagnosis and management of cancer when the register was established in 1980. The information does not reflect contemporary diagnostic techniques and cancer management. The QCR is currently not notified of all important information from pathology laboratories or all relevant cancer related treatment from hospitals. To address these data gaps and ensure the QCR is contemporary and keeping up with best practice, the bill amends the Public Health Act to require pathology laboratories to provide additional cancer related examination results performed by the pathology laboratory following a person's primary cancer diagnosis, extend the cancer diagnosis notification requirements to diagnostic imaging practices and enable additional data to be required from hospital notifiers, including cancer treatment centres, about all cancer related treatment provided—that is, each cancer treatment episode and each procedure or investigation regarding cancer.

The notification methods for existing notifiers will not change. The QCR has been in place for almost 40 years and additional data being notified to the QCR will be protected by the existing strict safeguards that mitigate the risk of unauthorised access in line with industry best practice. The new notification requirements will provide comprehensive coverage of cancer incidents in Queensland, allowing the QCR to monitor the progress of the disease after diagnosis, evaluate the effectiveness of treatment and monitor disease free intervals to provide an indication of a person's cancer returning. They will also help to provide more comprehensive data for research to determine the cause of cancer and improve the quality of cancer services and for programs to educate the Queensland community on the risks of cancer.

The bill will also allow the Mental Health Review Tribunal to implement electronic recording of its proceedings. To ensure the new framework established by the Recording of Evidence Act applies appropriately to the MHRT, the bill limits the parties to which the MHRT can provide records, including written records, audio or electronic records or transcript, to judicial persons, the registrar of the Mental Health Court, the Chief Psychiatrist performing a function or exercising a power under the Mental Health Act, inspectors appointed under the Mental Health Act and persons entitled to be given written notice of the decision in the proceedings.

The bill also amends the Mental Health Act to remove the requirement for an adult with capacity to waive the right to be represented at the Mental Health Review Tribunal in writing. The requirement for the waiver to be in writing can be an administrative burden for some patients and can create a barrier

to individuals exercising their rights in a timely manner. It has resulted in situations where the MHRT is unable to dismiss a legal representative even though the person with capacity has chosen to waive their rights to representation. Currently in these circumstances the MHRT must adjourn the proceedings until a written waiver can be completed and consequently slow down the proceedings. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (6.46 pm): I rise to speak on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I want to thank the shadow minister, the member for Mudgeeraba, for her contribution. I acknowledge that we have a lot of health practitioners of different types in the House. We have the paramedic from Thuringowa, we have the nurse from Mudgeeraba, the doctor from Moggill and, members may not know, the former member for Currumbin's husband was a doctor, and I am a registered dental surgeon so my interest in the health of Queenslanders is well established. This bill deals with changes that are largely technical but go towards strengthening our health system in Queensland. I support any initiatives that promote better health in our community.

There are elements of the bill which the opposition acknowledge are commonsense updates and modernisations to legislation across the health portfolio. As mentioned, as an opposition we are not opposed to seeing them implemented carefully and thoughtfully by the government. The bill amends eight acts across the health portfolio which I will outline, but I note this bill does not address the current issues crippling our health system such as ambulance ramping and waiting lists. The Labor government's record on ambulance ramping is appalling and is more than double the worst in the nation at 38 per cent across Queensland. The government has placed emphasis on the changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act which seeks to improve staff wellbeing. The changes to the other seven acts are more technical in nature.

I thank the Health and Environment Committee for its report. It received 12 submissions to the inquiry which were mainly concerned with the bill's amendments to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011. Amendments to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 are designed to strengthen protections for the physical and psychological wellbeing of the public health workforce by requiring hospital and health services, HHSs, to proactively consider the health, safety and wellbeing of staff of public sector health service facilities.

As an opposition we have called on the government to fix the broken health system and want to place on the record our admiration and support of all frontline health staff. It has been well documented that staff have suffered a heavy burden in recent years with the COVID-19 pandemic crippling our hospitals here in Queensland. The opposition will never stand in the way of strengthening protections for the physical and psychological wellbeing of staff. We note the support from stakeholders for these provisions. The Australian Medical Association Queensland welcomed the amendments, advocating for independent evaluation of all measures and that these evaluations be made public on an annual basis. Amendments to the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 have been included to ensure persons who have dealt with medicines or poisons in an improper way be disclosed if in the public interest. The amendments also seek to clarify the meanings of 'fumigation activity', 'pest control activity' and the definition of 'primary producer' in relation to authorisation for use of fumigants and pesticides.

Amendments to the Recording of Evidence Act 1962 will establish a statutory framework for recording the proceedings of prescribed tribunals and providing access to copies of records and transcriptions of the proceedings. Amendments to the Mental Health Act 2016 clarify access requirements for copies of records or transcriptions of Mental Health Review Tribunal proceedings and also change the requirements for adults waiving the right to representation in Mental Health Review Tribunal proceedings.

Amendments to the Public Health Act 2005 will allow the screening of children for preventable vision loss by authorising the disclosure of student information from schools to Queensland Health's vision screening health service. These amendments will also modernise the Queensland Cancer Register so that it more accurately reflects the incidence of cancer by extending notification requirements. The Australian Diagnostic Imaging Association supported the provisions of the bill that modernise capturing the incidence of cancer. However, it noted that substantial work would be required to meet those requirements across Queensland's radiology practices. The association shared reservations about whether this feasibly could be done in the time line set out. The opposition hopes the government has plans to address the issues that have been raised by the time this legislation comes into effect.




Amendments to the Radiation Safety Act 1999 create a new offence for failure to ensure a person does not receive greater than a specified dose of ionising radiation and enable low-risk radioactive material to be exempted from current requirements. Amendments to the Transplantation Anatomy Act 1979 change requirements for doctors to purchase human tissue products approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration's Special Access Scheme and also seek to ensure consistent consent processes are implemented for human tissue and organ donation across private and public hospitals.

Finally, a matter of particular interest to me is the amendments to the Water Fluoridation Act 2008 that remove the requirement for water fluoridation decisions and implementation notices to be published in a print newspaper. Members in this place may not be aware, because there are not many left from the 51st Parliament, that on 1 September 2004, as the first dentist elected since 1937 or 1938, I was pleased to present the Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Amendment Bill. Unfortunately, as a private member's bill it was defeated 70 to six. At the time there were five Liberals and we secured the support of the then Independent member for Maryborough, Chris Foley. At that stage we were not the LNP. We were the Liberal Party and even the Nationals would not join us. The Nationals and the Labor Party voted together against us, but we took up the fight.

I am proud to have seen fluoridation subsequently returned into the water of Queensland given that it had been done since 1963 in Melbourne and occurred in every other jurisdiction. Something that I subsequently took into my ministerial career was that if you have seen legislation done somewhere else and it has sorted things out then I reckon we can do it in Queensland as well. Therefore, on behalf of my profession, I am very pleased and proud that fluoridation is now here. Given the impracticality of notices being published in a print newspaper that requirement will be waived through this bill.

It should be noted that Queensland Health recommends including all basal cell carcinomas and squamous cell cancers, which are cancers that dental surgeons often see as well, as notifiable cancers in future amendments of the Public Health Regulation 2018. Of course, as Queensland has the unfortunate title of skin cancer capital of the world, that is certainly a reasonable recommendation.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (6.53 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I must say that I quite enjoyed that little wander down memory lane from the member for Surfers Paradise. As I am sure all members do, I appreciate his commitment to people's dental health over many years.

This bill makes minor but important amendments to facilitate initiatives that support the provision of health services in Queensland and promote better health care for Queenslanders. Our government thinks that there is nothing more important than that. The bill amends multiple acts to update and modernise our Queensland health system and touches on overarching themes of ensuring health worker wellbeing, strengthening the management of information and balancing accountability with privacy protections. Very importantly for our Palaszczuk Labor government, the amendments in this bill primarily seek to deliver better protections for our healthcare workers to whom we all owe so much as we come out the other side of an unprecedented global pandemic. They could not be more important as we continue to work hard to deliver an innovative, contemporary and fit-for-purpose public health system.

Unlike the member for Southport, whose wonderings I always enjoy, we think that rules about rules are important at times and that, in fact, we need rules to ensure the safety of our health workers. All of that fits into the context of the incredible increases in demands on our public health system in Queensland and on our health workers as a result. In one recent quarter alone we saw an 11 per cent increase in ambulance demand. With those increasing demands, the pressures on the wellbeing of health workers are escalating and taking steps to ensure that they are cared for and protected are more important than ever. In this legislation we are taking steps to make hospital and health services and hospital and health boards directly and specifically responsible for ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of health workers and, indeed, all employees within Queensland's public health system.

As Ms Kellie Dwyer, professional officer of the QNMU noted, our health workforce face dangerous situations day in, day out and they need to know that we are taking every possible step to ensure that they are protected. Mr Jamie Shepherd said that it is about looking forward to going to work, being able to do your job safely and competently, and going home at the end of the day feeling that you have done a good job. You should not be wondering, 'Will I get hit today?'

I note the feedback from many submitters who expressed appreciation for the consultative process undertaken by the department, particularly the legislative and policy unit. The AMAQ in particular acknowledged the legislative and policy unit for its collaborative approach. The AMAQ stated that they were extremely pleased to see included key amendments regarding enhanced hospital and

health service responsibility for health worker wellbeing and that they appreciated the sensible changes made to the bill as originally proposed to allow enhanced natural justice for health workers facing administrative action.

In relation to the changes regarding security officers, the bill amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act to make it clear that security officers cannot direct a person to leave hospital and health service land if the person requires immediate care. In their response to questions, the department was very clear that security officers will not have the responsibility for making clinical decisions relating to the health status of a person, which was comforting particularly for the unions involved. The QNMU submitted that the changes relating to security officers are very important and that nursing staff value and appreciate enormously well trained security staff. In environments where critical care is required or the case mix is varied or complex, understanding the precise boundaries is crucial and these amendments will make a real difference.

As we have heard, the bill modernises and increases the data provided to the Queensland Cancer Register. Of course, that is essential for making sure that cancer data can be utilised to give the best possible treatments, research, care and ultimately outcomes for Queenslanders. The changes will ensure that more data is provided to the register and the data is more complete. More valuable information will allow the risk of cancer to be managed into the future.

Of course, managing cancer risk and ensuring that Queenslanders facing cancer are supported as well as possible are key values for our government as we saw with the commitment to build the \$750 million Queensland cancer centre at Herston. I know for the people in my electorate that is a very welcome initiative. As the member for Thuringowa noted in his contribution, Queensland has the highest rates of skin cancer in the world and it is essential that we gather data that can help with prevention, treatment and recovery. That was the strong advocacy of the Cancer Council Queensland and we all hope that we see that occur.

We appreciate the minister's commitment to have Queensland Health continue to engage with that issue and look closely at whether it is possible to increase the notification of data around basal cell carcinomas and squamous cell carcinomas. They are the cancers that so many of us will experience in our lifetime. Gathering and managing that data appropriately is important.

The changes to the Mental Health Review Tribunal proceedings recording are really sensitive and important for the small number of Queenslanders who go through that process. The new framework that is established by this bill allows more flexibility for the recording of evidence and the reporting of outcomes of tribunal decisions and enhances safeguards—

Debate, on motion of Ms King, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

### Ayr Hospital, CT Scanner



**Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (7.00 pm): What price do we put on human life? What price do we put on the quality of life? It is a question that has been pondered for years in this place, but it is a question that the Burdekin Community Advisory Network has actually been able to answer. In the Burdekin area, that price is \$2.8 million—the price of installing a CT scanner at the Ayr Hospital. As it stands today, up to 15 patients a week are forced to make the journey to Townsville—a 180-kilometre round trip. What about the people who do not have access to transport? They rely on our already overstretched Ambulance Service and have a wait of up to five hours. The paramedics and ambulance staff in Ayr and Home Hill do their absolute best every single day to care for residents of the Burdekin as well as the people who travel the long stretch of the Bruce Highway that runs through the electorate. Just like their colleagues in many areas throughout the state in other emergency services, their resources are often stretched, but still this government refuses to commit to funding a CT scanner at the Ayr Hospital.


Recent media reports refer to a 58-year-old woman who presented in Ayr with symptoms of a stroke. This woman needed to be taken to Townsville for a CT scan, but the ambulance and a hospital staff member were already on the way to Townsville with another patient. In this case the patient's diagnosis and treatment were delayed, but it could have been much worse. Just a week ago, at the opening of a new ward at the Townsville University Hospital, the federal assistant health minister said—

We know that health outcomes are so much better, if someone can be seen quickly and safely triaged ...

As Kaylee Boccalatte, chair of the Burdekin Community Advisory Network, said, this project is about improving equity of access and catering to an ageing population.


There is no doubt that a CT scanner at the Ayr Hospital would ensure better health outcomes. This government has the opportunity to deliver those better outcomes. I call on the minister to do exactly that by funding this vital equipment in the upcoming budget. The last thing we need is a repeat of the Bowen Hospital CT scanner situation. It took seven long years to get that CT scanner in place in an upgrade to the medical imaging facility at that particular hospital. What a difference that has made to that community and the neighbouring community of Collinsville. It is that flow-on effect. As I like to say, just because you live in rural and regional Queensland it should not mean that you do not have access to those types of services. The provision of a CT scanner at the Ayr Hospital would make a massive difference to that community. I am glad that the minister is here tonight to hear me request funding in the upcoming budget for that particular item of equipment.

### **Australian Volunteer Coast Guard; Redcliffe, Mobile Police Beat**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (7.03 pm): I am thrilled to stand up and talk about a visit I had last week from the Minister for Police and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, Minister Ryan, who joined me in announcing a brand new rescue vessel for the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association QF3 Redcliffe base. They are getting a brand new rescue vessel in April 2024. The great news is that it is \$1.9 million of investment. It is being built in Maryborough, by a Queensland-based company. Allweld Manufacturing has been awarded the contract to construct the 11.9-metre catamaran. This new vessel for the coast guard is really exciting. I want to thank the coast guard for the great work they do each and every day in keeping our community safe—working with our police, water police and of course the Queensland Ambulance Service as well as the hospital and health service. I also congratulate them on their fundraising for a new lift in their facilities. This means that people with mobility issues will now be able to come in and volunteer whereas before they had difficulties because the only access was via stairs. They did a lot of fundraising for that \$83,000 lift installation. Some \$10,000 came from QFES, \$20,000 came from the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the rest they funded themselves. I congratulate QF3 Redcliffe for their great work each and every day.

Last Friday we also launched a mobile police beat for Redcliffe. This is fantastic. We know about the traditional ways of having a police beat in a shopping centre: they are static and only open certain hours. Having a mobile police beat that can move around the area, be proactive and go to big events and festivals but also quickly respond to major incidents will make all the difference. That high-visibility policing presence increases safety in the community and reduces crime. It was so exciting to launch that wonderful police beat at the youth space at Redcliffe. The youth space has just celebrated its 21st birthday. Happy 21st to them. I acknowledge Amy-lee Mayes, their manager, who has 17 years of service looking after the youth in our community. They also now provide so many other services including around mental health. I want to acknowledge her and her wonderful staff and volunteers for the great work they do with the young people in our community. It was great to launch the mobile police beat at their facility. Last Friday they also started up Picnic Hill, an event coordinated and run by the young people as they gain skills. Well done to Redcliffe Area Youth Space, the Queensland Police Service and the coast guard for their great efforts.

### **Acton, Mr A; Davies, Mr G**


 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (7.06 pm): It is with great sadness that I rise to pay tribute to Alan Acton, who tragically passed away on 4 April at age 65. His loss will be felt by many. I offer my deepest condolences to his wife, Jennifer; children, Daniel, James and Jessica, and their partners and children; sister, Elizabeth; and brothers, Robert and Evan. The Acton family is one of Queensland's best known and most successful pastoral families. Alan was a worthy part of the family's 150-year contribution to the Queensland beef industry and, of course, our thoroughbred racing industry.

Central to the story of the Acton family is a beautiful home property called Wilpeena, near Dingo, where Alan sadly lost his life while helicopter mustering. Alan loved Wilpeena, so it is fitting that it is his last resting place. Wilpeena Station celebrated its centenary in 2017. It is renowned among Central Queenslanders for its famous Wilpeena races. These were held on the property from 1927 to 2008, attracting crowds of up to 3,000 people. As his great friend Colin Dunne told *Emerald Today*, Alan was a great force for the community and he and Jennifer did a huge amount for the community behind the scenes.

We also lost another icon in Queensland agriculture, Graham Davies OAM, a very successful canefarmer, cattleman and business leader in the Mackay, Moranbah and Middledmount region. When I say that he made a contribution to reforming our sugar industry, that is an understatement. In 1988 he led the charge for Mackay Sugar, which would become one of Australia's biggest farmer owned mill cooperatives. Graham had a motto: 'I want farmers to be price makers, not price takers'. Forming that cooperative allowed Mackay canegrowers in the 1990s and early 2000s to gain full financial benefit from that investment. Graham was also chair of the Australian Sugar Milling Council and later served as the chair of the state government Queensland Rural and Industry Development Authority under the late Tim Mulherin.

Tonight we say vale to two Central Queensland icons of our agriculture industry: Alan Acton and Graham Davies. We are starting to lose too many of these people who have been involved in our agriculture industry for a long time. I just say vale to both those people.

### **Hervey Bay TAFE, Nursing and Allied Health Facility**

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (7.09 pm): Recently I had the pleasure of welcoming the Minister for Training and Skills Development to my electorate of Hervey Bay. With Jobs Queensland predicting that there will be a need for at least an eight per cent increase in skilled workers in the Wide Bay region by 2024-25, which is more than 12,000 extra workers needed regionally since 2020-21, it was an opportune time for Minister Farmer to visit Hervey Bay to open the excellent new \$1.3 million nursing and allied health facility at our wonderful Hervey Bay TAFE campus.


It goes without saying that the demand for healthcare workers is set to continue to climb due to our region's popularity. This new \$1.3 million facility will equip our local TAFE to meet this demand. This new TAFE facility will be able to train upwards of 120 local healthcare students at home in Hervey Bay every year. The TAFE facility now has state-of-the-art training environments, including low- and high-fidelity wards, a replica nurse station, observation and medication rooms and three general learning classrooms. The training workspaces have also been designed to accommodate virtual reality technology activities into the future.

Talking to the trainee nurses at the facility, they acknowledged how the new facility will give locals a chance to train for a rewarding career at home in Hervey Bay and complete their certification as an enrolled nurse. This is further proof that this government recognises that demand for local health workers in our regional health sector is set to continue. With the Fee Free TAFE program making it easier to study, this growth will no doubt continue well into the future.

The contrast between this positive and forward-thinking government and the desire to drive forward our communities' skills and training and the views of those opposite could not be starker. It is with concern that in Hervey Bay we still have the LNP running around saying that they would make it their goal to bulldoze the Hervey Bay TAFE campus into the ground for some fictitious use of the site in the future. This just shows our community how the LNP has not changed. We know that with the former LNP member's support in 2015, the Hervey Bay TAFE was to be closed. It leaves me to ask the question: why does the LNP hate TAFE so much? Is it because they believe that all skills and training should be privatised? It is their agenda, it has always been their agenda and it will always be their agenda.

On behalf of the people of Hervey Bay, I want to thank the Palaszczuk government for focusing on delivering for the people of Hervey Bay. This facility will go a long way to ensure our community has a qualified and job-ready stream of nurses into the future. I want to thank the nursing teachers and TAFE staff who work tirelessly to train and upskill our future nurses.

### **State Schools, Religious Instruction**

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (7.12 pm): Easter is a very important spiritual time for millions of Australian Christians—we have just celebrated it. They celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus brought the message of God's love to all mankind—to all people; to you and me. This message of love, acceptance and forgiveness from God to us and us to each other is important and relevant whether you are 90 years old or nine years old.

Research shows that it is helpful for school-age children to have the opportunity to be taught spirituality, with a message of love, of acceptance. That is why it is important that religious instruction continue to be offered as part of the curriculum in state schools. I want to thank all of the religious instruction teachers in the schools of the Cleveland district and wider Redlands coast. They do a great act of service for the community when they teach and model good values to children.

Reverend David Baker and the Venerable Tseten are co-chairs of the multifaiths RI network. I table an article they have provided and two Harvard studies that support RI continuing to be offered and the importance of it in state school curriculum.

*Tabled paper:* Article from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, dated 13 September 2018, titled 'Religious upbringing linked to better health and well-being during early adulthood' [502].

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Harvard Gazette*, dated 12 July 2022, titled 'Spirituality linked with better health outcomes, patient care' [503].

*Tabled paper:* Media statement, dated 27 February 2023, by Co-chairs, Multi Faiths RI Network, Rev. David Baker and Venerable Tseten, regarding religious instruction [504].

An opt-in RI program allows parents and caregivers whose children go to state schools some choice of faith in their child's education. RI is popular. Parents of 200,000 students in over 600 state schools opt their children into RI. RI supports the learning outcomes of the national curriculum, social cohesion and a well-rounded education, among other things—all squeezed into a short 30 minutes each week. RI reflects a multicultural, multifaith Queensland. It supports multicultural communities in our state schools. There is Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Greek Orthodox, Hindu, Sikh, First Nations yarning circle RI, among others. RI supports values-based education, including the key values of care, compassion, respect and responsibility as outlined in the national framework for values education. RI provides important psychological benefits to students' mental health and wellbeing, according to Harvard University research. They talk about RI and general religious education. RI in Queensland is current and relevant. It is academically reviewed regularly, modernised and kept relevant.

In conclusion, I would like to encourage the education minister to continue to hold the line against the current attacks on RI, on faith, from those who sometimes do not understand faith or its value to the millions of Australians who hold it. Can I encourage the minister to continue to hold the line and keep RI.

### Spencer Motorcycle



**Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (7.15 pm): On Saturday week, 29 April, Ipswich will host its annual planes, trains and automobiles event at the Ipswich Workshops Rail Museum. As someone interested in historical motorcycles, I was excited to recently learn that front and centre at the display will be the Spencer motorcycle. This will be the first time that the Spencer motorcycle will be seen and appreciated by a large group of people, including me.

The significance here is that the Spencer motorcycle was handcrafted by David Spencer, who worked at the Ipswich railway workshops. The motorcycle is referred to as No. 8 and classified as a veteran—circa 1906-08, which makes it around 116 years old. Ten of these distinctly Australian racing bikes were built by Spencer and only two remain—the No. 3 and No. 8. These two motorcycles were donated and entrusted to the Historical Motor Cycle Club of Queensland in 1985 by David Spencer's daughter. The motorcycles were what is referred to as a basket case and were donated to the museum.

In 2019, the then president of the Historical Motor Cycle Club of Queensland, the late Paul Reed, and the immediate past president, Dave Dettmar, led negotiations with the museum to have access to and fully restore the motorcycle. In July 2021, all parts from the Queensland Museum were delivered to Dave Dettmar and his team who worked to restore the motorcycle, which was then transported to the railway museum on 4 February this year.

I want to name and acknowledge the many people—apologies if I miss some—who played a pivotal role in this project. I acknowledge the CEO of the Queensland Museum Network, Dr Jim Thompson; senior curators at the Queensland Museum, Phil Manning and Jennifer High; and the extremely dedicated team of HMCCQ—Dave Dettmar, Doug Jolliffe, Ian Rennie, Rob Blackmore, Ian Dugdale, Barry Deeth, Steve Hood, John Wellings, Chris Stephan and Gavin Dell'Osto. I also want to thank Mark and Marita Williamson who helped me with the material for this speech.

The Ipswich railway workshops have played such a critical role in the history of Ipswich. It built 218 steam locomotives. It employed around 1,500 people at any given time, with more than 3,000 employees recorded after World War II. Those employees took pride in their achievements at the workshops and a community was created within. It had its own cooperative ventures, sporting clubs and service clubs. Workers created their own gardens and outdoor lunch areas—personalising their industrial environment. This is not something that we do not see too often today. It is a source of great pride in our city.

I table some photos and excerpts from the historic motorcycle magazine for the interest of members of parliament who want to have a look at this historical motorcycle.

*Tabled paper:* Extracts, dated March and April 2023, from the *Journal of the Historic Motor Cycle Club of Queensland Inc.*, titled 'The Historic Motorcycle' [505].

It is incredibly beautiful to look at. I take my hat off to all those men and dedicated volunteers who put so much of their heart and soul into restoring this motorcycle. Everyone can come to Ipswich on Saturday week and look at this motorcycle for themselves—the only Australia made historic motorcycle.

### **Kurrimine Beach, Boat Ramp; Innisfail Bowls Club**



**Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (7.18 pm): With the budget just around the corner, I point out two projects in my electorate that are waiting to get the green light. In regional coastal areas, our beaches, islands and outdoor lifestyle are a huge attraction for locals and visitors, but we do not have up-to-date modern facilities. Kurrimine Beach near Innisfail is a beautiful spot, with a number of islands close by. Kurrimine Beach has been held back significantly because of the lack of a decent boat ramp to meet current demand and to market the region as a priority tourism and fishing destination. For example, the annual Kurrimine Beach Fishing Classic cannot expand, with many attendees highlighting the difficulties and safety aspects around the launching and retrieval of vessels at the tournament.

A new facility would also limit the threat of box jellyfish and crocodiles which are a constant worry for locals and visitors. While an upgraded boat ramp facility has been on the drawing board for the last 20 years, momentum has gained over the last four years, with me, the local community, council and TMR holding numerous meetings to finalise the design of a modern new boat ramp facility.

Late last year the Minister for Transport and department heads met with the Kurrimine Beach Safe Boat Access Committee and me, and the Cassowary Coast mayor and council committed to funding the foreshore development of the project. The plans are already completed and approved. All that is required now is the funding to be committed from the state government towards the construction of the boat ramp.

The Innisfail Bowls Club overlooks the north and south Johnstone rivers and is celebrating its 100-year anniversary this year. Recently there was combined funding provided towards stabilisation earthworks to stop the club's facility from sliding into the Johnstone River. In a region located in the Wet Tropics, with an annual rainfall of 3.6 metres and extreme hot and humid conditions, it is unbelievable that the club operates without any form of all-weather covering over the bowling greens. A bowling green canopy will provide a safe playing environment, increase the use of the green all year round, increase membership and usage from local community groups and schools, and attract major competitions to the region.

We constantly hear about the billions being spent on the 2032 Olympics, while regional Queensland facilities are either crumbling or desperately in need of upgrades or replacement. There is an opportunity here for just a small outlay in comparison to the billions being spent in the south-east to be included in the upcoming budget towards both of these valuable regional infrastructure projects.

### **National Volunteer Week**



**Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (7.20 pm): We are getting closer to National Volunteer Week—Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering. It is happening between 15 and 21 May, and I want to get in early and pay tribute to just some of the hardworking and inspirational volunteers working in the Bancroft electorate.

I want to specifically pay tribute to Vince and Miriam Gerhardy, who for years now have been making breakfast for the students at the YMCA Vocational School at The Space at North Lakes run by the YMCA. They do that every Tuesday morning, putting food into the stomachs of young students.

There is Lindsey Harrison, Shane Sparks, Darren Moore and Evonne Fish from North Lakes United Football Club. Lindsey was recognised by Football Queensland as one of the volunteers of the month a couple of months ago. Evonne is the secretary, Shane is the junior football director, and Darren is the senior football director. The North Lakes United Football Club has a great story. They are a new club and an amalgamation of two existing clubs in North Lakes. They already have 1,400 players on the roll.

At the Lighthouse Centre at Deception Bay is one of Queensland's leading community-based food bank operations. There is Allana McMahon, who I know well. She works from her wheelchair but has been helping out homeless people through the church for more than 10 years. There is Genia Kobierska, who has also worked for more than 10 years handing out food at the food barn and doing it in a loving and caring way. We will not forget Carly Helander, who runs a youth group at the Lighthouse Centre, giving direction and hope to the lives of many young people in our area.

I also want to mention those volunteers at the Deception Bay Neighbourhood Centre—Bettina Nissen, Jan McNicol and Mary Otto. Bettina Nissen has done tremendous work in building the literacy of young people in Deception Bay and has been a real champion for our wetlands and our shore birds. Mary Otto has worked for decades with youth organisations such as Girl Guides and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to Mark Cleaver—one of our special volunteers in the Bancroft electorate—who spent more than 10 years on the board of the local PCYC and Younity, the community youth organisation. Mark led Younity through years of COVID and huge organisational change. He recently headed off to Atlanta for a new career change.

Mark and all the volunteers in my electorate are the true community heroes. I hope that we can recognise all our volunteers in National Volunteer Week and say thank you. The late Arthur Hayes OAM said to me—it was one of the last things he did before he passed away—'Chris, with your time in the world you give your time to your family, you give your time to work and the time you have left over you give to the community.' Arthur was a great inspiration, and those words have always stayed with me.

### Bli Bli Bridge



**Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (7.23 pm): On behalf of the Bli Bli community, I would like to put on the record, while he is in the chamber, my sincere thanks to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Last year the minister announced \$800,000 to plan future and long overdue upgrades to the Bli Bli bridge. Just in case you missed it, just last month the minister announced it again—not another \$800,000 but just reannounced the same \$800,000.

I can assure the minister that the irony is not lost on the Bli Bli community, who for years have been calling for this antiquated bridge to be upgraded. If the bridge could talk, it could tell a fascinating tale about how a small farming community evolved into one of the fastest growing suburbs on the Sunshine Coast. When the historic 165-metre structure was built in 1959, it bore the proud title of the longest prestressed concrete bridge in Queensland. The iconic bridge was built for a cane train which serviced the Nambour sugar mill for more than 30 years—and it is still known locally as the cane train bridge.

At the time of its construction, according to Census data, there were just over 200 people living in Bli Bli. Today, that number is estimated to be over 10,000 people. However, incredulously, not only is the bridge still standing but finally, after years of lobbying the state government, it has caught the attention of the minister.

Bli Bli, as I mentioned earlier, is one of the fastest growing suburbs on the Sunshine Coast. However, you could be excused for overlooking that if you are forced to cross the narrow two-lane bridge every day. Pedestrians, cyclists and anglers share a tight pathway down one side of the bridge adjacent to two lanes of heavy traffic that can carry up to 15,000 vehicles a day. It is also a main thoroughfare now between the Bruce Highway and the new international Sunshine Coast airport.

Locals have been complaining of rust and disrepair on the fencing and structure of the bridge for a number of years. Four years ago, in 2019, a 20-tonne limit was applied as a temporary safety measure due to legitimate structural concerns. That load limit remains in place today.

Mr Acting Speaker, I can assure you that the Bli Bli community know just how lucky they are having twice as many reasons to be hopeful that it will not take another 60 years before the ageing bridge is upgraded. Thank you to the minister, as I acknowledged, for taking the time to reannounce the funding for this vital next stage of planning for this long overdue infrastructure project. I, along with my community, am now filled with anticipation that the minister's generosity is repeated when it comes to allocating all the funds required to complete these upgrades in the upcoming state budget.

Similarly, communities on the other side of the river in my electorate, including Coolum and Peregian Springs, will also be waiting with bated breath, hoping the minister's benevolence might extend to fast-tracking the long overdue motorway upgrades and other congestion-busting road and safety improvements across our region.

### Plastic Free Places; Toombul Shopping Centre



**Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (7.26 pm): It was fantastic to welcome the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs, Meaghan Scanlon, to my electorate recently to announce the expansion of the Plastic Free Places program. It was a special day for the team at Espresso Train Cafe at Nundah who hosted the announcement and were also able to proudly showcase the incredible sustainability efforts that they have long had in place.

Espresso Train Cafe is much loved by our local community and is, in fact, Australia's longest running social enterprise cafe, providing jobs to those who may otherwise face barriers to secure employment while at the same time making earth-conscious decisions. The cafe is completely solar powered and everything that can be re-used or recycled is. All food waste goes to co-op member James, who turns it into fertile compost and worm juice. Coffee grinds are bagged up and given away to anyone who might need it in their gardens. The entire co-op membership enjoys the spoils from the Palaszczuk government's containers for change initiative, sharing the refunds from all plastics, glass and cans as pocket money.

Espresso Train is incredibly excited about what the expansion of the Plastics Free Places means for them and about encouraging more businesses like theirs to go green. I thank Minister Scanlon for visiting and choosing our beloved Espresso Train to make this exciting announcement. I would also like to say a huge well done to cafe manager, Kirsty, and the amazing team there for their efforts.

While I am on my feet, I would also like to provide an update on Toombul Shopping Centre. As many would be aware, Toombul Shopping Centre was inundated during the February 2022 floods, devastating many business owners, as well as local shoppers who access not only the convenient retail options but vital services provided there. I advocated strongly for those business owners alongside the federal member for Lilley, Anika Wells, and thankfully many of the business owners have been able to relocate and restart anew since. Of course the ongoing impact for others is deeply felt.

Since the centre's owner Mirvac has announced its permanent closure there has been significant uncertainty about the future of that site. I was pleased to speak to Mirvac recently and to see they have now submitted their demolition DA to the Brisbane City Council; furthermore, they hope to present plans for the future use of the site to the community by the end of this year. I am also pleased that Mirvac has made clear and strong commitments to limit the impact the demolition and rebuild will have on my surrounding community, an issue I have been strongly advocating for and will keep a close eye on, as a demolition of this nature and size will of course have impacts for the surrounding community.

The House adjourned at 7.29 pm.

### ATTENDANCE

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