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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 10 May 2023

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WEDNESDAY, 10 MAY 2023

The Legislative Assembly met at 10.30 am.

ABSENCE OF SPEAKER

The Deputy Clerk informed the House of the absence of Mr Speaker for the day's sitting.

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.

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.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition



Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, yesterday I rebuked the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for speaking before I had given him the call. The broadcast revealed I had in fact given the deputy leader the call. Accordingly, I apologise for my error and rebuke.

Mr Bleijie: Do I have free rein today?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: No, you do not—but you can find that out later.

Sergeant-at-Arms



Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am sure you will all join with me in wishing the Sergeant-at-Arms a very happy birthday today. I will not reveal the number. You can chat with him about that yourselves, but it does have a zero in it.

TABLED PAPERS

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey)—

[611](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on visit to Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands and Italy by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (Hon. Bailey), 1-9 April 2023

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

[612](#) Serious and Organised Crime Legislation Review, January 2023

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Membership



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.33 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the member for Bonney be discharged from and the member for Glass House be appointed to the Health and Environment Committee.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

PATH TO TREATY BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 9 May (see p. 1288), on motion of Mr Crawford—

That the bill be now read a second time.



Hon. MC BAILEY (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.35 am): I acknowledge that we gather for the debate on this historic treaty bill on the traditional lands of the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji people. I offer my respects to their traditional owners past, present and emerging and I thank them for their custodianship of this extraordinary place over 60,000 years. I acknowledge too the many other First Nations peoples of the Far North Queensland region, including all the way up to Cape York and Torres Strait and in the gulf region.

I also acknowledge the Palaszczuk government's trailblazing three First Nations members of parliament, the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts and the members for Cook and Bundamba. What a profound difference they have already made to advance justice for First Nations people in Queensland. I am proud to serve with them as colleagues and friends. They have been key to the bill that is before us. I also acknowledge the leadership of both the Premier and, of course, the minister in the process for this historic bill.

Yesterday, outside this temporary chamber at the welcome to country, traditional owners greeted us all in First Nations languages. It was a reminder, in terms of history, that what we know as Australia and Queensland are a relatively recent phenomena but that this is an ancient land. It is the oldest land and is inhabited by one of the oldest cultures in the world and we are still learning about its depth and breadth.

Let me be clear to members in this place: today I speak in this debate from my heart and not with my finger. I speak with a sense of reaching out to engage with members and our communities with goodwill and a desire to share what I know and understand because this bill goes far beyond any party politics of this time. It is a profound opportunity for the people of our state to evolve our connections across our different cultures, to broaden our understanding of the state's actual history, devoid of sugar-coating and revisionism, and for us all to grow who we are—not just the First Nations people of our state, although that is very important, but in fact all Queenslanders, whatever our background.

The fact is that from 1788 onwards there was a vast chasm in terms of understanding between European culture and the First Nations cultures of this continent that resulted in shocking and catastrophic outcomes, to say the least, for First Nations peoples, who had a sophisticated relationship with this land and a complex network across an often dry and harsh land that evolved over 3,000 generations. Over a century and a half of frontier expansion and consolidation, those shocking outcomes, by their nature, were mostly witnessed by only a few, but the reverberations from that pain cross time through intergenerational trauma that we still experience and grapple with today.

In the most part, First Nations peoples—and, I might say, some European people on the frontier at that time who were also victims of violence—have family and relatives whose experiences were spoken about or were not able to be spoken about but that passed, through trauma-driven behaviour or words, from generation to generation. Now, our generation can choose to ignore that colossal and often hidden part of our history or we can be courageous, stand up and open our hearts to the truth. We can and must do better than previous generations and this bill shows that we are. I sincerely thank all members from all sides who have come to this debate with their hearts open and their verbal weaponry sheathed to grapple with something that no previous parliament in this state has done successfully.


In my teaching degree my historical inquiry was, in fact, on the Queensland parliamentary building, which is an extraordinary piece of architecture and has great presence. In my research on the debates of this House, I discovered that in the early 1860s one of the first debates was about the killing of native peoples on the frontier. Some members opposed that and some members defended it. That is a matter of historical fact and is on the *Hansard* of this House. Of course, First Nations peoples have endured much more violence, geographic dispossession and movement onto reserves and the systematic removal of children from families, which continued for a long period. In fact, the last child was systematically removed in 1970, after the referendum in 1967. It is never too late to heal the wounds of the past. We are one of the few Commonwealth nations that does not have a treaty between the state and its First Nations people. This is not a rushed bill. The treaty process commenced in 2019 and has been inclusive and steady to ensure its integrity.

An important and fundamental part of this bill is truth-telling about our full history. As a culture, we revere the past and its importance for our future. Only two weeks ago we all stopped at dawn to remember. 'Lest we forget' is enshrined on our monuments in cities and towns across our state and our nation as we open up our hearts to those who have defended this land every year. It is a small yet large step for us to take that part of our collective psyche and apply it to the First Nations peoples who suddenly were dealing with a foreign people on their land that they knew so intimately, who did their best to understand what was happening, who sought to defend their families, their women, their children and their ways.

This state and nation saw more than a century of frontier wars, armed Europeans taking land that was not theirs at the time and under arms. Due to the lie of our nation—often relatively flat and dry ground, being an ancient continent—the spread of Europeans was slow, so many battles and conflicts were not at all like the European battles that we are very familiar with, of large numbers of soldiers, armaments in set pieces. They were often smaller skirmishes of smaller parties on both sides as the frontier slowly grew. It is a simple fact that rifles and pistols were always going to defeat the spears of the time. Of course there were massacres. That is a documented fact and that is the truth. Lest we forget.

Treaty and truth-telling is applying those same standards that we extol every year to our First Nations peoples and their history. On Anzac Day we do not speak of guilt; we open our hearts. This is what we are doing with treaty. As I stand here, to my right is the parliamentary mace, a symbol of our democracy in session. Parallel to that is a spear of the Guugu Yimithirr peoples of the Cooktown region placed by the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships yesterday—a fitting foreground and witness for this debate and bill.

We must have our First Nations history, culture and inclusion better understood and respected by our broader culture while acknowledging its uniqueness. I not only commend the bill to the House but I also urge sincerely all members to consider voting affirmatively for this historic bill. In future years this bill will be examined and it will be considered like no other bill. Now is the time to commit so that all of us as members can say that we were a part of this affirmatively and that we were a part of this historic change and this historic process that goes beyond this parliament.

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (10.42 am): I rise in support of the Path to Treaty Bill 2023 being debated at this unique session of the regional parliament being held here in Cairns. I would like to start my contribution by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which this parliament is taking place and pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

This bill before us today is a landmark in how we as a community choose to move forward, how we choose to bring the community closer together and, in doing that, how we recognise the process of colonisation that marginalised and disempowered our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Equally, we recognise the enormous resilience of the First Nations people and their strength drawn from the rich history, culture, law and knowledge of 65,000 years of Aboriginal peoples and the unique culture, law and knowledge of the peoples of the Torres Strait.

The Path to Treaty process contained within this bill is a shared journey between the Queensland government and the people of Queensland—Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. This is a key reform with the goal of negotiating a treaty or treaties that will reframe and strengthen the relationship between Queensland's First Nations and the wider community. Path to Treaty seeks a foundation for a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples—one based on respectful relationships between the state and the First Nations people—and this foundation will benefit all Queenslanders.

Broadly, Path to Treaty will be advanced in five phases. Phases 1, 2 and 3 have already effectively been actioned. With the commencement of phase 4, from 2023 onwards there will be established a Treaty Institute and a Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. Phase 5, from 2024 onwards, will see the development of a treaty of negotiation framework by the Treaty Institute and the Queensland government and the establishment of supporting structures such as a treaty authority and a treaty tribunal or similar mechanism to deal with disputes, and treaty negotiations will begin within that year.

The Path to Treaty Bill 2023 is foundational legislation designed to drive Path to Treaty. This bill responds to a generation of calls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland for a formal agreement, a treaty or treaties, which recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original custodians of their lands, waters and air and provides a just and realistic foundation for a reframed relationship—an agreement that delivers broad-ranging substantive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Queensland community.

In the region that I represent as the local member, that part of the Fraser Coast defined as the Hervey Bay electorate, the lands, seas and air are those of the Butchulla peoples which mainly cover the wonderful geographical area featuring the mighty K'gari, the Great Sandy Marine Park and inland. It is my privilege that I get to speak here in this place regarding this bill and honour those peoples past, present and emerging to commence the process of a treaty with them that acknowledges our collective past and moves us forward to acknowledge our collective present and the future.

It was also my great privilege just the other week to be present with the member for Maryborough, the mayor of the Fraser Coast region and the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, as well as many hundreds of locals, at the unveiling of a monument to the Butchulla warriors in Maryborough. This is a monument that was instigated by the work of Uncle Glenn Miller, a Butchulla elder, who many years ago raised his desire to facilitate a monument that now stands in Queens Park in Maryborough as a testament to the truth of what actually took place on the shores of our region during occupation.

The Butchulla warriors monument acknowledges how fearless and brave the Butchulla warriors were in the face of an insurmountable challenge from a technologically advanced invading force that set foot on their lands hundreds of years ago, and my understanding is that the monument is the first of its kind in Queensland, let alone in Australia. It was very moving to sit there and listen during the unveiling address by Uncle Miller whilst he described what it must have been like for those Butchulla warriors at first contact and what came from that first contact. Uncle Miller's words were very clear: the monument is not about blaming anyone for the wrongs done or the sins of the past but to acknowledge warrior courage and bravery that had gone before, and the monument is about ensuring that the truth was being told about what had occurred there on those shores all those years ago.

It was equally moving to look around the site that morning and see in great numbers how the local community, from all walks of life, had come to recognise this dedication to these warriors. It clearly showed by their collective actions that the time is right for treaty and for truth-telling, that a step forward in the right direction was being taken that day, as we are doing here today to ensure that, through this Path to Treaty process, we will also be able to truth-tell as active participants, bringing together our state and our country. Path to Treaty is the right thing to do now. It is right for a more reconciled future. I look forward to the next phase of this Path to Treaty process we are now undertaking and to the fruition of truth-telling with Indigenous peoples of this state and with the Butchulla peoples of my region.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work done by the members for Cook, Algeester and Bundamba, who I know have worked tirelessly to bring this bill to the House, but also the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and the Community Support and Services Committee and the committee secretariat for the work they have done to date. I fully support this bill before the House.



Hon. SJ STEWART (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.48 am): I first acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. What an amazing ceremony we had yesterday to welcome us all to this amazing part of the land. I, too, come from an amazing part of the land. I come from Wulgurukaba and Bindal country. Wulgurukaba people are the canoe people and for 65,000 years they paddled across to Yunbenun. Around 253 years ago, a white fella, or a micaloo in traditional language, sailed past. His compass went a little bit crazy and he went, 'Gee, that island must be magnetic,' so he called it Magnetic Island. These days we affectionately call it 'Maggie Island'. We still recognise the Wulgurukaba and the Bindal people for their custodianship for the last 65,000 years of the area that we call Cowboy's country or Townsville.

I rise to support the Path to Treaty Bill before us today. This bill signals to everyone that we are ready and willing to confront the past and work together on a better way forward. Truth-telling and listening are key as we embark on this landmark journey together. There are not many places in Queensland this applies to more than Palm Island, which has at times had a dark and troublesome history. Sadly, more than 100 years ago Palm Island became a place to which more than 40 different Indigenous groups were displaced and forcibly sent. For this reason, it is a unique community with a huge range of voices. As the local member, I know some of the struggles Palm Island has faced and continues to face. What I continuously hear is that community leaders on Palm Island want to work more collaboratively with governments. That was made clear to me during the committee's public hearing on Palm Island earlier this year. While we are doing that now, we can always do it better.


Path to Treaty will help make partnerships and relationships with Indigenous people right throughout Queensland more meaningful. Path to Treaty is part of the reconciliation process—like with this broken-tipped spear. I had to tell that story to a number of staff in my ministerial office who did not know the story of the encounter with James Cook and the food source—turtles and how important they were for traditional people—and the meaning of the breaking of the spear tip. Placing this here during this sitting is so powerful. It is very symbolic, but it certainly is a great way forward and I congratulate the minister for displaying its importance.

Path to Treaty is part of the reconciliation process, but it is also about hearing the truth and getting the true stories told. As Minister for Resources, I am proud to play a small role in Queensland's Path to Treaty through native title, transferring state land or using traditional languages in place names. We are committed to preserving First Nation cultures and values. We have wiped 15 racist placenames off Queensland maps as well as renaming cultural sites to embrace the language of our traditional owners. Some of those placenames are close by. One that we renamed just recently was a creek to the south of Cairns. After a lot of consultation with traditional owners we renamed it Bana Gindarja Creek. That is what they knew it as for 65,000 years and that is the name we have returned it back to.

Truth-telling is an essential part of Path to Treaty. It will be uncomfortable and it will not be easy, but it is important. It is relevant to rename placenames because the reality is that some of these places have horrific stories and connotations associated with them. If we do not acknowledge these truths with Indigenous people we will not be able to move forward. As a good friend of mine, the member for Thuringowa says, you must know where you come from to know where you are going. It is so true.

Since 2015 native title rights have been determined to exist over more than 210,900 square kilometres of Queensland. For the students who are joining us here today, that is roughly the size of Victoria. Native title is vital for Path to Treaty because it helps preserve Indigenous cultures, values and traditions. Since 2015 the Palaszczuk government has returned more than one million hectares of state owned land to traditional owners, and we are very proud of that. In March I had the pleasure of attending a stunning sacred site known as Minto Crag, or Whinpullin as the traditional owners call it, for the land transfer. I have to say that it was one of the most amazing days I have experienced. I am proud to say that traditional owners now hold Whinpullin as freehold. It is theirs to hold in trust forever.

Land transfers and native title are incredibly important as we continue on the path to treaty, but it is not just about the transfer of land; this is about recognising and respecting the unique cultures, practices and histories of our First Nations people. It is about acknowledging their enduring connection to country—a connection that has lasted more than 65,000 years. As we continue on the path to treaty we must remain committed to working in partnership with our First Nations people. We must listen to their stories, honour their traditions and work towards a more inclusive and just Queensland for all. By doing so we will not only create a brighter future for our First Nations people but for all Queenslanders. The students who are watching this parliament here today are part of this changing history. We are creating a future where we acknowledge and learn from our past while working towards a better tomorrow. By working together through Path to Treaty we will create a better Queensland for all. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (10.55 am): On behalf of KAP I think it is appropriate to give a little bit of background about where I come from. I have Irish and Lebanese Christian Maronite heritage. They were both chased out of their countries at the time. That is part of my ancestry. The Katter side of my family landed in North-West Queensland in the 1890s and has been there ever since. They came onto land that had been occupied by Aboriginal people for 65,000 years, and I would assume they had some indifference to colonisation and many of the atrocities that went along with that period. I am proud of the legacy of my family in Cloncurry. I am told they were the first employers of full-time Aboriginal people in their store in Cloncurry, which at the time was a socially unpopular thing to do. As I said, they were still classed as immigrants and they were quite indifferent to that. When I was first elected, a lady

off a cattle station wrote me a letter and said, 'I just want to commend your grandfather, because when they first bought the cinema—they had the cinema in Cloncurry—they ripped up the segregation line.' It was the first thing they did.

Then my family entered politics. If you are in politics to solve problems, then in the Gulf Country of Western Queensland you will be buried in issues relating to First Australians because there are lot of problems and some people are crying out for help. That is a bit of the background about where we are coming from with this. That does not give me any more right to speak or any more moral claim for anything really; I am just trying to give some context. I was brought up—and I think KAP are characterised—as someone who just wants to fix things. As we see it, we are very focused on fixing problems the best way, and that is where I have a real problem with this.

I do not have any problem with acknowledging the past and telling stories. I think that is very virtuous. I do not have any problem with recognising that bad things were done. What I do find morally interesting is that much of the debate has focused on colonisation, we took the land, there was no treaty formed, sovereignty exists and those sorts of things. If I morally project that forward, if you believe in that then we must think about giving it back. If it was theirs and we took it, the right thing to do is give it back. I am not sure what we should do with that. That just seems to be the logical conclusion to what you are saying. I am not sure how that would play into land tenure around the country and the economy as we know it, but I am happy to hear the other side of the argument on that. That is what has been generated from a lot of the contributions I have heard here.

We are primarily interested in fixing things. I am very accustomed to modern day governments using words instead of actions and subordinating actions; for example, saying 'Blue cards are a problem to getting people employment, but we won't fix that now. We're going to work on treaty.' 'We're not going to fix grocery prices out here at the moment. We'll do treaty first.'

The first conversation I ever heard in parliament about treaty was a good, collegiate conversation. I was politely holding back, listening to what people said we need to do to help Aboriginal communities. I do not have all the answers; I know that. I was listening politely. One of the comments made by a member from Brisbane was, 'The first thing we have to do to help people is treaty.' I thought crikey, I thought the first thing we should be doing is giving them home ownership, or fixing the renal unit in Doomadgee, or giving them extra renal chairs in Mount Isa, or fixing grocery prices, or helping with parenting and support for parents. This is the main thing. Then another person said, 'Well, you can do both.' Well, maybe you can, but that has not been my experience in government.

In the short 11 years I have had in parliament, I have seen a lot of talk not followed up with action. It makes us pretty angry when we are vilified. We will be called all sorts of names because we oppose this, but we are the ones in the trenches. I would say that at least 50 per cent of my time is spent dealing with the hardship and terrible outcomes we have at the moment. My electorate is a relatively small part of the population, but we are being told that this is going to be fixed with treaty. Hang on, I have all of these other things that need fixing, but in the meantime this is going to take \$300 million and all of this effort and resources over the next few years. I am not sure I am for that because I want these other things fixed. That is the basis for our position on this.

I will talk about some of the outcomes. In crime, Indigenous children account for 60 per cent of Queensland's youth detention population, despite making up five per cent of the population. That is something we need to fix. Also in crime, Indigenous adults are 10 times more likely to be in prison than non-Indigenous adults, and a lot of that is for ridiculous reasons that could easily be fixed. The unemployment rate for Indigenous working age people is 3.8 times that of non-Indigenous people. That is something we definitely could have fixed with the blue card, but no-one has chosen to do anything about that for nine years. Despite us putting it on the table, looking for answers, looking for alternatives, nothing has been done there. In education, the year 12 attainment rate for Indigenous students in very remote areas sits at around 38 per cent, compared with 85 per cent in major cities. In health, I will not go into much detail but these figures will make you cry. Indigenous Queenslanders by and large have a lower life expectancy than non-Indigenous Queenslanders, being 17 years less for males and almost 20 years less for females.

Those are some terrible things that need to be fixed. I cannot help but feel like we are setting people up to fail. I think there is a lot of expectation that this is the government delivering. There are a lot of people who genuinely have good, virtuous support of this, and I accept that, but I think there are expectations on the back end of that that this is going to solve all of these problems—that the \$300 million is going to pour into these areas that need help—but it is not.

I have no problem with telling truth stories and getting the stories out there. I love Queensland's history with all of its warts, bruises and ugly pieces. It is fascinating and we celebrate it in Mount Isa. The Kalkadoon people are proudly the only people who forced back the white men in Australia. They battled them for many years. It is a proud story that is told across all the kitchen tables in the north-west. They are great stories, and some of them are very tragic and very terrible. Yes, it is good to acknowledge our history, but I would certainly like to see \$300 million spent on grocery prices or renal units in the gulf in my electorate rather than doing that.

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr KATTER: I will take that interjection that it is not being taken away. It is not, but I am pretty sure I will still be looking at these same issues in five years time. I will still be in parliament talking about blue cards and everything else. You can shake your head all you like but I am sure I will be back in the trenches in five years time getting these stories of hardship from people who are saying, 'Can you please help me, Rob? Can you please help me get a job? I don't understand it. I did nothing wrong but I can't get a blue card.' I will still hear these stories in five years time. I will come in here and put my fourth blue card bill in next parliament to try to get some action on that. I will hear a lot of words in parliament from well-meaning people but we will not get action. Someone at some point has got to say, 'Come on, guys. We don't want to hear about closing the gap anymore.' We heard a lot about closing the gap, but how did we go with that? We are no better off.


My response many times with this has been that I am indifferent to the outcome. I think it would be good if it helps people generate that spirit, as has been said, and people acknowledge the First Australians. I think it will help, but in 10 years time when they say, 'Hang on. We got the treaty but we're still living in the same conditions in Doomadgee and Mornington,' they are going to be angrier than they are now. They are expecting outcomes from this and that people are genuine, but I do not think enough people are genuine, which is evidenced by the fact of where we are now. There have been plenty of things to fix in the meantime and it has not been done. To say that this is the panacea that is going to fix everything is setting up people.

Ms Boyd: No-one is saying that.

Mr KATTER: I will take that interjection. It does not matter what you say; it is implied by your actions. Unfortunately for you, you have been part of the inaction in these areas—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Through the chair.

Mr KATTER: I take that interjection. I should be speaking through you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am just trying to make the point that we are in this situation because of the inactions. We are in a situation where people are going to expect life will improve, their conditions will improve and things will get easier because the government is now listening, but I fear nothing will change from this. I am indifferent to the outcome. Whether it changes or not, I know I am still going to be back here in a couple of years talking about exactly the same things and trying to get outcomes for these people who are crying out for help. There is a lot of indifference to this because they know there are priorities on the ground now that are not being acted on or not listened to, and they will still be there in the future.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (11.05 am): I rise today to support this bill. I am so humbled to be part of this government and part of this parliament in making a contribution here today. In doing so, I recognise the Indigenous people of the lands on which we gather and the elders past, present and emerging. I want to recognise my cabinet colleague Minister Enoch, I want to recognise you, Deputy Speaker Lui, member for Cook, and I want to recognise the member for Bundamba for not only their insight but their contributions, their beliefs and their courage in how they contribute to this government and this parliament on a regular basis.

I would like to thank the Premier for introducing this bill. It is one of the most important things we will do as a Queensland parliament. I also want to thank the Community Support and Services Committee and their chair, the member for Mansfield, for their detailed inquiry across the state and the recommendation that this bill be passed. The objectives of the bill are to establish a First Nations Treaty Institute to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop and provide a framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to prepare for and then commence treaty negotiations with the Queensland government and a Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to inquire into, and report on, the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

I also associate my contribution to the debate on this extremely important Path to Treaty Bill with three First Nations people I love and respect—Aunty Honor Cleary, deceased, her sister Aunty Lesley Williams and Lesley's daughter, Tammy Williams, who is in the chamber here this morning. Whilst having the fortune to travel and engage with our Indigenous peoples in Australia and Queensland as a former senator, a former minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships and an MP, I am still humbled by constantly learning from the oldest surviving culture on our planet. My learnings originate from committee inquiries in both federal and Queensland parliaments and from having a genuine and profound interest in our First Nations people. In addition, there are many books and papers I have read, along with many amazing Indigenous people I have met in their communities. I have also been the ministerial champion for Mapoon community. It is such a privilege and honour to be in that position, along with my other ministerial colleagues who are responsible for the various discrete Indigenous communities across our state. In addition, I was privileged to be in the federal parliament during the Rudd government where we accepted that the right thing to do was to apologise to our First Nations people. On National Sorry Day this year at Teralba Park I will be reading the apologies to our Indigenous people who gather on that day, as should be the case, in recognising that we took the apology as part of our recognition of the sins of our past.


I wish to reflect upon my journeys with Aunty Honor Cleary to Cherbourg on a regular basis. Also, I draw upon an excellent book called *Not Just Black and White*, which was co-authored by Aunty Lesley and Tammy. On the three-hour trip to Cherbourg, Aunty Honor would explain the struggles she had growing up in Cherbourg, a town under the control of the then Queensland government. Without hesitation, she introduced me to many of her family and provided an opportunity to explore the ration shed at Cherbourg. The ration shed stands as an incredible reflection of a dark past and a tribute to all those involved in its history and the ongoing maintenance of that building.

While it stands as a reminder for some of the amazing sports and community achievements those Indigenous persons achieved, it also stands as a truthful reminder of the dark past of those whose lives were controlled by the Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1887. Some politicians in the proposal of that act argued that placing the Aboriginal population on reserves would keep the white race pure. What an insidious, racist view to take in respect of that past. Punishment for the offence of answering back to a white official under that act ranged from being locked up in jail for a week on bread and jam and black tea or being sent to Palm Island.

Not long after turning 16, Lesley Williams was informed of her next journey in life. She was to be sent to a station in Condamine as a domestic servant. Following this posting she was sent to Taroom, where she worked from 4 am to 10 pm, cooking and doing domestic chores. It is hard to imagine what Indigenous people went through when we consider our own lives and contemporary standards we enjoy. However, Lesley's struggles were not over. She is best known for her fight to instigate domestic and international justice for Aboriginal workers, a campaign that resulted in an historical reparation package of \$55 million to all Indigenous workers who had their wages and savings controlled by past governments in Queensland.

It is beyond comprehension how anyone can be treated in this manner. No doubt the path to truth-telling will bring about many stories like those Aunty Honor and Aunty Lesley have explained, but they must be told and we must listen. With the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games less than a decade upon us, we need to demonstrate everything within our capacity to show to our nation and the world that Queensland is mature and respectful in recognising our First Nations people in supporting this extremely important bill and voting yes in the amendment to the Constitution later this year.

In the words of Aunty Lesley, 'It wasn't the money I wanted but to be treated with dignity and respect.' Now it is our time as legislators to address the wrongs of past legislation and pass new legislation which treats all Indigenous people with the dignity and respect they deserve. We all owe it to our First Nations people. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (11.12 am): I rise to speak in support of the Path to Treaty Bill 2023, and I am pleased to be able to do so from the home of the traditional custodians here in Cairns, the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji and Yirrganydji peoples on Gimuy country. I would also like to acknowledge my colleagues: the member for Algeester, Leeanne Enoch; the member for Bundamba, Lance McCallum; and the member for Cook, Cynthia Lui, and thank them for their leadership on this wonderful issue. Last but not least, I thank Minister Crawford for his leadership on this historic legislation. As we all know, the bill was introduced into the Legislative Assembly by the Premier on 23 February 2023 and referred to the Community Support and Services Committee. I would also like to acknowledge the member for Mansfield, Corrine McMillan, who chaired that committee.

As has been stated by previous speakers, the object of the bill is to establish a First Nations Treaty Institute to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop and provide a framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to prepare for and then commence treaty negotiations with the Queensland government, and to establish a Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to inquire into and report on the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

This bill will ensure these main purposes are achieved with sufficient regard to Aboriginal traditional and island custom through: requiring the principles for administering the bill are complied with by ensuring that in partnership and good faith, the rights and history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are acknowledged and responded to in accordance with the Human Rights Act 2019 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; requiring the Treaty Institute Council and members to have particular regard to the interests of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples; requiring the CEO to be appointed only if they are an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person and Treaty Institute Council members to be appointed having regard to the cultural diversity of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples; requiring Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry members to have at least one Aboriginal person and one Torres Strait Islander person and the majority of members are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders; requiring members of the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to have particular regard to the interests of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples; and requiring the inquiry to have regard to Aboriginal tradition or *ailan kastom* during truth-telling sessions.

The bill will also amend certain provisions in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act in response to a departmental review to align with the Path to Treaty objectives and repeal provisions that do not support the commitment to a reframed relationship.

The committee also made 12 aspirational recommendations that the committee considers vital to the successful establishment of a treaty framework and acceptance by the wider community, and for the treaties made between First Nations people and the Queensland government for the benefit of future generations. I am proud to be part of a government that does not shy away from a path to treaty, a matter that has been ignored for too long and considered by others as too hard.

Australia's history under white political authority has been, at best, deeply troubled. The First Nations people have never ceded sovereignty and have always asserted that their sovereignty continues to exist.

In 2022, the 50-year anniversary of continuous occupation by the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra was recognised. The Tent Embassy began its public life on 26 January 1972 and should also be thought of as the site of the longest protest for Indigenous land rights, sovereignty and self-determination in the world. Initially, the protesters were making a stand about land rights following the then prime minister William McMahon's speech that dismissed any hope for Aboriginal land rights and re-asserted the government's position on the policy of assimilation.

Path to Treaty is urgent work, one that acknowledges that developing a treaty or treaties needs to be built on a shared and reflective approach. I commend the bill to the House.



Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (11.17 am): Part of the majesty of the parliament is that it is a mix of practical consideration and lawmaking imbued with 750 years of tradition and ceremony to give it all a bit of lustre of legitimacy. However, in the face of more than 60,000 years of lore, this lustre is a little less shiny. Even the gilded crowns, sceptres and orbs of the coronation come off a little bit of a fad compared to the stories and traditions of the world's oldest continuing culture.

The questions that are before us in this Path to Treaty Bill that provides that path to resolving and reconciling a matter of great importance to our country, and therefore our state, are big and, frankly, they are beyond us all because they respond to an environment that is eons in the making. But we are called to address it. It is an arc that is bigger than the parliament, but from so many that we have heard during this debate, it is still personal. It is clearly personal to you, Deputy Speaker, as part of that ABC—the members for Algeester, Bundamba and Cook—and I acknowledge each of them. The fundamental—it is a bit of the alpha and omega. We get the whole journey there. However, despite the fact that it is so much bigger than us all, it is a personal matter. My journey on this is one that has been influenced by my great interest in the nature and the arc of the history of our state; I regard myself as a bit of an amateur historian. I heard the member for Traeger speak of his great passion for and interest in the history of our state.

It took a turn in understanding the nature of that history. I learnt early on in my studies at high school and then particularly during tertiary education of greater stories and greater understanding of the impact of the frontier wars. I was extraordinarily moved and remain very moved for something that is close to my part of this state, and part of that story is in relation to the story of Dundalli, the great warrior hero of the frontier wars who was executed by the powers of authority by way of example in 1855, a mere handful of years before this institution of this parliament was created.


We have heard in other contributions today about the discussions and the debates that took place in this parliament early on that directly related to those injustices and those hurts. We have also heard of the further hurts that have been done to First Nations people through our history that have been dispensed through these dispatch boxes from which some of us are speaking today. We have heard of the laws that have been communicated via these dispatch boxes that have done great hurt and caused so much pain.

That was relevant for me personally because in the mid-nineties when I was working for the Lord Mayor of Brisbane I was asked to get very involved in and provide some support to a project in response to the *Bringing them home* report. That was a federal report into what we now think of and understand as the stolen generations which, frankly, at the time the Australian government and the Queensland government completely dismissed and did not want to have anything to do with. They failed to acknowledge the massive damage that was done to a very important part of our community by those policies of removing children. I got to be part of developing a program in the City of Brisbane where we did have political leadership that wanted to respond to and acknowledge these great pains.

We developed a program called Kul-gun Da 'Lo-bol' pa, or The Journey Home. That was an opportunity for us to hear the stories, the hurt and the pain of those people who were affected by the stolen generations and to then respond and say that we want to do something different going forward, that we needed to do something different going forward. I very much saw that as being a part of starting the arc to where we are coming to today. It was quite moving for me to be involved in that in a small way and I got to know a great number of very wonderful and extraordinary individuals who were part of that journey not only from within First Nations communities in the city of Brisbane and beyond but also from within the churches and other institutions that were part of that story of the removal of children.

I have heard many in this debate, especially from those opposite and indeed from the crossbenches as recently as a couple of speakers ago, talk of closing the gap and the concern that the gap remains too wide. I share that concern. I know everyone on our side of the chamber shares that concern. However, this is the important understanding. The greater understanding that we can all seek to achieve through Path to Treaty of intergenerational trauma helps explain why the gap remains wide and why we need to take different approaches including approaches like Voice to see things done differently.

The goal is treaty but truth is needed. Truth-telling will be hard and it is needed to inform the relations between First Nations peoples as well. It is definitely needed for relations between all Australians and all Queenslanders to be able to understand that those scars of dispossession and continued disrespect will not be healed quickly and that they are the cause of so much challenge to the good that we wish to do together as a community to improve the plight and the life of all Queenslanders. Without addressing those scars of dispossession, the attempted genocide and the continued disrespect, we cannot do that. That is why I commend Path to Treaty and I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.24 am): I rise to contribute to the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. Kathleen Ruska was born on 3 November 1920 at Bulimba in Brisbane. After her brothers were captured by the Japanese during the fall of Singapore in 1942, Kathleen enlisted in the Australian Women's Army Service and was trained as a signaller. She was promoted to lance corporal in 1943, the same year she married Bruce Walker. Despite their short marriage, many will know her as Kath Walker and many others will know her as Oodgeroo Noonuccal.

Oodgeroo Noonuccal's relevance to this bill comes in many forms. She held many positions of importance, received numerous awards, wrote the script for the *Rainbow Serpent* theatre presentation that was performed at World Expo 88 and created a place of learning that inspired thousands of schoolchildren and visitors who made the barge trip across Moreton Bay. In her poem, *All One Race*, Oodgeroo Noonuccal made the point that all people, regardless of their tribe or skin colour, are one family and questioned why we make wars. Her poem is about unity and bringing people together and that must be the emphasis of this bill.

I will not be opposing this bill because, as Queenslanders and Australians, we value unity. Unity is the basis of the great Australian trait of mateship and it is unity that held together Indigenous groups throughout history. Most of all, it is unity that will provide the foundation for our state and our country to move forward and to be better for everyone regardless of whether they are, as Oodgeroo Noonuccal wrote—

Black tribe, yellow tribe, red, white or brown.

I am extremely proud of my service to Queensland as a police officer and I am particularly proud of my service to remote and Indigenous communities. In fact, when I was stationed at Laura in Cape York I had one of two remaining blacktrackers, as they were officially known as that time, employed under the black trackers award. I want to put on the record today Thomas George, who was my tracker, and his service to that community and his value to me because I put my trust and faith in Thomas George. In fact, he saved my life on more than one occasion and he taught me so much. He taught me so much about Aboriginal culture and history. Then there was his father, Tommy George, well known in the cape as TG, and who could forget the role that he played in those communities in the cape?

I am also proud of my work on Palm Island, a community where we were able to dramatically increase school attendance, contributing to a better future for many Indigenous children. My service in those communities are times I will never forget. Luckily for me I have frequent reminders through people who lived in those communities or their families. Many speakers on this bill have spoken about the importance of truth-telling. The truth is that Indigenous people and Indigenous communities face challenges that many of us do not understand, but those challenges will not be addressed by division. Path to Treaty cannot be only about the spoken or written word; it must include action and those actions must address the truths currently faced by Indigenous people in communities.

Just this week we have met with the mayor of Yarrabah. Would honourable members believe that today in some places in that community they still do not have suitable drinking water or a reliable power supply? I make that point because if we are serious about going into those communities and making a difference, there needs to be a real commitment to dealing with those issues around health, education, housing and employment. When I was on Palm Island, 982 people on that island were unemployed—honourable members should think about that—they had never had a job. In the two years I was there we managed to get 96 of those people into full-time employment, and what a difference that made to those people and to their community.

When we consider that the average occupancy of housing on Palm Island at that stage was 25 people, we certainly appreciate what overcrowding in housing means. Think about that; they had to have shifts. It was like something off a submarine where there is a night shift and a day shift. When all the people who were out of a night-time came home in the morning and went to bed, everyone else got out of bed because they simply did not have enough housing.

It is a truth that Indigenous students in Queensland lag behind non-Indigenous children on every education measure, it is also a truth that Indigenous students in Queensland have a disproportionate rate of disciplinary absences from school when compared to non-Indigenous students and it is a truth that there is gross over-representation of Indigenous youths in our detention centres, and that needs to be addressed. I come back to early intervention. Why are we not doing more at those early stages when these kids are at risk to divert them from going into the justice system? We know that once they enter the justice system it is extraordinarily difficult to get them out of that system.

Path to Treaty must be about unity and about bringing Queensland together to achieve a better outcome for all. The member for Oodgeroo spoke of unity and of poetry. More recently, Jacinta Price during her maiden speech said 'it is time to stop feeding into a narrative that promotes racial divide'. As a proud Indigenous woman, Senator Price spoke about the hard work and sheer determination of people of all backgrounds in forging an Australia that we can all be proud of. She spoke of the need for Indigenous Australians, white Australians and Australians from myriad other cultural backgrounds to work in unity for what she called real and lasting change. All Queenslanders, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, can benefit from that change if we approach this process dedicated to unity, not division. While Senator Price's journey is to unite our nation, I call on this government and all members to unite our state for the benefit of all—and that means we need to start making a real difference in our Indigenous communities, starting today.



Ms HOWARD (Ipswich—ALP) (11.32 am): I am pleased to speak in support of the Path to Treaty Bill today. I begin by acknowledging the original custodians of the lands we are gathered on and by paying my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I thank the local people for their welcome here yesterday. There was a lot of truth-telling in that welcome, and I thank them for their commitment.

This is an historic piece of legislation. I am incredibly proud to be part of a government that is driving this legislation forward. I acknowledge my three First Nations colleagues who are here—Minister Leeanne Enoch, the member for Bundamba and you, Madam Deputy Speaker Lui—for the role that they play in this place. I often bear witness to the weight of responsibility they carry, but I thank them for their commitment and determination to improve outcomes in the lives of First Nations people. I thank Minister Craig Crawford for this bill. I know that he has done an incredible amount of work on this. I also acknowledge the committee chair, Corrine McMillan. She puts her heart and soul into everything that she does, but this bill particularly meant a lot to her and I know that she would love to be here today to share with us.

Path to Treaty acknowledges the impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland. It recognises their pain and suffering, their marginalisation, disempowerment and dispossession of lands, language, culture and traditions. Path to Treaty seeks to build a better future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—one that addresses past injustices and the ongoing social and economic injustices that they continue to endure today. We recognise that there is still a lot more work to be done to close the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Path to Treaty is a key part in helping to close that gap.


In 2023, the average life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is still lower than that of non-Indigenous people. First Nations adults and children are still over-represented in our criminal justice system and First Nations children are over-represented in our child protection system. The truth-telling and Path to Treaty processes will provide measurable economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and for the Queensland community in general. Path to Treaty will help more Indigenous Queenslanders gain more knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history in Queensland and improve our understanding of the injustice inflicted upon First Nations after white settlement.

There are still so many gaps in people's understanding of how First Nations people were treated for much of the past 235 years. Decades of forcibly removing Aboriginal people from their land, their culture, their customs, their resources and their language had incredibly traumatic consequences that are still tragically felt by many Aboriginal communities today. Even in our own towns and regions, many of us do not even know—nor have ever been taught—the rich and unique history of First Nations people who were the custodians of our land for tens of thousands of years. Many Ipswich people know, for example, of Ipswich's white history. We know about the local coalmining industry, its railway workshops and its notable politicians, sportspeople, artists and performers, but not many Ipswich people know a great deal about the history of our local First Nations people. That is why I deeply value the relationships I have built with local elders. I am completely in awe of their commitment to truth, culture and education. It has not been an easy path for them; it is still not an easy path for them. I know that Path to Treaty is the right step for us as a government because it is something they have been working on for as long as I have known them.

Path to Treaty is all about accepting and acknowledging both the good and the bad of our history and working towards creating a new future together. This bill will establish the First Nations Treaty Institute and the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. The Treaty Institute will lay the foundations for negotiating a treaty or treaties and the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry will strengthen and enrich our state's First Nations history by inquiring into and reporting on the effects of colonisation on First Nations in Queensland.

As the Premier stated in her outstanding speech earlier this year at the Path to Treaty event, Path to Treaty signals to the rest of Australia and to other nations that Queensland is ready and willing to confront that past and to listen to the painful stories that need to be told. But we cannot right the wrongs without recognising those wrongs. I acknowledge the member for Traeger's contribution. He was quite cynical about this bill and whether it will have a positive outcome for First Nations people, but I think the Premier summed it up when she said that we cannot right the wrongs and that we will keep seeing history repeat itself unless we recognise those wrongs and have honest conversations about them.

History will be made this year as we vote as a nation on the Voice to Parliament and the Queensland government commits to Path to Treaty. In 2023 we have a unique opportunity to commit to reconciliation, healing and truth-telling, share our past history—both good and bad—and work towards creating a better future together.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (11.37 am): Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, I begin by acknowledging you and appreciating your work as a Deputy Speaker and as one of the leaders of our parliament. Today I rise to offer my wholehearted support to the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. Every day in our parliament we say that we are fortunate to share these lands with two of the world's oldest continuing living cultures, and this bill calls on us to reflect on what that really means—not only the strength and ancient beauty of cultures that have thrived for well over 65,000 years but also the courage, the resilience and the endurance of cultures that have survived the last 235 years. This is one of the reasons that Queensland is the greatest place in the world. Nowhere else has living cultures with links to 2½ thousand generations and beyond.

As Queenslanders we share a painful history, but treaty and truth-telling give us a path forward to finally reframe that history. I particularly thank the Premier for her courage in pursuing these issues and Minister Crawford for his hard work and the passion that he shows every time he talks about it. More than that, though, I want to offer my respect and thanks to our First Nations members of parliament: Minister Enoch; the member for Cook, Cynthia Lui; and the member for Bundamba, Lance McCallum. It is not a coincidence that we are now debating these issues of treaty and truth-telling in our parliament. It is down to the work of them as elected representatives, every activist, every elder and every person who marched. Governments do not simply decide one day to do what is right and attempt to make up for the wrongdoings of the past. They are brought to that point at the stage when they cannot any longer avoid it. It is the work of activists like them and all of the others who came before and upon whose shoulders they would say they stood that brings us to this place today.

Colonisation and invasion have cast long shadows of trauma, exploitation, violence and loss, but First Nations people have kept telling their stories and kept marching and, when those shadows seemed darkest, always persisted. I well understand the scepticism and cynicism that some First Nations people feel in relation to this bill and the path to Voice and the path to treaty. I hope that by showing justice rather than simply talking about justice we can build trust together as Queenslanders.

I wanted to be part of a Labor government because I believe in that long arc of history that bends towards justice, and this bill contains many of the ingredients for that justice. They are simple. We teach our children that when they do wrong they need to admit their mistakes, hear the truth of the harm they have caused and act to make it right. As colonisers, we were children in an ancient land among ancient cultures that we did not have the capacity to understand, but we knew even then that what was happening was not right. The Path to Treaty Bill is about Queensland being mature enough to right the wrongs of the past—courageous enough to hear and accept that dark shared history. Treaty is not a magic wand; it is a body of work ahead. I acknowledge that that work falls disproportionately on our First Nations people. It is hard cultural work—it is hard work to relive difficult stories and difficult histories—but together we all want our children to inherit a mature Queensland with justice at its heart.


I am very proud to represent Gubbi Gubbi and Djindubari lands. Like many regions, those lands have experienced loss and diaspora, but culture and community remain strong. I acknowledge PIEEC, the Pumicestone Indigenous Education & Employment Council. I want to close with the words of one of our wonderful local elders, Aunty Flo Watson. I asked Aunty Flo what she would like me to say in this speech on her behalf and she said—

We are finally here on our path to Treaty. Truth telling is so important and if we can have this, we set our foundations for a reconciled future.

Myself as an Elder lived at Yarrabah under the Protection Act as part of the Stolen Generations, but now we have a treaty forthcoming.

Thank you, Queensland—a dream I've always had.

This bill is only the beginning of our path to treaty. I hope that the LNP can bring themselves with the same compassion I have heard throughout this debate to support the Voice referendum later this year. It is time for us to walk together and work together toward Oodgeroo Noonuccal's brighter tomorrow. I commend this bill to the House and to Queensland.

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (11.43 am): I rise to speak in support of the Path to Treaty Bill. I am very pleased to speak in the debate on this bill which, in your words, Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, represents an historic occasion. I absolutely agree. In speaking to this bill, I would like to acknowledge that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Queensland are made up of many individual communities and groups, each with their own traditions, culture and traditional knowledge, unique laws and languages. My part of the north side of Brisbane has a vibrant Indigenous community and a number

of organisations that deliver important services every day in our community, particularly around Zillmere. Organisations like Boss Boxing and Strong Women Talking do fantastic work every day getting real outcomes. They deserve respect and acknowledgement of their ongoing contribution.

The two processes set up by this bill—establishing a Path to Treaty and setting up a truth-telling inquiry—will essentially further the difficult course of reconciliation in this country. The issues that will be brought up by these processes may be uncomfortable for some non-Indigenous Australians, but for me that is the point. If the treaty process was easy and straightforward, it would have been done by now. If genuine truth-telling was a simple process, it would have happened years ago. These need to be uncomfortable conversations for non-Indigenous Australians to have. Bear in mind that that is a fraction of the uncomfortable hardship that Indigenous Australians have been experiencing through intergenerational hardships and are still experiencing to this day.


There is an attitude in some sectors of society and politics that reconciliation is a process that happens naturally of its own accord over time and that parliaments should not impose reconciliation or even speed it up unnaturally. For me, the perfect example of why this is not a correct point of view is the story of John Koowarta, a Wik man from Aurukun. As the assistant community champion for Aurukun I had the absolute honour—a sad honour—of visiting his grave in Aurukun in your electorate, Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, with his widow, Martha. The government champion for Aurukun, the member for Bulimba, I know has a strong bond with Martha which is beautiful to see. This giant of the Indigenous rights movement, who passed away in 1991, is known as the Eddie Mabo of the mainland, and his legacy lives on. His headstone reads: 'Fondly remembered for fighting for land rights for his people. Sadly missed.' John Koowarta's story is the story of the glacially slow pace of reconciliation if it is left to its own devices. Unless we push it forward, reconciliation goes nowhere.

In 1974, Koowarta and a number of other stockmen planned to purchase the Archer River cattle station, which covered much of the Wik people's traditional homeland. The Bjelke-Petersen government did not approve of the sale, primarily because the then premier did not believe that Indigenous people should be able to acquire large areas of land. This was challenged in court through various courts, all the way up to the Supreme Court of Queensland, where a decision was eventually made in 1988 in favour of John Koowarta. That is some 14 years after the planned purchase was intended to go through. But then, of course, the Bjelke-Petersen government declared the land in question national park so that no-one could own it—an act described by many as an act of spite and prejudice. That is the pace of reconciliation if parliaments and governments do nothing to push it along or actively work against it.

As the saying goes, if nothing changes nothing changes. It is only through governments advancing the cause of reconciliation that real steps forward can occur. All day we can debate the merits or otherwise of particular programs and initiatives aimed to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but unless the fundamental relationship with Indigenous Australians changes for the better then progress will always be stop-start and we can never build up sufficient momentum.

At this point in our shared history we need more steps forward towards reducing the gap in education, health, literacy and incarceration outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. I congratulate the Premier on her leadership of this issue, the minister and our three proud First Nations MPs—the members for Algeester, Bundamba and Cook.

Eddie Mabo and native title recognition was a powerful step forward. John Koowarta and the land rights movement was a significant step forward. The national apology to the stolen generation was a powerful step forward. The Voice to Parliament will be a very positive step forward. Starting the path to treaty and truth-telling are very worthy steps forward that we can take from this parliament right now. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (11.48 am): I rise to talk to the Path to Treaty Bill and acknowledge that the Indigenous people were the first inhabitants of the nation we proudly call our home. I make mention of many First Australians I am friends with—those I went to school with, played footy with and worked with shoulder to shoulder at the Queensland railways right throughout the state. I also recognise and thank the many First Australians who have attended here yesterday and today.

From the outset I want to highlight the confusion in the general public about Path to Treaty and the Voice to Parliament and what both of them mean. I would say that most people recognise and respect our First Nations people as the first people of the land. This government is high on rhetoric and tokenism but lacks any real meaningful action when it comes to making a difference in the lives of those living in Indigenous communities. I understand that a \$300 million Path to Treaty Fund is being provided for the treaty process; however, I cannot find any of this funding being used to directly benefit and better the lives of the Indigenous people living in communities in Queensland.


The KAP has had a strong record since Bob Katter was the state minister for northern development and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs. During this time the Katter leases were created under the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (Land Holding) Act 1985. However, in 1991 the Aboriginal Land Act 1991 and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act 1991 were introduced by the Labor Goss government into the Queensland parliament as new principal pieces of legislation applying to Indigenous land. The introduction of these acts created issues for the existing lease applications and also meant that no new applications could be made, which was a tragedy for Indigenous landowners. The KAP has continued to pursue title deeds for Indigenous people throughout the state through its state members. We also vehemently opposed the corporatisation and privatisation of Queensland Railways from consecutive Labor governments that eventually resulted in the loss of thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

The member for Traeger has on three occasions presented changes to the blue card system through his blue card bill. The current blue card system is currently holding back employment opportunities for Indigenous people in communities right across the Far North. This issue was brought to the member for Traeger by Indigenous leaders who were sick and tired of discrimination against those wanting to secure work in their communities. On all three occasions the bill was voted against by the government and opposition despite widespread support from Indigenous communities and leaders across Far North Queensland. If the changes were adopted, we would have seen a safer alternative to the current system and the ability for self-determination by Indigenous people and access to vital job opportunities. This was the voice of Indigenous people through the member for Traeger's actions yet was voted against by the government and opposition.

The KAP has also pushed for the return of market gardens to address the high cost of food transportation to communities and to help pursue a healthier lifestyle. Again, this is still being rejected. The \$300 million would be better spent directly on providing better outcomes to big issues that Indigenous communities are facing such as access to better health services, including dialysis and diabetes treatments, access to education, jobs and the development of economic opportunities, and access to cheaper, healthier food. This funding would go a long way to providing equal opportunity for Indigenous people to services and opportunities that we all enjoy. For those here today, we are all North Queenslanders, we are all Queenslanders and we are all Australians. Every one of us deserves equal opportunity and equal access to basic services, but we need real action, not more talk, broken promises and tokenism.

An incident having occurred in the public gallery—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): There will be no clapping from the gallery.

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (11.52 am): Before I begin, I want to acknowledge the fact that my feet are firmly on the grounds of the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji people. I also pay my deepest respects to their elders past, present and emerging as well as the traditional owners north, south and west that make up this beautiful part of the world and to the Kombumerri people of the land and sea country that I have the privilege of representing. I also want to acknowledge my colleagues the members for Algeester and Bundamba and you, Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, the member for Cook, whose experiences and knowledge we all have the privilege of learning from but whose journey to get to this place was no doubt more difficult than my own.

I am very proud to be a member of a Labor government speaking on this bill—a bill that, if passed, will mean the treaty process is enshrined in law. I am, however, not proud of some of the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments, including Labor governments, that inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on First Nations people. There have been many honest and powerful speeches so far in this debate about our respective backgrounds and knowledge. I said in my first speech that one of my earlier memories of becoming interested in politics was in primary school where I learnt about our country's cruel treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—a history of invasion, dispossession, massacres and stolen wages. I can distinctly recall watching *Rabbit-Proof Fence* and as a 12-year-old feeling a profound sense of shame of the assimilation policy this country oversaw that stole a generation of children from their families based on the colour of their skin.

It is convenient and easy for some to suggest that these were things that happened a long time ago, but the reality is there are many people walking among us who carry the lived experience of these profound failures, and the intergenerational trauma of these policies continues to this day. There are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people alive today who, for a period of their life, were not allowed

to vote in this country—something that was not changed until 1967—and there are in fact members of this place who were alive for that referendum. In the words of the former prime minister Paul Keating—

We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life.

We brought the diseases. The alcohol.

We committed the murders.

We took the children from their mothers.

We practised discrimination and exclusion.

It was our ignorance and our prejudice.

And our failure to imagine these things being done to us.

That is why the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry that examines the impacts of colonisation that this bill sets in train is so important. We as non-Indigenous Queenslanders need to open up our hearts and listen honestly. We need to come to this conversation acknowledging our biases and privileges. If we are ever going to fix the disadvantage First Nations people disproportionately experience from incarceration rates, worse health outcomes and the education gap, then we need to accept that these metrics are a direct and enduring result of colonisation. Path to Treaty will be a path to closing those gaps. This bill responds to generations of calls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland for a formal agreement, for a treaty or treaties, which recognise First Nations peoples as the original custodians of the land, waters and air and provides a just and realistic foundation for a reframed relationship; an agreement that delivers broad and substantial outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Queensland community.

I want to acknowledge everyone who has been a part of advancing this reform, in particular to those elders who have passed away waiting for change. In preparing for this speech, I was reflecting on a meeting held on the Gold Coast with traditional owners back in 2019. At the time I said—

Yesterday was a day I will forever remember.

I had the privilege of listening to the view of people like Kombumerri elder Dr Graham Dillon about how we achieve Treaty.

The discussion was raw and emotional but ultimately, that's how it had to be for people's voices to be heard.

I believe a Queensland treaty will benefit us all by promoting reconciliation, healing, and a future that is more just, more equal and more respectful of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Four years later, and having had the privilege of meeting with traditional owners across this state, I remain even more optimistic about how profound this reform will be. I am very proud of the work the Department of Environment and Science is doing in rightfully returning lands, in jointly managing parks and in doubling our Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program. Do we get everything right? Absolutely not, but we remain committed to making things better and taking up the generous offer made by people who have had every reason to have mistrust in government. It is incumbent on all of us to take up that offer, to listen to the call for voice, treaty and truth. As the Uluru statement concluded—

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

I commend the bill to the House.



Hon. DE FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (11.59 am): I rise to speak to the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. I acknowledge the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji people and the Yirrganydji and Djabugay people of this region. I grew up on Bieli country. I acknowledge the First Nations people who are here today in the gallery. I acknowledge the member for Algester, the member for Bundamba and yourself, Deputy Speaker, the member for Cook, the three First Nations members of this government who have helped to bring us to this point in so gracious, so patient, so heartbreaking but so resolute a manner, gently exhorting us but with such determination that we reframe who we are as a state and as a people.

I think all of us are speaking to this bill with a great sense of moment, knowing that we are making history this week, and I personally feel so proud that we are doing that. When we pass this bill we will be embarking on a path to treaty with First Nations people. We are saying we will understand our history, we will speak the truth of it, we will be more respectful, we will be more inclusive, we will walk as one. We know there will be a number of things put in place as a result of this bill to make that happen and I will not speak specifically to those, but I note the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry, which I am sure will be an emotional, gut-wrenching but necessary experience for so many. We are here today as the result of many years of hard work, of committees and processes, to get us to this point. I acknowledge that a number of people involved in those processes are here today.

I think my own journey in understanding the truth about the history of our treatment of First Nations people probably reflects the journey of many other Queenslanders. The Australian history that I learnt growing up was that Captain Cook came and 'discovered' Australia in 1770 and he civilised the 'natives' and that that was the beginning of Australia. If you asked me about Burke and Wills, Matthew Flinders, Abel Tasman and the like I was on it. If you asked me about the oldest continuous living culture in the world and our treatment of that culture I would have had absolutely no idea, but I have been on a journey ever since to learn.

Fast forward to 2017 when, as minister for child safety, youth justice and prevention of domestic and family violence and minister for youth, I was faced with some terrible truths about the over-representation of First Nations people in all of those systems, about entrenched disadvantage, inherent bias, intergenerational grief—I learnt that grief is epigenetic, that children are born with that grief. I became Ministerial Champion for Aurukun, which is possibly one of the greatest privileges of my life. I learnt that Aurukun was established as a mission in 1904 by herding up Aboriginal people from a large surrounding area, including people from five different family clans who had no relationship to each other. It was ruled for 40 years by a chief protector. With the coming of the missionaries children were confined to dormitories to isolate them from the influence of their people. I met Auntie Martha Koowarta, whose husband John was known as the 'Mabo of the mainland'. In seeking to buy back the land of his birth at Archer River in Cape York, he had to take the Bjelke-Petersen government to the High Court to prove that the Whitlam government's new Racial Discrimination Act was constitutional. He won and then Bjelke-Petersen, out of 'spite and prejudice', declared the property a national park to ensure that no-one could ever own it.

In the last six years since learning the most confronting truths about our treatment of First Nations people, walking alongside me have been First Nations people who have been so patient and so tolerant of me. They have taught me so much and were full of hope that we would always come to the point where we are today. I want to acknowledge Mick Gooda, Auntie Judith Ngakyunkwokka, Auntie Harriet Pootchemunka, Auntie Martha Koowarta, Auntie Ena Koongotema, Mayor Keri Tamwoy at Aurukun and the many others. I acknowledge Auntie Rachel Atkinson, the chair of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, who, when I first became minister, scolded me very early on, saying stop talking about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in a deficit model, please talk about our strength and our hope; talk about what we have ahead of us.

As a result of all of the First Nations people who have walked alongside all of us we are here today and we are promising that we will be as one, that we will understand the difficult truths, that we will tell those truths and that we will have a path to being one Queensland. I want to recognise the minister and the time he spent with me to make sure I understood this process, but also the Premier for taking leadership in bringing this bill to the House. I quote the minister in his second reading speech—

I also recognise that the Path to Treaty process is built on the enormous resilience of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the strength drawn from their rich history, their culture and their knowledge.

We speak to that strength.



Ms RICHARDS (Redlands—ALP) (12.05 pm): I rise to support the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. I start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are gathering here in beautiful Gimuy, in Cairns, on Yidiny lands and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging of all of the lands which we represent here in this place. I acknowledge all of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are in the gallery here today to watch this historic bill be passed.

I know there are many others who, like me, were taught more about the history of Captain Cook in school than we were taught about the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as among the world's oldest continuing living cultures. I know the experience of the students who are here with us in the gallery today will be very different to that of mine 40 years ago. We have come a little way but we still have a very long way to go. I was born on the lands of the Wurundjeri people in the Kulin Nation. They are the traditional owners of the lands surrounding the Yarra Valley. I was not taught that at school. Their traditional language is Woi Wurrung. We were not taught that in school. In fact, we were taught French. I think it is important that we reinvigorate our traditional languages and make sure they are taught in school. I am very proud of the students at Victoria Point State Primary School in my electorate who can sing the national anthem in traditional language.

Truth-telling and being honest about our past will bring us as communities, as Queenslanders and as Australians closer together. Just as today in our schools and our communities we celebrate the incredibly rich culture of the world's oldest living civilisation, now is the time to also tell the truth about

our uncomfortable shared history. Truthfully telling the stories of our shared history is key to genuine reconciliation. It will help us go forward and walk together on a truly shared journey in our beautiful country. As the member for Bundamba and proud Gubbi Gubbi man said in his contribution, this legislation could have really been put in the too-hard basket by the Premier. I thank her for bringing this forward. It is a really important and historic piece of legislation. I thank the members for Algester, Cook and Bundamba and Minister Crawford for the significant work they have done.

Although I was born on Wurundjeri land, for over 30 years I have called Redlands, the stunning lands of the Quandamooka people, home. It is home to the Noonuccal, Ngugi and Gorempul peoples whose lands, winds and waters I have the privilege of sharing. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge Ngugi elder Uncle Bob Anderson for his contribution to our community. It has been substantial. I do not think there is anybody in this chamber who is not familiar with Uncle Bob's contribution. Again I want to acknowledge Minister Enoch as a proud and strong Quandamooka woman and to remember Aunty Joan Hendriks who sadly passed away in 2020. She made an enormous contribution to our Redlands community. She would always conclude her welcome to countries with the poem of another incredibly strong Quandamooka woman, Oodgeroo Noonuccal. To conclude I would like to read that poem: *A Song of Hope*. I think this bill goes part of the way to bringing that hope to life. With an open mind and an open heart, through treaty and voice, we will bring about a glad tomorrow.

Look up, my people,
The dawn is breaking
The world is waking
To a bright new day
When none defame us
No restriction tame us
Nor colour shame us
Nor sneer dismay.

Now brood no more
On the years behind you
The hope assigned you
Shall the past replace
When a juster justice
Grown wise and stronger
Points the bone no longer
At a darker race.

So long we waited
Bound and frustrated
Till hate be hated
And caste deposed
Now light shall guide us
No goal denied us
And all doors open
That long were closed.

See plain the promise
Dark freedom-lover!
Night's nearly over
And though long the climb
New rights will greet us
New mateship meet us
And joy complete us
In our new Dream Time.

To our fathers' fathers
The pain, the sorrow;
To our children's children
The glad tomorrow.

I commend this bill to the House.



Ms CAMM (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.09 pm): I am pleased to be able to contribute to the debate on this bill and to do that in Far North Queensland. I represent a North Queensland electorate, four per cent of the population of which are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. My electorate and that of the member for Mackay are also home to the largest population of Australian South Sea islanders

and I am proud to represent their voices in my contribution today. I acknowledge the Yuwi people who represent the lands of Mackay and part of my electorate, from Habana and Rural View right through to Cape Hillsborough and the O'Connell River; the Ngaro people who represent the beautiful Whitsunday Islands; and the Gia people who represent lands from the O'Connell River to Proserpine and to the north of my electorate. I also acknowledge Uncle George Tonga, a Yuwibara traditional custodian of Yuwi land, and his leadership across the Mackay and broader Mackay-Isaac-Whitsunday communities.

In particular, I acknowledge an initiative that I am proud to have been involved with in my former role as deputy mayor of Mackay Regional Council and chair of the council's Natural Environment Advisory Committee. With the establishment of the Traditional Owners Reference Group, traditional custodians came together to work with not just local government but also land management organisations. As part of their work they cohesively used their conviction, passion and connection to land and water. They have been able to educate not just myself but also many community leaders as well as young and future leaders of our community, school groups and even our local Rugby League club. They often organise visits out on country where sites have allowed a reconnection to country and have been utilised to reconnect young people who were perhaps taking the wrong path. We have seen incredible early interventions by the elders in our community. Through that process we have seen how connection to country, truth-telling and sharing of culture can allow people to reconnect. Therefore, I am pleased to see that the state will be progressing Path to Treaty to provide people from all cultural backgrounds with a deeper understanding of a sense of place, a sense of connection and a sense of belonging.

By doing that, we will have a greater understanding of some of the very tough conversations and tough stories that we need to hear through statewide truth-telling so that we can all acknowledge the intergenerational trauma and the impact that it has had on communities. It is important to note that each community is unique in terms of geography, culture, family and connections. I hope that in setting up the institute—and I note the committee's recommendations around language and ensuring that we connect correctly with language—a whole-of-state approach is taken and rather than a South-East Queensland focus.

It is very timely that we are in Cairns, in the Far North. Over the course of the past two years, as a member of this House I have had the absolute privilege of visiting communities in the Far North. We have met with the mayor of Mapoon, the mayor of Mornington Island, the mayor of Yarrabah and the mayor of the Torres Strait. We spoke with those community leaders who are at times frustrated as they feel that their voices and their advocacy are not heard as they deal with the day-to-day leadership of their communities and the very important priorities of those communities. Today I have heard many members of this House raise those concerns, whether they are members of the crossbench, the government or, in fact, the opposition.

There will be a \$300 million investment in Path to Treaty. That is an enormous figure. It could contribute significantly to not just past healing but also what is occurring right now in communities across this state. Some people do not live in the standard of housing that we would expect in a modern Queensland. Some children cannot access the education or health care that their city counterparts expect. Some young people are not invested in in the same way because of where they reside.


It is important that we throw political correctness out the door when it comes to the point of this bill, which is truth-telling. As part of that, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the truth of the community of Mackay that I live in and serve. I want to acknowledge the very important history of my community, which is intertwined with that of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and it is that of the Australian South Sea islanders. One individual has commented to me, 'Member, they are migrants; they are different.' However, their history in my community of Mackay, the way in which they were brought to this nation and their deep family connections with both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families also need to be told. We need to hear the truth of what occurred in my region and in other parts of Queensland to the Australian South Sea islander community. We need to hear the truth about what Robert Towns and Captain John Mackay did. We need to hear the truth about blackbirding and the intergenerational trauma that it created.

I met the grandson of an Australian South Sea islander who served in the Vietnam War. I heard stories about how he and his Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues, friends and comrades were not permitted to enter the same pubs as white people. He needs to be able to heal and connect not just from the trauma endured in his own culture and background but also from the trauma suffered as he served our nation. Those truths also need to be told. As part of Path to Treaty, I urge the minister and the government to acknowledge the importance of the Australian South Sea islanders' connection to culture and community in areas such as my home of Mackay.

I want to highlight recommendations that the LGAQ made to the committee during its consultation process. Having served as a former deputy mayor, I believe that at times local government and local representatives are best placed to engage and consult. At times they are more trusted than many of us in this chamber or our federal counterparts, because those people work on the ground and deal with priorities and issues every day. They are the ones who are connected. They are family members and leaders. Therefore, when we talk about how committed we are to a process, it is concerning that the committee outlined a lack of consultation and a lack of timeliness. I have spoken to people in my own community who did not even know about or understand Path to Treaty. As a member who represents that community, to be criticised for not speaking openly on our decision on the Voice—I will not have it. We want details. My community and my Aboriginal elders want details too. Nobody has consulted with them on what the treaty means or what the Voice means. While we are a large and diverse state, a commitment of \$300 million should go a long way towards ensuring that every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is consulted with in a meaningful and co-designed way. Otherwise, this will be nothing more than lip-service and political correctness that will deliver no outcomes.

As a proud Far North Queenslander, I want to see the boys and girls who are in this House watching these proceedings today, as well as the boys and girls from Mornington Island and young people from the Torres Strait have the same opportunities as their white counterparts have right now. While truth-telling and history is important, we must not forget to hear the voices of the young generations of today and listen to what is important to them. That is why we all need to rise above what sometimes is ludicrous politicking, so that we can all make informed decisions. As a representative of my community I am equal to every other member of this House and that is why we are named by our electorates. It is because we represent all people of all cultures and backgrounds in our electorates.

With that, I thank the House. I thank the committee, in particular. I understand that some of the stories heard were quite traumatising. I thank those who contributed. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of Path to Treaty.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (12.19 pm): I rise to proudly speak on the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of these lands on which we meet today in Cairns and pay my respects to elders both past and present. I also acknowledge all of the students here in the public gallery because today you will witness history making in the Queensland parliament. You, and about a dozen speakers, will be part of that when this bill is voted on.

This bill provides an opportunity for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to set a way forward, to right the wrongs of the past and move together as one in our state of Queensland. First, there must be truth-telling. Path to Treaty is our opportunity to overturn the wrongs of the past which were, as the chair of the Community Support and Services Committee and the member for Mansfield quite correctly said in her foreword—

... the horribly misguided iterations of the Aboriginals Protection and Sale of Opium Act of 1897. This Act advocated the displacement of Aboriginal peoples to reserves, regulated their employment and perpetrated the most draconian form of social engineering—unleashing a state-sanctioned process of dispossession, brutality and violence.

For those who know Palm Island and its actual history, it was called ‘Punishment Island’, where people from missions were sent in its early days.

I take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge all members of that committee for their work, particularly the chair, the member for Mansfield, who cannot be here today. I also acknowledge those who made submissions or came to the many public briefings, as we saw in my home town of Townsville—a good turnout of local elders who shared some of their own deeply personal stories to the committee.

Many in this House know that I am born a proud New Zealander. I am a direct descendant of the Ngai Tahu, proud Maori people who are the principal iwi, or tribe, of the South Island. All of my iwi know the importance of treaty. The Waitangi Treaty was signed in 1840. That is 183 years ago, so we have a significant amount of work to do in this country and it starts with this bill in this House in our proud state of Queensland. It starts with our Path to Treaty.

The Waitangi Treaty did not come easily. There was much conflict. In fact, the New Zealand Wars that followed from 1845 to 1873 had many casualties along the way on both sides. This, our Queensland Path to Treaty, must start with the acknowledgement of Queensland’s own past, and that means truth-telling has to occur before healing and walking together on this our path to treaty.

The bill’s objectives are to establish a First Nations Treaty Institute to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop and provide a framework for them to prepare for and commence treaty negotiations with the Queensland government and, importantly, to establish a

Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to inquire into and report on the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The core principles underpinning the bill are self-determination; free, prior and informed consent; and respecting and protecting Aboriginal law, Aboriginal tradition, Torres Strait Islander law and ailan kastom. A big esso to the member for Cook, who was in the chair earlier.

A treaty is a signed, negotiated agreement that accepts our history and opens the door to a shared future. Treaties signed between governments and First Nations people have occurred around the world to provide recognition that First Nations peoples are the original owners of this land and endured injustices as a result of colonisation. Treaties have been used throughout the world as an accepted means of acknowledging past injustices, resolving differences and creating a foundation for reconciliation. Treaty provides an exciting opportunity to create a unified identity for all Queenslanders—one that recognises and protects the rights of First Nations peoples, their cultures and way of life.


Informed by statewide consultations in 2019, three major themes emerged that inform the work we are doing today to become treaty ready: one was inclusion, two was reconciliation and three was being treaty ready. To move forward we must acknowledge the past and I must take this opportunity to thank, commend and acknowledge the work of the Eminent Panel and the Treaty Working Group, which was established in 2019 and, in large, has underpinned the work we are doing today.

The foundation for a respectful and mutually beneficial relationship between Aboriginal peoples, Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland community generally is to provide for processes and opportunities to hear the voices of those peoples to start this process. Whilst this has been an opportunity to talk on a piece of history-making legislation, I have had to shorten it a little bit. To conclude, I want to echo the words of the Premier. She said—

This is our chance to do what we should have done two centuries ago—to make a treaty or treaties with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. There are rare moments in time—perhaps just once in a generation or even once in several generations—where we have an opportunity to be true agents of change. Queensland's Path to Treaty is such a moment. It is a moment which will define our humanity and our sense of fairness and will be a legacy we leave to our children.

As we stand together in this place, we are indeed making history. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Before calling the member for Springwood, I would like to acknowledge visiting schools in the gallery with us: St Joseph's, Cairns; St Therese's; Jubilee Christian College; and Dimbulah State School. Welcome.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (12.26 pm): I acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands on which we meet today and I also acknowledge the custodians of my home—the Yagara, Yugambeh and Quandamooka people. I pay my respects to elders past and present. I recognise their connections to the land, water and sky—which spans over 65,000 years. It is this history, this connection—their sovereignty—that the Path to Treaty Bill seeks to recognise and to honour.

The truth is—as we know, but most of us were never taught in school—that our state's history is inescapably entwined with egregious wrongs, actions that today we now know were committed against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and many of those atrocities were sanctioned by the state. We come into this House to this debate in an act of recognition that the crimes of our forebears cannot be left to fade beyond our memories as if they never happened, for these are not the crimes just of the past. The truth is that those actions ripple through generation after generation, through relationship after relationship, and are still felt deeply today.

This sitting of regional parliament in Far North Queensland is poised to establish a mechanism for truth-telling but it is also poised to create history and to create a better future for all Queenslanders. It is a pathway that recognises First Nations people and non-Indigenous Queenslanders as equal partners to shape the narrative about what it means to be a Queenslanders and to create a shared identity that we can all be proud of.

We are in this House right now with a once-in-a-lifetime chance, with an opportunity, to take a very significant step forward on our journey towards reconciliation. I want to acknowledge that it is not the beginning of this journey, because our state's history contains not only wrongs. Despite the darkness, we have much to be proud of. So much of this progress and that which we are proud of was driven by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples themselves. I would like to take the opportunity to honour their work and honour their resilience, strength and bravery.


In fact, we are here today because like the Voice, First Nations people have come to us—they have come to this parliament—and asked us to do this. This is not something that we have decided to do to them, again. This is the significant and poignant difference. It is what those opposed to Voice or Treaty must come to terms with. It is a generous and deeply kind offer that has been made to us despite what has been done, despite the wrongs or in fact what we have failed to do.

To suggest that, whether it is on Path to Treaty or the debate on the Voice, the government has got it wrong is worse than just missing the point. It is actually the same mean old trick that has served to oppress First Nation Australians. To suggest this is our idea, to create a doubt, or say that this serves to distract from doing everything else on the pathway to reconciliation and advancement of the experience of First Nations Queenslanders is nothing more than gaslighting. Instead, I believe that most of us are honoured to be part of a movement that is ready to, and has, worked with Indigenous people to mould this moral arch to deliver this progress.

In this debate we can take strength and guidance from the multitude of other acts of reconciliation that have been brought to us—solutions to assist reconciliation such as: the recovery of decades of stolen wages from First Nations workers; the establishment of the nation's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing authority, which happened here in Queensland; and calling on us to establish and commit to invest and uplift First Nations businesses through procurement. We all acknowledge there is much more to do. As a Queenslanders, I am so proud to build on my relationship with many First Nations Queenslanders, including the people of Hope Vale—a beautiful, vibrant community in which I am privileged to spend many days and nights.

I speak about these collective achievements not as some act of self-congratulation for us as parliamentarians, because this debate is not about us. We are not here on a mission to pat ourselves on the back, to be satisfied with a 'job well done' or a pause, in fact, on the road to reconciliation. Instead, we speak about these examples of progress so we can understand the path we are already on—a path that First Nations Queenslanders have laid out for us, the steps we have already taken to understand what might be in our way and, most importantly, how we can shine a bright light on the way forward.

This is another pivotal movement. As the House moves to vote today on establishing the path to treaty, this nation is also about to deliver a Voice to the federal parliament. I am very proud, and I know that so many members of this House, this state and this nation are proud to support both Path to Treaty and the Voice. I am proud to be standing along with members of this House who believe in a better future for us all. I look forward to standing shoulder to shoulder with non-Indigenous Queenslanders and Indigenous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders as we walk this path together. Treaty will deliver a better Queensland. The Voice will make us a better nation. When we vote today, we can take inspiration from those who are reaching out their hands to us so that we may walk arm in arm, heart to heart, Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders alike and united. We are not walking away from our past, but towards a future that we all have a role in creating—a future that all Queenslanders can be proud of.

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (12.33 pm): I rise in strong support of the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. In doing so, I pay my respects to the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today here in Cairns. I thank them for their generous and warm welcome and welcome to country yesterday. I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the community that I am privileged to represent on the north side of Brisbane. I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging and do so in the spirit of social, legal and cultural justice and true reconciliation.

It is with great honour that I rise in Cairns to support this bill today. The path to treaty has not been easy, nor will the path ahead be easy, but I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government in delivering this historic reform. I thank the minister for his hard work in this area. I particularly thank him for his approach and his support in engaging the community on this important issue, which included public engagement in little old Stafford. My view is that as elected members we all have a role to play in leading community discussions on important issues like this. I have taken the view that it is not just about engaging First Nations members of my community but also about trying to bring people with us.

Of course I welcomed many First Nations people to my forum, including Cheryl Buchanan from the interim panel, who was fantastic, along with members of the Noonga Reconciliation Group. MPs might remember Kaia from Wavell State High School, who presented the beautiful students' reflection at the event on the Speaker's Green last year. Kaia and her family were also very generous and participated in my local forum, so I thank them for that. As I said, with all due respect to First Nations people in this parliament and in my community, the point is that it is actually much broader than thinking

this is solely an Indigenous issue. This is about all of us; this is about our intertwined history. To that end, our local forum included school principals, students and church leaders. It was hosted by the Salvation Army. There were members of community sports groups and many more because this is about all of us and our intertwined history. This is about our now shared identity. The reality is that it will likely be confronting for many of us, and so be it. This is about telling the truth of our shared history with the hope that it helps us all create a better collective future. I thank First Nations Australians for the generosity they have extended in seeking to do this. I am privileged to do my part in taking that hand of friendship.


While considering the momentous reforms this bill represents I reflected on my own journey and education on these issues. I consider myself lucky to have grown up in a household where the notion of reconciliation was a genuine topic of discussion—not just with Dad, who served in the Goss government and did so much to reconfigure the relationship between the state and Indigenous Queenslanders—but particularly with Mum, who was a member of the north side reconciliation group. It is a great privilege to be here in my capacity as an MP to progress this bill. As a primary school student in grade 4 or 5 I remember my interest being spiked by the frontier wars of North America. I was really hooked on Native American history. It is fair to say that one of the most influential books in my education was *Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee* by Dee Brown. While the history and stories of the Sioux, Cheyenne and Comanche come to me with such ease, in my later education I realised that it was shocking that the same could not be said for our own Australian and Queensland history. Of course that includes the significant impact of colonisation and the reality of frontier expansion here in Queensland.

Through this process and the federal referendum—I acknowledge the remarks of the member Springwood, who talked about the parallel processes we are facing this year—we are finally recognising the basic truth that for tens of thousands of years Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were the original inhabitants of this vast continent. The Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry will be difficult, but it is important to learn where we have come from, who we are as a collective people and where we are going. The institute to support the readiness and preparation for treaty negotiations is important, and I thank the minister for delivering that as well.

My first professional introduction to this space was as a young law graduate finishing my associateship in the courts. Trying to inform myself, I volunteered for native title experience. I was nominated to go to the Yamatji land and sea council in Geraldton, Western Australia, so I had experience working on ILUAs, the substantive Federal Circuit Court application itself. When I think back to those days, when I had a full head of brown hair, it is an absolute honour to be here today to progress something so meaningful in that space.

I want to touch on some of the faux opposition to some of these reforms—that we are being too high level, that we are not being practical, that somehow these historic reforms are at the expense of practical reforms. If I can paraphrase Dean Parkin, the director of the Voice to Parliament, creating avenues for First Nations communities to have a role in how their lives are run is absolutely practical. That is what we are doing through treaty, that is what we are doing through truth-telling and that is federally what we are doing through the Voice. It is absolutely about enabling First Nations Australians to have control and agency over their own lives and their own communities, and nothing could be more practical or meaningful.

I am very proud to serve in a caucus with Minister Enoch, the member for Bundamba and the member for Cook. I am very privileged to be here alongside them. I thank the minister and his staff. I thank the member for Mansfield for her significant work in this space as well as the committee members. I give a particular shout-out to those eminent Queenslanders who did so much of the heavy lifting: the members of the exploratory committee, the members of the interim panel, the supporters of the Voice and so many more—I think I saw Mick Gooda here today. I thank them all for their hard work. We stand on your shoulders, and we thank you for getting us to where we are today. We are so proud to be part of this experience. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (12.40 pm): I rise to speak on the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. I want to first recognise the traditional custodians—the Aboriginal people, the Torres Strait Islander people and the South Sea islander people, of whom I am a part. The Path to Treaty Bill 2023 is foundational legislation designed to drive Path to Treaty. Once passed, the Treaty Institute and the Queensland government, together with a newly created treaty authority and treaty tribunal, will work together to develop a treaty negotiation framework.

The bill is the most transformational change to relations between the state and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribal peoples of Queensland that has ever been introduced to the House, yet everything about it seems very rushed, with minimal time frames allowed for submissions. Those who did provide submissions all expressed concerns over the rushed time line and the lack of consultation. One wrote—

Your committee should note that not once has our ... Corporation received information from any of the relevant committees and not once from the Treaty Office.

Why is this bill being rushed through at the speed of light like this before a proper consultation process has been carried out and before the government can legitimately claim to have obtained Queenslanders' 'free, prior and informed consent'?

The many conversations I have had with traditional owners in my area reveal that most know nothing about the bill or its content or what impact it will have on their lives or their community. They also knew nothing about any notion of a reframed partnership between their people and the state, and many are understandably confused and apprehensive about the whole idea. They say that they were not consulted and, even if they had been, consultation is not consent despite what the government would have us believe. Many First Nations people have told me they do not want this bill or treaty. What they want is to be treated with respect and courtesy and to be given more time to understand what the government is proposing to do so they can then consult, discuss and decide for themselves if they will support it and what that support will look like. This bill is not reflective of a bottom-up approach but rather a top-down, agenda-driven process by the government itself, and a rushed one at that.

The Path to Treaty Bill 2023 contains some very fine words and sentiments, most of which ring hollow on closer examination. A number of submitters say they were unimpressed with the process to date. As one noted—

... in all the time this path to treaty process has been occurring, our Corporation has never received information or communication from this office. We remain unclear as to its role, function, personnel and whether it meaningfully engages with First Nations' communities, the latter being another stated principle. In our view this office lacks transparency and does not seem to have even the most fundamental of communication practices.

The bill also poses a direct threat to the integrity of traditional decision-making processes. As one submitter stated—

Our cultural traditions very much align with decision making by consensus. We recommend that a reference be made to this method of decision making as being culturally sensitive and placing an onus on all members to work collaboratively.

Not by a casting vote system.

The Path to Treaty committee should have consulted the Indigenous government toolkit where it is all laid out very clearly. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander approach to decision-making is one of consensus and occurs across the layers of networks. Consensus is created through a slow agreement and can change over time. The institute will not and cannot represent Indigenous people as a group. The notion that 10 appointees in Brisbane will have the support of all Indigenous people throughout Queensland, for whom they will professes to speak, is simply absurd.

The government allocated a 10-year budget of \$300 million to this process. Nowhere in the bill does it mention exactly how First Nations people might gain access to the fund. The explanatory notes state—

Allocations from the Fund will be available to commence key functions of the Path to Treaty, including local truth-telling and healing activities, community engagement and research and advisory functions.

This whole arrangement is controlling and paternalistic. If the government were truly serious about negotiating in good faith with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, then it should hand over the whole \$300 million. Any situation where the government holds the purse strings, doling it out for 'approved' projects, completely negates any supposed independence of the treaty appointees.

The bill states that the Governor in Council will appoint treaty council members on the recommendation of the minister. The minister will recommend Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons to the council if satisfied that they are 'suitably qualified' but there is no reference as to what that means. Essentially, therefore, the appointment will be basically at the minister's discretion. The government's selection process is not independent and does not fulfil the requirements for free, prior and informed consent on anything, much less a treaty. If the council is to represent the interests of the First Nations people in Queensland, it must be representative of them and their separate and unique interests, depending on where they live. No body whatsoever could be described as independent when its members and leadership are to be hand-picked by the executive branch of government.


Apart from a brief and dismissive reference to 'self-determination' as a 'principle' in the explanatory notes, the bill fails to mention it in any of its clauses or provisions. The government clearly has no intention of relinquishing one iota of control over this whole process. That is why the bill contains nothing in the way of democratic representation by our tribal people or an independently appointed body and no right to self-governance or self-determination.

This bill is not what is being represented in the media by either the left or the right. It is not about respecting and empowering First Nations or tribal people; it is about manufacturing their consent for a treaty in which, sure, many hand-picked appointees and select groups may become enormously powerful and wealthy, but the trade-off will be the people's land and their sovereignty. That is because it is being driven by the same interests pushing similar legislative reform in other colonial countries, including the United States, Canada and New Zealand. All are engaged in renegotiating treaties with their First Nations people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders need to ask themselves why. Why have those countries suddenly decided to reframe their partnership with their country's First Nations people? Did they all just suddenly develop a conscience and decide to finally right the past wrongs at the exact same time, or is there something more to it? If the Queensland government really want to help First Nations people, they would grant them land rights, the right to self-determination and the right to veto, but they will not do that. Everything in this bill will be at the minister's discretion.

The bill also contains a preamble recognising certain aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law, history, custom and tradition. The preamble mentions that First Nations people assert their sovereignty but there is no mention of the commitment to it in principle by the government. There is also no mention of self-government, land rights or even native title. More telling is the complete lack of any reference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' ongoing connection to their country. Where 'lands' and 'waters' are mentioned, it is accompanied by a reference to the tribal people's 'continuing responsibility for their lands, seas, waters, air and resources'. The two mean completely different things. A connection to country entails a right to the use of those lands and waters, not simply a responsibility for them. By using the word 'responsibility', the bill employs vague language with no real meaning beyond that used to denote management and ranger programs. It is a word that does not acknowledge the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to use the water or to hunt, fish and roam freely over the land.

Clause 63 also imposes strict confidentiality provisions on the minister, council members, senior executive officers, members of staff or contractors of the Treaty Institute and public service employees—so, independent but still bound by government secrecy. Frankly, if a treaty does not come out of all of this, the Queensland government will have accomplished a feat never seen before—that of negotiating and signing a treaty with itself.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (12.49 pm): The people of Queensland, free and equal citizens of Australia, honour the Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay tribute to their unique values and their ancient and enduring cultures, which deepen and enrich the life of our community. So begins our state's Constitution and so, too, do I begin my contribution on this debate on the Path to Treaty Bill, respectfully acknowledging the First Nations peoples of the land where this parliament meets in Cairns and where this debate takes place. I also respectfully acknowledge the First Nations people of the Yagara and Yugambeh land in and around the electorate of Woodridge, a First Nations community that has taught me so much during my period of service as the state member for Woodridge.

For too long, Queensland and our nation have turned away from the fundamental truths of our shared history with our First Nations people. In 2023, we stand on the threshold of change and at an historic moment for First Nations people here and around the nation. Before we take the next steps on our shared journey, we must reckon with our past. For Queensland, this is the time for treaty. It is not a time for moral equivalence. There is no time for equivocation or hedged bets. It is a unique and special time in our history and for us to unify. This is a time for all of us to support our First Nations peoples. It is a time for truth-telling and straight talking. This bill represents our chance to walk in step with our First Nations people, our chance to show that we are prepared as a parliament and as a state to hear all sides of Queensland's history, much of it hidden and unheard. The bill is an important next step in making treaty a reality.

In the Queensland budget I delivered two years ago, I cemented our commitment to this process. Our government created the \$300 million Path to Treaty Fund to enable that journey, a reform that led the nation. The returns of that fund in the order of \$20 million each year will support the Treaty Institute

and the state's Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. When the Path to Treaty Fund was announced as part of the 2021 state budget, LNP members lined up to dismiss it. They complained there was nothing being spent from it, yet in this debate they complain that we should be spending more from the fund or question the fund's investment priorities. It is sad that political parties like the LNP and Pauline Hanson's One Nation party continue to make bad-faith political arguments, contradicting themselves from one year to the next. I would respectfully remind all honourable members that the existence, form and nature of the Path to Treaty Fund is a direct response to the recommendations of First Nations peoples themselves expressed through the Treaty Working Group in February 2020.

The LNP and other political parties should stop acting like they know best. They should listen to the voices of First Nations people, including when they asked and recommended that we establish a future fund to support Path to Treaty. Again, I respectfully ask that the LNP stop talking over the voice of First Nations people. It is not for the LNP to be making decisions about what those funds should be spent on. Those funds are there to support our First Nations Queenslanders to participate in this process, as they see fit, at the pace they require, and I will defend those purposes for as long as I serve as the Treasurer of Queensland.

These institutions created through this bill will help reframe our relationship with First Nations Queenslanders. Our statement of commitment sets out the principles that we are working towards—self-determination, locally led decision-making, empowerment and, very importantly, respect. It is a shared commitment, a shared responsibility and shared accountability.

I thank the minister, members of the parliamentary committee, and particularly the member for Mansfield, the chair of the committee, for their work on this bill. I thank them for their commitment to hearing and listening to the voices of Queenslanders in remote and regional locations in particular across the state and particularly for listening to the voices of First Nations people.

I would also like to thank my colleagues and friends, the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Leeanne Enoch MP; the member for Cook, Cynthia Lui; and the member for Bundamba, Lance McCallum, for their leadership and wisdom as First Nations members of this parliament, our government and our parliamentary party, and for the contribution they have and will continue to make to this journey our state has embarked upon and for the contribution they have made to this bill.

As the committee report makes clear, Queenslanders want to see change. We know they want to see action towards reconciliation now and into the future. This is a national movement, a movement towards voice, treaty and truth. All state and territory leaders have thrown their in-principle support behind the Voice, as has the Commonwealth government. Even the Liberal government of Tasmania supports the Voice. What these actions show is that the Voice and our country's move towards truth-telling and empowerment is above partisan politics, or at least it should be; that we are capable of something more than the politics of division that has characterised and impugned far too many First Nations debates. If only the same courage and conviction flowed in all LNP ranks.

The Leader of the Opposition has said publicly that he will take his time on a Voice position. The Leader of the Opposition has said that he is keeping an open mind on the question of the Voice. Alluding to Dante, John F Kennedy said, 'The hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who, in times of moral crisis, preserve their neutrality.' Once again, when it comes to the Leader of the Opposition, it is just not his style to take a position on the Voice. Last weekend, we heard more about the Leader of the Opposition. He was urged to be straight with Queenslanders. There is no issue upon which the leader of the LNP should be clearer or straighter than this path to Voice, treaty and truth. These are matters of profound and fundamental truth, the truths that underpin our society, our shared past and our shared future together.

In this state, Labor governments act with courage, with compassion and with conviction. The Path to Treaty Bill is a proud addition to Labor's tradition of reform. Today's bill is the next step in walking our shared path because truth-telling is important. Parliament is itself a place of truth-telling, a place where members should exercise their unique and privileged right to raise those arguments with courage and conviction that will advance our society. I urge all members of the House to listen to the voice of First Nations people, to listen to the call of history and to support this bill.

Sitting suspended from 12.58 pm to 2.30 pm.



Mr POWER (Logan—ALP) (2.30 pm): I want to mark this special sitting in Cairns by recognising the traditional people of this region, the history of the steps taken towards recognition and agreement that happened, perhaps in a faltering way, in Cairns and Cooktown of which the member for Barron River and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships spoke in this place and the

powerful presence of the broken tipped spear that lays upon our table. I rise to support the Path to Treaty Bill. It is right and just and proper that we fulfil the unfinished business of the creation of our state to reach a lasting recognition and agreement with the many first peoples of our state, from the people of Saibai to the descendants of the Yugambah speaking peoples in Logan and the Gold Coast.

At a multicultural event in Logan I spoke of Australia. I tried to sum it up as a great engine of equality, a place people from all over the world come to, often in desperate and damaged circumstances, to make a success of their lives. England sent us what they thought were their worst: first criminals and political dissidents and then the poor uneducated of industrial society and Highland clearances, then the angry and damaged survivors of the great Irish hunger, the Great Famine, who watched a million die of starvation. After World War II we took those who were pushed out of Europe, displaced, abandoned and traumatised by war, whether from Sicily, Poland or elsewhere. Afterwards we continued this tradition to take Vietnamese and other refugees. So many found success in Australia, even if it took a generation or two to thrive. As I said, Australia is a great engine of success, equality and a fresh start.

My life and life in Logan is much richer and deeper for the living presence and heritage of Aboriginal Australians from all over our country. I visit the ceremonial ring in Tamborine and the caves in Yarrabilba. For me to hear children singing the anthem so beautifully in Yugambah language is to be reminded that Australia would not be Australia without the descendants and living culture of our original inhabitants. That is why it is a really tough and confronting thing to recognise that this country has not extended success in the same way to the first peoples of our nation. It is a failure of our nation that we cannot extend success to all. I note the talking points from the other side: they were told to say we have not closed the gap, and indeed we have not. We have not extended that success of Australia to all. Some still ask why, but it is clear to me—and Paul Keating expressed it best when he said—

We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life.

We brought the diseases. The alcohol.

We committed the murders.

We took the children from their mothers.

We practised discrimination and exclusion.

It was our ignorance and our prejudice.

And our failure to imagine these things being done to us.

Many Australians who came from overseas came from trauma and dispossession, perhaps not as profound as Aboriginal trauma or dispossession, but it was significant. Australia represented a fresh start, a way to put behind the old and start anew. First Australians do not get to have this fresh start. Instead, the very act of living in this place is a reminder of dispossession and the opening of old wounds. The very language we speak is a reminder for me that they are no longer connected to the language that their ancestors spoke because of this trauma and dispossession.

This process, which I wholeheartedly support, is there to make that fresh start on a new journey, to recognise the detail and the truth of dispossession and violence. For too long Australia has suffered from a collective amnesia about this violence, oppression and control. It is right and proper that we recognise this history. It will not be easy to hear for many Australians, but they should recognise there is a lasting pain for a person to know that the Australian nation refuses to admit the painful history of their family, their land and their language. It is only through telling the whole truth that we move forward towards treaty. This is the unfinished business of our nation: to recognise that many nations exist in this country.

We all know that the first English person who was directed by a government to come to this place, Captain Cook, was directed to first seek consent before any British possession. We know that this somewhat naive order was never fulfilled and it remains unfulfilled. Our treaties will take many forms and none of them will resemble the imagined 18th and 19th century British colonial treaties, but we do know that they will fulfil the destiny of our country. We do not know yet their form because rightly this is a process of discovery and understanding. They will not be the same in each area because they will be led by local people empowered through the process.

We stand noting that all Australians have a shared future on this continent. We have a shared destiny. As we work together towards a shared truth, we should also work together to share the making of treaties and fulfil that first notion of what we were supposed to do as a nation. I commend the bill to the House.



Hon. LM LINARD (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.36 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. In doing so, I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land upon which we meet to discuss this historic

bill today, the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji people, the First Australians whose lands, winds and waters we all now share. I pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging and I respectfully acknowledge any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people in the parliament or gallery today. I acknowledge my First Nations colleagues, Minister Leeanne Enoch, the member for Algeester; the member for Bundamba, Lance McCallum; and the member for Cook, Cynthia Lui. I acknowledge the significant responsibility they carry within our caucus, parliament and the community to speak on issues such as this and the wisdom they bring to our decision-making as a government. I acknowledge the Community Support and Services Committee for their examination of the bill, particularly the chair, the member for Mansfield, who has so passionately advocated for the passage of this bill. Her presence is missed during this debate.

This bill is a watershed moment in Queensland's history. It responds to calls from generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland for a formal agreement recognising their role as the original custodians of the lands, winds and waters we all now share. It provides a fair foundation upon which to build a reframed relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Queenslanders, one built on honesty.

The bill, in a practical sense, will provide a framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to prepare for and commence treaty negotiations with the Queensland government. It will create a Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to inquire into and report on the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The bill acknowledges the impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples never ceded sovereignty over their lands, seas and waters, and their ongoing torment due to dispossession is real and palpable.

Queenslanders have a right to know the past and to understand how it affects everything we witness and experience today. The process of truth-telling will be painful. I believe it will be confronting and I believe we will be the better for it. People often say, 'It is in the past. Why can't we all just move on?' We cannot move on until we truly acknowledge the confronting truth of the past, until we collectively stop and do so, sit in the discomfort that is our collective past and decide what future we want as a country. I want an honest one and I want one that is courageous enough to pursue true healing and truth-telling. You cannot heal until you say sorry. It is true when we say it to our children and it is true for all of us.

There is no doubt that my department has had a long and impactful history in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families in Queensland. We must play our part. The department has established a treaty readiness team that has worked across the agency to develop a departmental treaty readiness action plan to ensure the department is well placed to contribute to the treaty journey in Queensland. As we have this conversation across Queensland, an equally important conversation is taking place federally.


Six years ago, the Uluru Statement from the Heart was delivered to the Australian people. It is one of the most powerful, inspiring and convicting pieces of prose that I have ever read. It was a request from First Nations Australians to all Australians—a road map to peace. It was an invitation to 'walk together in a movement of the Australian people for a better future'; a transformative and unprecedented constitutional dialogue of Indigenous peoples across Australia, who had been excluded entirely from the Australian Constitution until 1967; a call for voice, treaty and truth; a voice to federal parliament enshrined in the Constitution and a Makarrata commission to supervise the process of agreement making and truth-telling about our history. It was an invitation, and we are yet to respond with integrity and courage.

The upcoming referendum will put the power in the hands of the Australian people to decide what kind of nation we want to be. I believe that we are, and can be, one that recognises and acknowledges the richness of our Indigenous past and the mistakes made as we walk forward with a shared purpose and voice. I believe that we are a nation that has always shown courage when called upon.

My politics are no secret. I am a proud member of the Australian Labor Party and I am proud that we are the only party to support the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full, but this conversation is beyond politics. We cannot change the past, but we can build a better future. I was born on Wiradjuri country, grew up on Larrakia and Ngannawal country and settled to raise my family on Turrbal country. My mother grew up here in Cairns, witnessing significant intergenerational trauma and poverty amongst the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community—a situation that continues today. This informed her experiences and views and formed the early basis of mine. In grade 4 I had an Indigenous teacher. He would teach us weekly as much Indigenous culture as he would English or maths. I did not realise

at the time how rare such an opportunity was. He taught us of the Dreamtime stories, of connection to land and to culture. He taught us of what this country looked like and how trade, language and mutual respect for the land looked before the ghosts came, the guns came and then the missions. It is a history that too few truly understand. It is the history that my children now learn in school, as they should. It is a difficult history, but it must be taught and understood. I am so glad that, alongside it, my children—like I did—are learning of the deep richness and wisdom of the history of the First Australians that we all now share. The truth-telling process here in Queensland will further inform our understanding of that history.

I became involved in politics 20 years ago because I wanted to make a contribution. I wanted to see our community, our state and our country move forward to be the fairest place it could be—where everyone can share in its riches and its opportunities. Now at 42 and a mother, I reflect on what sort of country I want for my two young boys, and I believe it starts with its foundations. This is our chance to do what we should have done two centuries ago: make a treaty or treaties with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As the Premier said so eloquently, these are rare moments in time, perhaps just once in a generation or even once in several generations, where we have an opportunity to be true agents of change. Queensland's Path to Treaty is such a moment. It is a moment which will define our humanity and our sense of fairness, and it will be a legacy we leave to our children. It is time.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (2.43 pm): I, too, wish to contribute to the debate on the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. I want to start my contribution by saying that we as a parliament must do everything we can to focus on practical measures that will close the gap and deliver real outcomes for Indigenous Queenslanders—not platitudes, not symbolism, not words alone. Indigenous Australians deserve action, because the gap remains far too wide. I have always held a very firm belief that part of the role of government is to enable, not to roadblock. When it comes to Indigenous affairs, this is absolutely critical. That is why it is so important to have comprehensive consultation with our local Indigenous communities and their leaders, to discuss how we can enable the improvement of future generations of Indigenous Australians.

I am lucky enough to represent an area with a very rich and celebrated Indigenous culture. The community I represent, the Currumbin electorate on the southern Gold Coast, is home to the Yugambeh language people of the Bundjalung nation. In my electorate of Currumbin there are a number of proud Indigenous organisations that are working hard in the community to provide education, training and real outcomes for Indigenous people. The Krurungal Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Welfare, Resource and Housing is one of those organisations. Krurungal are based in Coolangatta. I have had the pleasure of meeting with them on many occasions. Their vision for our community is to have easy access to necessary community services and to enjoy more opportunities, better outcomes, cultural connectedness and a positive sense of wellbeing. For 30 years now, they have gone about the business of achieving this. It is so critical that there are organisations like this that have a holistic approach to Indigenous affairs.

I know that in our community there is a strong focus on Indigenous education and training for our youth. Schools across my electorate have implemented Indigenous programs that are making a noticeable difference in the lives and wellbeing of young Indigenous boys and girls on the southern Gold Coast. Elanora State High School is one of those schools. It has a strong focus on engaging Indigenous leaders with the school community, and this is having a real impact. Through assemblies, education programs and other community partnerships, Elanora State High School is one of the many schools on the Gold Coast leading the way for positive change.

Another school doing fantastic work in this area is Palm Beach Currumbin State High School. PBC's Indigenous partnerships are enabling the youth of today to become the leaders of tomorrow. Through their work with the Clontarf Foundation they are committed to improving the education, discipline, self-esteem, life skills and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in our community. This equips them to participate more meaningfully in society.

I also acknowledge the work of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation across the state and particularly the uptake of this program in the schools in my electorate including Palm Beach Currumbin State High School and Elanora State High School. The objective of the foundation is to increase educational choices and life opportunities for Indigenous people. In my view, the practical outcomes that this foundation is achieving for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people proves that the gap in this space can indeed be closed.

That brings me to the objectives of this bill. The objectives are: to establish a First Nations Treaty Institute to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop and provide a framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to prepare for and then commence treaty negotiations with the Queensland government; and to establish a Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to inquire into and report on the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Path to Treaty must be about unity and achieving better outcomes for all—working in unity for real and lasting change. If we approach Path to Treaty dedicated to unity and not division and take real action to close the gap, all Australians can benefit from this process. I do need to point out that people in my electorate—and, frankly, in the chamber, judging by what I have heard over the last couple of days—are confused by some aspects of this bill. What this bill is proposing is not a small undertaking. This bill would result in the negotiation of hundreds of different treaties across various Indigenous communities. It demands, as I have said, meaningful consultation and deliberation with all of our Indigenous communities. As we have heard from other members in this chamber, the state government has not consulted with some of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Queensland.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mrs GERBER: I take the interjection from the member for Nanango that her Cherbourg community has not been consulted. I note the contributions of many other members, like the member for Nanango, that the time frame given by the Palaszczuk government has meant that this bill has not been widely consulted on, meaning that it has not addressed some of the concerns of community members. The reality is that Labor state governments have dominated policy affecting Indigenous Australians over the last 25 years, yet the gap remains wide in many areas including health and education. If this bill really is about truth-telling, the truth is: despite making up just 4.6 per cent of Queensland's population, young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders account for 62.6 per cent of youth in our prisons.

In fact, in the 2020 Closing the Gap report, the Palaszczuk government revealed that six of the target outcomes were not on track to be met. Now the Palaszczuk government has changed the goalposts on the metrics that measure the success of the target outcomes for Closing the Gap to hide the fact that it is not meeting its targets. Let's have some truth-telling around that. The lack of progress in fixing these shameful truths is an indictment on this state government. The state government also should be focused on real and tangible action to address these shameful truths.

The LNP has a proud history of delivering tangible outcomes in partnership with Indigenous communities, helping to improve the lives of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across our great state. We provided early access to childhood education for all Indigenous four-year-olds in remote communities and improved year 12 Indigenous attainment rates. We put in place legislative amendments which gave Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people the right to freehold land title. In 2014 we also implemented Solid Pathways, a program to support Queensland's high-achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Going further back, the Bjelke-Petersen government was instrumental in the ultimate signing of a treaty between PNG and Australia. This international treaty secured the Torres Strait's place in our country. Many will recall the historical significance—

Government members interjected.


Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I am sorry to interrupt, member. The tone of the debate thus far has been outstanding. Let's continue in that tone and that framework. We are debating difficult issues and they may be particularly difficult for people in the gallery, so let's continue this debate with a respectful tone.

Mrs GERBER: I want to address the proposed amendment that was circulated yesterday by the state government. The state government is seeking to move an amendment to this bill which would see Treaty Institute Council members no longer disqualified from serving in their position if they have a conviction for an indictable offence. Amendment 5 seeks to change clause 55 by removing the automatic indictable offences criminal history disqualification provision. This move would allow for people convicted of an indictable offence to serve as a member and a senior executive officer on the Treaty Institute Council. This move is not in the best interests of Queenslanders, including our Indigenous Australians, who would hope for this council to best represent them. It is quite unprecedented and I think it is potentially dangerous.

We are not talking about summary or minor offences; we are talking about convictions for indictable offences. Indictable offences incur severe penalties up to life imprisonment and they include things like rape, murder, armed robbery and assault. I do not think this is what people want. In one

breath the Palaszczuk government is saying that this is critically important for the future generations of Indigenous Australians, yet in another it is lowering the bar for the members of the Treaty Institute Council, removing the clause that disqualifies a person with an indictable offence conviction. This means that someone could be on the Treaty Institute Council with an indictable offence conviction in their criminal history, but that same person may not be able to even hold a blue card. What message does that send to young Indigenous Australians? What message does that send to hardworking young boys and girls in my electorate going to school and taking part in important Indigenous programs, wanting to improve their lives and the lives of those in our community? What message does it send to our state as a whole—one standard in keeping with other Queensland legislation and a different standard for members of the Treaty Institute Council? In my view, this is a really poor decision by the state government that detracts from the purpose of this bill, and I do not support this proposed amendment.

The wellbeing and progression of Indigenous Australians is extremely important, and I welcome the bipartisan commitment that this House has to provide outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The Path to Treaty Bill largely offers a way forward and I am supportive of the Path to Treaty Bill, but I want it on the record that I do not support the proposed amendment to remove from the bill provisions relating to indictable offence convictions.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (2.53 pm): There can be no denying the profound nature of the legislation we debate in this parliament—the magnitude of its possibility. The connection that our First Nations people have to country and culture is undeniably profound. Our colonisation history is brutal. It is traumatic. It is unjust. The reality is that in modern-day Queensland so too is our present. This bill is about the future—an opportunity to share history, often uncomfortable, and to reframe and reshape our future together.


I want to start by expressing my wholehearted appreciation of many First Nations people for their generosity. I thank those who have taken the time not only to talk with me and with others about this history and the traumas but also to educate and inform us around the cultural depth of First Nations people and culture. Undeniably, this is an ancient, valuable culture; in spite of all of the colonisation attempts to extinguish or erase it, it endures. Across our state I see the celebration and legacy we create of the last 200 years of history. I want to see that change, to evolve and accurately reflect and acknowledge our First Nations history—having a state that can appreciate the truth of our 200-year dark past and to do better to understand and appreciate the thousands of generations that came before. That is powerful, meaningful and worthwhile.

I viscerally recall my first exposure to this dark past. It was through learning of our stolen generation as a teenager. It was not through conversation but rather through reading the report that I located through an assessment with a free choice on the topic. It was by chance that I located that report that day—chance that I stumbled across it. While it detailed information, it did not allow me to develop a really deep understanding. This was but one horrific policy that parliaments have legislated and implemented throughout colonisation. The list is long, confronting and shameful. Our history needs to be honestly discussed. It needs to be understood. It needs to be documented. It needs to be taught. Most importantly, it needs to be never repeated.

We acknowledge that First Nations people have never ceded their sovereignty. In fact, they still assert it. This is unfinished business, and it is long past due. We are all on this journey and, while it will be confronting and difficult to embark upon, for First Nations people most especially, I acknowledge the faith, respect and goodwill in embarking upon treaty or treaties in Queensland.

This enduring connection that our First Nations people have to country is what this bill will focus on. I commend the work of the Premier, the First Nations members of this parliament—the members for Algeester, Bundamba and Cook—and all involved in bringing this work to a place where the Path to Treaty Bill can be legislated. For all that work, it is only the beginning. The path to treaty will take courage, honesty and trust. In First Nations Queenslanders I see and hear something remarkable. In spite of all that has transpired I see that strength. I see their determination.

Here we stand on the country of the longest continuing culture in the world. It is imperative that that connection to country, history, culture, language and law is strengthened, continued and preserved—to be understood and embraced. It is in this bill that we focus not just on the past and the present but also on the future, on building a brighter future together. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (2.58 pm): It is an honour to be here in Cairns, to speak from this dispatch box, with this broken tipped spear in front of me, in support of this important piece of legislation. I acknowledge the minister's comments yesterday on this spear and its connection to Eric Deeral and his family. Of course, Eric Deeral was the first Aboriginal man elected to any state parliament in our nation and was proudly a member of the National Party when he was elected in 1974.

I acknowledge the traditional owners of this land, some of whom I had the privilege of meeting just the other day—the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji at the Aboriginal tourism hub and the Yirrganydji at the beautiful Jack Barnes saltmarsh and mangroves near the airport. If any members have not been out to that wonderful conservation area, I highly recommend that they go. They are the tallest mangroves you will ever see. I am ashamed to admit that I did not believe mangroves could get that tall. They are absolutely stunning.

Back home on the Gold Coast, I am proud to represent part of the Kombumerri people's lands from the Yugambah language group. I am proud that in my electorate their rich history lives on. In some of our suburbs' names we honour their language. Biggera Waters refers to the red ironbark trees that line the creek, and Coombabah means 'place of cobra worms' or 'home of the turtles'.

Today we are here to continue the process of redefining the relationship our state government has with our First Nations Queenslanders. We are here to unite Queenslanders as we go forward, to remove the unacceptable inequalities that exist between us. This bill will set up a First Nations Treaty Institute to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop and provide a framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from across our state to prepare for and then commence treaty negotiations with the Queensland government and a Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to inquire into and report on the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

What we are embarking on is significant. It has been nearly six years since the Uluru statement's simple but powerful call for voice, treaty, truth, but a First Nations treaty has yet to be finalised under a treaty process in any Australian state or territory and just two states—New South Wales and WA—have not engaged yet in a treaty process. South Australia became the first state to have a First Nations Voice to Parliament just recently and Victoria has a similar version of this representative body with its First Peoples' Assembly. I look forward to seeing the government's proposal for Queensland's local and regional voices.

Extensive statewide consultation was conducted by the Eminent Panel and Treaty Working Group in 2019 to answer the question of whether Queensland should seek a treaty or treaties with our First Nations peoples and how the process to finalise those should happen. That has led to the bill we are discussing today, and I want to thank the committee members for their excellent work on this legislation under very difficult circumstances. The opposition members in particular put in a thorough and considered statement of reservation. It was a shame that at the public hearings it was regularly raised that there was a lack of notice which led to poor attendance in many instances.

The Treaty Institute will be established as a statutory body, subject to the same obligations as other statutory entities established under Queensland legislation. The Treaty Institute will be a body corporate and may sue and be sued in its corporate name which is important because that means the institute will be able to perform its functions independently of government. The Treaty Institute council will be set up as the governing body of the Treaty Institute and it will be made up of 10 members to be appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the minister. Members must be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. The council must give a report to the minister within six months before the end of the inaugural period and the minister must begin the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry within three months after the commencement of this bill. The inquiry will run for a period of three years, which may be extended by the minister. Truth-telling sessions will be voluntary or by invitation and anyone can provide a submission or something that may help the inquiry in performing its functions. Importantly, if a government entity fails to provide materials requested by the inquiry, the inquiry may issue a production notice requiring the CEO of the entity to provide those materials.

On the topic of truth-telling, I want to highlight a book that I have read which had a profound impact on me. It is called *Conspiracy of Silence: Queensland's Frontier Killing Time* by Timothy Bottoms. He is a historian who, the blurb says, is Cairns based, so a shout-out to him as a local. This book completely changed my perspective on our state's history. It is a detailed, well researched account of the colonisation of Queensland, with the most horrific stories from the settlers themselves. It is difficult to read in parts—the unimaginable horrors of what happened on our frontier, the murderous, barbaric acts committed by the pastoralists and the native police. The story it tells is uncomfortable, but it is a more complete history of how our modern state was built than what many of us have been told, and we

cannot shy away from this. We will never be able to heal if we do not paint and promote a more accurate picture of our past. There are far too many stories contained in it to share and far too many to say publicly because they are just so horrific in their nature, but they are all from reputable sources. There is one quote that I will repeat because it has stuck with me. The author says—

It is interesting to see as one reads about these incidents how often the massacre is prompted not by any killing of whites but simply by disturbing or killing cattle and sheep ... Aboriginals were killed for being there and being in the way.

Truth-telling is not about dividing people. None of us today are remotely responsible for what occurred. It is simply about better understanding where we have come from.


As someone who passionately serves as the shadow minister covering heritage protection and as a proud and active member of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland—I think one of the youngest members of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland—I would urge all members to do all they can to learn more about our past. With the facilitation of the Interim Truth and Treaty Body, work will be undertaken to establish the Treaty Institute and the inquiry. The final phase will see the development of the treaty-making framework by the institute. Treaty negotiations will begin in line with the treaty-making framework and subject to community and government readiness.

What I want to emphasise in my contribution is that we need to make sure that whatever this process leads to is practical and not just symbolic. Our state's Path to Treaty must focus on outcomes, especially those which close the gap and deliver real benefits for Indigenous Queenslanders. Labor has been in government for 28 of the past 33 years. It has had almost total policy control and responsibility over the issues impacting Indigenous Australians and yet the gap remains wide in many areas, including health and education. I want to highlight some of those disparities, those heartbreaking inequalities. They are what we must be focused on as this process progresses.

The most recent Queensland Closing the Gap annual report highlighted a shameful number of targets not on track to be met. The report shows just four of the 17 targets are on track. In health, the life expectancy gap in Queensland between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is currently 7.8 years for men and 6.7 years for women. The gap on this is not on track to be closed by 2031. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five domains of the Australian Early Development Census is not on track. Significant and sustained reductions in suicide of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards zero is not on track. Over the weekend I spent some time in Cooktown, and I want to acknowledge Trevor Meldrum and Uncle Eric. They told me that their biggest concern in that community is health, suicides in particular. Tragically, they have seen five young people from their mob take their lives in the last three weeks alone. Also, preventable deaths from diseases like rheumatic heart disease occur far too frequently. In education, we are seeing an ever-increasing failure to meet targets to close the gap. In every year level and in every target, Indigenous students are behind non-Indigenous students, with some gaps as big as 20 per cent.

In housing, increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized—not overcrowded—housing by 2031 is not on track. Approximately 20 per cent of Indigenous Australians living in remote and regional communities in Queensland live in overcrowded households. Again, I saw this over the weekend. Overcrowding contributes to the social issues that we see and to family breakdown. Mayor Ross Andrews of Yarrabah made a powerful presentation to shadow cabinet on Monday when he told us that overcrowding happens regularly in his community and that it leads to all of the negative social indicators that they do not want to see.

I acknowledge that I have spoken to this legislation as both someone whose family has come to this country—in my case, from Ireland and Wales—and as a member representing an electorate with a small Indigenous population. At the 2021 Census, my electorate had just a 2.3 per cent Indigenous population which is half the state average, but I have great respect for the views of members who come from electorates with high proportions of First Nations people and of those people themselves. What we are embarking on will not be easy, but the important thing is today by supporting this bill we are committing to better acknowledge the injustices our First Nations people have faced and to work towards a better future.

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (3.09 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. The importance of this day and this moment in our history cannot be overstated. For centuries we have ignored uncomfortable truths. We have gone along with the fantasy that Australia was empty when settlers arrived and buried their sins in the past. We have taught our children a sanitised version of their own story, ignorant of facts, hard-hearted and blinkered. For 200 years we have attempted to render invisible a culture that has lasted 60,000 years, but the past will not be silenced and our future will not be wasted.

Each generation is called to make its mark on its age. A treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is ours. This moment here and now begins to put right centuries of wrongs. Why Australia was not afforded the treaties offered to the First Nations people of New Zealand, Northern America and Canada is a question for historians to answer. The question we have asked is whether we allow that oversight to continue. The answer is no. That is something about which every Queenslander can feel proud. I am glad so many have joined us in the gallery today to see this historic moment.

This day has come because of those who have carried this fight for so long. Their names are too many to mention, but I will say how proud I am to lead a government that includes so many MPs who are First Nations people: the first Aboriginal woman ever to be elected to the Queensland parliament and appointed to cabinet, Leeanne Enoch; the first woman ever elected from Torres Strait, the member for Cook, Cynthia Lui; and Lance McCallum, a proud Gubbi Gubbi man, assistant minister and member for Bundamba. I say to those opposite who want to talk about closing the gap that we have members in our government fighting every single day for the communities and the people that they represent.

I extend my thanks to the Community Support and Services Committee and the secretariat for their thoughtful and thorough consideration of the bill. I also thank the First Nations people of my own electorate of Inala. I listen to them, take their guidance—I was just with them recently—and I value their input and what they are doing in our local community. To the Interim Truth and Treaty Body, the bill is a testament to your tenacity, your commitment and your insight. You guided the bill through the committee stage, helping to refine the legislation to the point where we are debating it today. So many people and organisations have been involved in getting us to this point. They made submissions to the committee and participated in committee hearings all over the state. Thank you for your contributions.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders have been calling for treaties for many generations. Hundreds of years too late we have come to the table with a firm commitment made in 2019 to reframe the relationship with our First Nations people and start a conversation about treaty with the Queensland people. We have not faltered in our commitment and our steadfast determination to make treaty a reality. This bill is an historic step. It sets up the framework for establishing the key bodies and the supporting architecture to take the next steps in this journey.

The bill establishes the First Nations Treaty Institute. The institute will not represent the state or be involved in treaty negotiations. Its role is to prepare Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders for treaty negotiations. It will focus on the development of a treaty-making framework. It will empower First Nations people to prepare for and take their rightful place at the table in treaty negotiations. It reflects that the government and our First Nations people want the treaty-making process to be driven by communities to reflect their own individual and unique needs and stories.

It is said that to move forward we must acknowledge the past. That is why truth-telling is such an important part of Path to Treaty: telling the stories of our shared history, stories that are confronting and painful, stories that will be harrowing and difficult to tell, difficult to listen to and difficult to understand. But the truth of our colonial past and not-so-distant past must be told for the healing process to commence. The bill establishes the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. The inquiry will adopt a non-legalistic and non-adversarial approach. It will travel the state allowing First Nations people to tell their own stories and the stories of their ancestors handed down from generation to generation and those stories will be documented.

North Queensland's role in treaty and reconciliation and recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples has to be recognised. It is no coincidence that we are debating this bill here at the regional sitting of parliament in Cairns. The first First Nations member of any parliament in Australia was Eric Deeral who represented the electorate of Cook. Minister Crawford spoke yesterday about his meeting with Eric's son Fred and the gift of the broken-tipped spear handed by Fred's ancestor—the Little Old Man—to Captain Cook on the banks of the Endeavour River. This was the first act of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Mayor Peter Scott tells any person visiting Cooktown this story and takes them to visit the site.

Eddie Koiki Mabo from the Torres Strait took the first steps in what has been a long journey toward recognition of native title rights in Australia. Five men from the Torres Strait with little formal education but who were well versed in the laws and traditions of their own culture were able to educate an entire nation—our politicians, our lawyers, our academics and judges of the highest court in the land—to understand the intricate system of land ownership that existed in the Murray islands.

The Northern Queensland Land Council have taken an active part in economic development for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Far North. The Tropical North Queensland First Nations Tourism Action Plan released last year recognised the need for a local plan for First Nations tourism in the region and our government's Land and Sea Ranger program is a \$24 million investment

to provide funding to First Nations organisations across Queensland to employ Indigenous rangers who will combine new technologies with traditional knowledge to protect and conserve our country. Indigenous land and sea rangers also provide guidance to young people through junior ranger programs and school-based education and training.

The bill also addresses a number of legislative anomalies and repressive provisions that are a hangover from an era when the Queensland government sought to control the lives and movements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders by repealing a number of provisions in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities (Justice, Land and Other Matters) Act 1984. This is more than a gesture and is a step towards righting the wrongs of the past and ensuring compatibility with the Human Rights Act.

Path to Treaty is a unique opportunity for Queensland. It provides the framework for a journey toward reconciliation. I have confidence that this is the right time in our history to embark on this journey of discovery and reconciliation to a Queensland where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples can live together as true equals, where we can thrive and prosper in Queensland, where we acknowledge our sometimes painful past and move forward together as one in the spirit of cooperation. This is a watershed piece of legislation. The Path to Treaty Bill demonstrates our government's commitment to make treaty a reality for Queensland. As the poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal said—

To our fathers' fathers
The pain, the sorrow;
To our children's children
The glad tomorrow.

I commend this bill to the House.



Mr KRAUSE (Scenic Rim—LNP) (3.17 pm): In speaking to this bill I wish to acknowledge the committee's work in examining the bill. In particular, I recognise the issues raised by the member for Burnett and the member for Oodgeroo in their statement of reservation which, while offering support for the bill, also identifies many matters that require ongoing work. The passage of this bill today is not the end of the story. Work to improve living conditions, education outcomes, economic outcomes, health outcomes, all of the day-to-day practical measures that close the gap that still exists for too many Indigenous people of this country, must remain at the forefront of government's views. Far too often we have seen a great deal of money spent in efforts to improve outcomes in this area for very little actual improvement.


Looking back at Queensland's history, all of us here in parliament acknowledge the difficult and painful events of the past between Indigenous people of this land and those who came here and made it their home, like my forebears did when they came here from Germany and England in the 1860s. This bill establishes an inquiry in which this history can be examined. As the statement of reservation in the committee report mentions, this process and further actions that come out of it must be open and transparent to all Queenslanders. All Queenslanders need to be a part of this process. We are all Australians and this country belongs to all of us. Sovereignty is vested in each and every one of us as Australian citizens. That should be our starting point, and from that point the goal to lift up all parts of the community and make their lives and situation better becomes unifying for all Australians.

Just as this bill establishes the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to examine the past, in my view we all must fix our eyes firmly on the future. Closing the gap for Indigenous people has remained an extremely elusive goal. Recognising mistakes of the past and the wrongs that were carried out in the past is vital in all areas of government. I consider the inquiry should not only be examining the past but also be reflecting on how things can and must be done better.

I am proud to represent the Scenic Rim electorate and be the voice in this parliament for people who identify as part of the Mununjali people from around Beaudesert as well as the Wanggerriburra people, the Ugarapul people and the Yagara people. We live, work and take part in the community together. I know that many of the people I represent recognise the difficult history of the past. I can say that only through my role in parliament have I become aware in a substantial way of events of the past and the history of interactions between Indigenous people and settlers in our region. If this bill brings about a broader recognition of that history, and history as it relates to other parts of Queensland, it will be worthwhile.

I am not a settler, a colonist or an oppressor. I am an Australian and this is my country. We must acknowledge our history and, in turn, this bill must lead to better outcomes for our First Australians. We have seen far too many failures in policy in this area. Many of the challenges are not new and will not

be solved merely by setting up the institute and holding an inquiry. This bill must not be the beginning of more failure, but I can understand the scepticism of many in the Queensland community, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, given the track record of governments across Australia, including the current Queensland government. We can and must do better.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (3.20 pm): I rise to support the bill. As the Premier just said, it is great to be in Cairns to debate this bill. It is no fluke that that happened. We purposefully acknowledged that this would be a great place to debate the bill. I acknowledge the Yagara and Turrbal people from the inner city of Brisbane, where I live and where I was born. I also acknowledge the Cairns and district traditional owners and pay my respects to their elders past, present and, of course, emerging in our wonderful schools. Many of those students have visited the parliament here in Cairns.

I must say how disappointed I was that when I was a young girl—and I used to walk from All Hallows up Boundary Street to Spring Hill—I did not learn the history of Boundary Street. Uncle Bob Anderson explained to me the true significance of the naming of that street. It fell on me like a tonne of bricks when he explained it to me. As a young girl, I had no idea what Boundary Street actually was to the First Nations people in our community.

The preamble of the Constitution of the United States refers to the ideal of forming a perfect union. It is a noble aim that suggests that working to build a unified and cohesive nation and society is always a work in progress but that we need always to aim for the stars. The phrase was given fresh attention in 2008 with the famous speech of the same title by the then presidential candidate Barack Obama. While we often try to avoid comparisons with the US, I like to think that the idea of reconciliation in Australia is, at least in part, an equivalent concept to that of a more perfect union, that is, the idea and aim of working together with First Nations people for a true and lasting reconciliation that properly accounts for what has happened in the past and charts a positive way forward for the future.

I am so proud to stand beside our Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk, and this government on the path to treaty. This bill is an integral part of reconciliation with our First Nations people. As the Premier has said many times, and just said again, there are rare moments in time that come along perhaps once in a generation when we have the opportunity to be true agents of change. As a parliament, we must take that opportunity with gusto. Do not talk about what still needs to be done. Do not talk about how everything is not perfect; it is never going to be in this world. However, when you are given the ball you run with it. This is one fantastic ball and we are running with it. This is a wonderful opportunity because if we wait and sit on the fence and whinge and whine then we are not going anywhere.

Mrs Frecklington: Like you are doing now.

Ms GRACE: I take that interjection from the expert on whingeing and whining, the member for Nanango. The bill before the House is designed—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms GRACE: If you want to keep interjecting, please do so. The bill before the House is designed to drive Path to Treaty. It does this by establishing two key things: the First Nations Treaty Institute, which is a statutory body—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I heard the word ‘bullying’ as I was just talking. I take offence and I ask the member for Nanango to withdraw such a term.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I withdraw and I rise to a point of order. I found the comments by the minister personally offensive and I ask her to withdraw.

Ms GRACE: I withdraw. The First Nations Treaty Institute will be a statutory body that is independent of the Queensland government with powers and functions to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop, co-design and provide a framework to prepare for, and then commence, treaty negotiations with the Queensland government. The Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry will inquire into and report on the effects of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The bill responds to calls from generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland for a formal agreement, a treaty or treaties, that recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original custodians of the lands, waters and air; an agreement that provides a just and realistic foundation for a reframed relationship; an agreement that delivers broad-ranging substantive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider Queensland community.

As other speakers have said, this will not be easy but it is something that needs to be done. Truth-telling is fundamental to the path to treaty. The path will not be easy. The path will not be perfect. The path will not be everything to everyone. However, it is a path. It is the first step and we must take it to move forward as one great nation with reconciliation at its heart. As I said, the key elements of the bill will provide the foundation for a true and lasting reconciliation that properly accounts for what has happened in the past and charts a positive way forward. I am proud to be part of a Labor government that is going down this path. I will wholeheartedly be on that path with all in this chamber.

As we embark on this path, I know that education will play a key role. Education is the key. Culture and inclusion need to be part of our schooling system. Earlier this year I had the pleasure of meeting with the co-chairs of the Path to Treaty independent interim body, Sallyanne Atkinson and Cheryl Buchanan. I pay tribute to the sterling work both have done in getting us to this point. When we met, Cheryl made the point that language and education are critical to culture and identity and that true First Nations history in our schools is also very important. I commit that we will continue to review and update our curriculum so that a true history can be told in our schools.

I commend the work of our proud members of parliament Minister Enoch, the member for Bundamba and you, Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Cook. I also commend the member for Mansfield and the committee on the work that they have done. I commend the Premier, who has led us to the historic Path to Treaty Bill which we will soon pass in this House. On 27 May 1967, 91 per cent of Australians voted 'yes' to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples being counted in this country. Their 60,000-year history was acknowledged in 1967 and 91 per cent voted in favour. All I ask is that we vote the same way: 'yes' for a voice. We counted them and now we need to give them a voice. This is an historic moment. I am so proud to be a part of it with you, Madam Deputy Speaker, my other colleagues, the Premier and others in this House. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr BROWN (Capalaba—ALP) (3.28 pm): I quote—

It begins, I think, with that act of recognition.
Recognition that it was we who did the dispossessing.
We took the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life.
We brought the diseases. The alcohol.
We committed the murders.
We took the children from their mothers.
We practised discrimination and exclusion.
It was our ignorance and our prejudice.
And our failure to imagine these things being done to us.

Over 30 years ago Paul Keating made the famous Redfern speech. Since then, too few leaders have been willing to truth-tell in this nation and even fewer political leaders have listened to truth-telling. The change happens here, today and this week. It begins.

I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we meet here today. I pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I would like to pass on my respects to all Indigenous leaders and Torres Strait Islanders across our vast state. Indeed, I recognise my electorate of Capalaba. In traditional language it means 'ringtail possum', which are native to Quandamooka country. I also recognise the richness, strength and diversity of the Quandamooka people from their three distinct tribes—the Noonuccal, Gorenpul and Nughie people—and their connections to the lands, winds and waters that we get to enjoy every single day in my part of the world.

I would like to acknowledge our First Nation parliamentarians and colleagues: Minister Leeanne Enoch, a proud Quandamooka woman herself and the member for Algester; Cynthia Lui, a lamalaig woman, the member for Cook and the first Torres Strait Islander island person to hold a seat in any parliament of Australia; and Lance McCallum, a proud Gubbi Gubbi man and the member for Bundamba, but he also grew up on Quandamooka country like me.

For far too long the voices of First Nations peoples have been marginalised, ignored and silenced. Their cultures, language and traditions have been suppressed, their lands taken away and their rights trampled on. As a nation we must acknowledge this history and work towards a better future—one where Indigenous Australians are treated with respect, dignity and equality.

The Queensland Path to Treaty Bill 2023 is a significant step in this process. The bill responds to generations of calls from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland for a formal agreement, a treaty or treaties, that recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the

original custodians of the land, waters and winds and provides a just and realistic foundation for a reframed relationship—an agreement that delivers broad-ranging, substantive outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the wider Queensland community.

A treaty is a legal binding agreement between two states or nations that sets out the rights, responsibilities and obligations of each party. Other countries colonised by Britain, such as Canada and New Zealand, have formed treaties between the Crown and First Nations people. Australia is one of the only Commonwealth countries without a treaty with its First Nations people.

The notion of terra nullius, or unoccupied land, was upheld in court cases and Privy Council rulings through the 1800s despite much evidence to the contrary coming from Australia. It suited the times. It remained so until the landmark decision in Mabo which was handed down in 1992—barely more than 30 years ago—and which obviously flowed on to the Redfern contribution by Paul Keating. This is our chance to do what we should have done 200 years ago: make a treaty or treaties with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

There are rare moments in time—perhaps just once in a generation or even once in several generations. Path to Treaty recognises that the process of colonisation has marginalised and disempowered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Equally, it is built on the enormous resilience of our First Nations people and the strength drawn from their rich history, culture, law and knowledge of 65,000 years of Aboriginal peoples and the unique culture, law and knowledge of the peoples of the Torres Strait. Path to Treaty seeks a foundation for a better future for these peoples—a respectful relationship between the state and our First Nations people—and, from this foundation, benefit for all Queenslanders.

The main purposes of the bill are to establish the First Nations Treaty Institute to develop and provide a framework for Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the state to enter into treaty negotiations and to support these people to participate in the negotiations. It will also provide for the establishment of the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to inquire and report on the impacts of colonisation of our First Nations peoples and the history of Queensland. The institute will be a statutory body and independent from the Queensland government. It will be given powers and functions to perform its role to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the treaty process.

The Queensland Path to Treaty Bill is a significant and necessary step to reconciliation in our state. It acknowledges the historic injustices suffered by our First Nations people and commits to redressing these injustices through a process of truth-telling, healing and negotiation. Reconciliation is a journey, not a destination, and there is much work to be done. We must continue to listen to and learn from First Nations people, to respect and celebrate their cultures and identities, and to work towards where all Australians are treated with respect, dignity and equality.

While we cannot change the past, we can move forward together by facing our history with honesty and courageousness. I urge all members of the House to support the Path to Treaty Bill. I want to thank the committee. I want to thank the Premier for the hard work that she has done and also Minister Crawford for all he has done to bring this bill forward today. I wholeheartedly support this treaty process. I commend the bill to the House.



Hon. CD CRAWFORD (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (3.36 pm), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Path to Treaty Bill 2023. I would like to especially thank the Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, for her vision, courage and leadership. As the Premier said, each generation is called to make its mark on its age. A treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is ours. The Premier noted that this moment here and now begins to put right centuries of wrongs.

It was only yesterday that I introduced to parliament a broken-tipped spear gifted to me by Fred Deeral, the son of the first Aboriginal person elected to the state parliament, Eric Deeral—and, yes, he was from the National Party. It is a potent symbol of Australia's first recorded act of reconciliation. The spear has sat side by side with the Speaker's mace for this entire sitting of parliament to date.

As I said during my second reading speech, the historic Path to Treaty Bill 2023 marks a significant milestone in the negotiation process undertaken by the Queensland government and Queensland's First Nations people and non-Indigenous Queenslanders towards a treaty or treaties and sets in train a Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry to examine the impacts of colonisation and to facilitate healing and the establishment of the First Nations Treaty Institute.

Again, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank all those who have contributed to this significant legislation as we journey towards a state where Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous people thrive together. I would like to acknowledge the opposition leader in how he indicated his support. It has great significance that this bill be passed with such bipartisan support. Treaty is of such significance that it cannot be a political football. It must live through election after election. It must remain bipartisan; otherwise, the risk is too high to too many.

I would also like to acknowledge the wide range of views expressed in this House over the last few days. While there may be different ideas, perspectives and voices on the details along our pathway, this is a long-term commitment and I am heartened by the volume of support as we take these historic steps forward.

I acknowledge the support from the member for Surfers Paradise for the bill. I agree with his comments about the importance of ensuring First Nations voices are heard and respected in this important bipartisan move towards more inclusive and respectful communities. I further note and appreciate the points made about the importance of Path to Treaty in helping to achieve Closing the Gap targets.

I would like to clarify a few points made in relation to the inquiry in response to the member for Surfers Paradise. While the inquiry is similar to a commission of inquiry, it will not be established under the Commissions of Inquiry Act. It is being established under this new legislation—the Path to Treaty Act—to allow for a less legalistic and more culturally appropriate process. Also, rather than a single commissioner, there will be five inquiry members, with the majority of those members being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander persons. I acknowledge the concerns and importance of ensuring First Nations voices are heard and respected in this important piece of legislation towards treaty and reframing our relationship. While it is important that we take time to get this right, I also reflect on the member for Maiwar's comments that we are starting 200 years behind and we have a lot of ground to cover.

I note that, in addition to the important conversations and hearings held by the parliamentary committee in recent months, this Path to Treaty journey has included extensive statewide consultation which commenced in 2019. Community engagement involved public consultation across the state from September to December 2019 and was attended by more than 1,000 people in 24 locations, including the Torres Strait. In addition, 250 stakeholders and individuals were consulted, 331 online surveys completed and 38 written submissions received.

The next stage was led by the Treaty Advancement Committee, which during 2021 held face-to-face and virtual meetings with communities and groups to receive feedback on phase 1 of Path to Treaty and outline important developments such as the creation of the Path to Treaty Fund. The Interim Truth and Treaty Body has continued to undertake community consultation, including in relation to proposals for implementation arrangements for the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry and the First Nations Treaty Institute. I also note that when examining the bill the parliamentary committee visited Cairns, Weipa, Thursday Island, Palm Island, Townsville, Longreach, Woorabinda, Rockhampton and Inala. This parliamentary consultation was purely to test if the mechanisms of this bill achieve the next steps in the process. It was certainly not any form of treaty negotiation. Those steps are yet to follow.

More importantly, the bill sets in place key institutions to take Path to Treaty forward in conversation with all Queenslanders. I acknowledge the support of the member for Maiwar. I would also like to respond to and clarify a couple of the points he raised. With regard to the terms of reference for the inquiry, these will be co-developed with the Interim Truth and Treaty Body and will provide more detail to guide the work of the inquiry in this regard. The ITTB will provide advice to the Queensland government on the inquiry's terms of reference based on community engagement held over the last three months. I note the ITTB's latest community yarn was held yesterday here in Cairns. In relation to another of the member for Maiwar's concerns, the Queensland government's position is that First Nations people continue to assert their sovereignty. While we recognise that some sort of dispute resolution will be an essential element of the treaty process, this is a matter for the institute to lead further discussion and consultation on.

Under the Path to Treaty Bill, a function of the First Nations Treaty Institute is to develop a treaty-making framework with the state. This includes identifying and developing dispute resolution strategies to facilitate treaty negotiations. I note that Victoria took the approach of establishing a treaty tribunal as the third-party dispute resolution body. While I note that there was strong advocacy for a term of not more than five years in the legislation, clause 64 already allows the term of the inquiry to be extended to five years or another time period if required. This can be done by the minister on their own initiative or if the inquiry gives the minister a notice asking for the minister to extend the term and stating

the proposed period of extension and the reasons for such extension. This can occur at any time during the three years of the inquiry, and the period of extension is not specifically limited to provide sufficient flexibility.

Under the bill, the inquiry chair may work with the director-general of DATSIP to arrange staff. Inquiry staff are not required to be existing DATSIP staff, and recruitment processes will allow interested people to apply for roles at the inquiry; however, as with other arrangements for similar entities the department will provide an administrative support as host of the inquiry. The Queensland government is working with the Interim Truth and Treaty Body to consider arrangements for location and resourcing, including staffing for the inquiry.

Regarding the decision to not accept recommendation 2 of the committee's report in relation to the Masig Statement, we have weighed up the risk of possible unintended consequences to the treaty process and the lack of broad visibility of views across the community, including those of Aboriginal people in relation to the expression of their self-determination in the bill. With the changes proposed, I am advised there may be legal implications at this late stage which could filter through the interpretation of the whole bill. This bill recognises the self-determination of Torres Strait Islander peoples and the treaty process and will provide a concrete pathway forward for this issue and others to be further negotiated and agreed between government and the community. I am committed to further consultation, including working closely with Torres Strait Islander peoples on this matter.

I emphasise that Closing the Gap aims to improve the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians by ensuring we work in partnership with First Nations people to deliver change. The government continues to deliver on this important reform. Long have First Nations leaders wanted input into the policies that directly affect them. Treaty will provide one avenue; Voice will provide another. The Queensland government is committed to coming to the table as true partners with our stakeholders. We are committed to reframing our relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, underpinned by the strategic reforms of Path to Treaty, Voice and Local Thriving Communities. These reforms address historical and ongoing economic and social injustices and recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's right to self-determination. We recognise that structural change in the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is needed to close the gap. Treaty represents a very significant structural change that will require significant change across the breadth of the Queensland government.

Working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to deliver Path to Treaty with the ultimate aim of achieving a treaty or treaties is consistent with the national agreement's aims to achieve self-determination and improvements to the wellbeing and lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and is one step closer to closing the gap. The truth-telling and treaty path will acknowledge and address mistakes of the past and ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations play a central role in addressing key reform priorities and structural imbalances which impact on Closing the Gap outcomes to this day. The Path to Treaty approach has consistently emphasised the importance of co-design with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is just one of many reforms towards closing the gap.

We know that First Nations Queenslanders have experienced barriers while engaging with the blue card system. The Queensland government is committed to making sure our blue card processes and resources are culturally appropriate and more accessible for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations. The Queensland government's Safe children and strong communities strategy and action plan provides the opportunity for real change to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland accessing the blue card system. Like Path to Treaty, the strategy is about empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and communities by taking an innovative approach to providing greater support through each part of the blue card system. The strategy also aims to enable those working in the blue card system to embed real, sustainable change through enhanced decision-making and processes and by developing and fostering cultural capability within the system itself.

Path to Treaty benefits all Queenslanders by providing a shared understanding of the past so we can build a strong and equal future that is based on respect. Path to Treaty also supports all Queenslanders to participate in a process that promotes healing, justice and reconciliation. The \$300 million Path to Treaty Fund and the returns of this fund will be used to support all Path to Treaty actions. The resourcing available through the fund will support the establishment of the First Nations Treaty Institute and assure it can undertake its functions, which will include preparing Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to enter into and participate in treaty negotiations and supporting Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples to record the impacts and effects of colonisation

on their communities. Providing the resourcing to support this work ensures that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are supported through this process to participate in treaty making and in turn ensures that all Queenslanders benefit from treaty on this land that we now share.

I would like to thank officials from the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships; namely, Jason Kidd, Tony Cheng, Emma Howel, Mel Cule, Byron Hunter, Laurel James and Suzie Barton, also Brian McFadyen from the Office of Queensland Parliamentary Counsel, for embracing a new way of working in the co-design of this bill.

I want to thank our hardworking members of the Interim Treaty and Truth Body, and many of them are in the crowd—Mr Mick Gooda, Ms Sallyanne Atkinson, Professor Michael Lavarch, Dr Bianca Beetson, Ms Seleena Blackley, Ms Cheryl Buchanan, Mr Aaron Fa'Aoso, Ms Margaret O'Donnell, Mr Ray Rosendale and Ms Natalie Siegel-Brown. I want to specifically mention the outstanding work of Sallyanne Atkinson and Cheryl Buchanan as chairs.

I want to acknowledge previous Treaty Advancement Committee members Josephine Bourne and Jackie Huggins, who put a lot of work into this process. I want to acknowledge all of the Treaty Working Group who came before them and who conducted extensive work across the state to advise our Eminent Panel on the way forward. I want to thank my staff—my chief of staff, Don Wilson, and advisors on this process Talitha Ware, Esha Sadhu and Peter Michael. I want to especially thank my ex-chief of staff, Katie Kiss, who I know is in the audience and is now senior executive of the Interim Truth and Treaty Body.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues—the minister and member for Algeester, Leeanne Enoch; the member for Cook, Cynthia Lui; and the member for Bundamba, Lance McCallum—for their strategic advice, support, guidance and assistance. I could not have done this without you.

This government is proud to be taking such a significant step forward towards redefining its relationship with Queensland's First Nations peoples. All across this country in every single dialogue with government, both state and federal, three common themes have been echoed for generations, for decades—voice, treaty, truth. It has been a powerful and consistent call. Today the Queensland parliament, as we sit here in regional parliament in Cairns in Far North Queensland, delivers commitment to two out of three pillars of the Uluru statement. On this day, 10 May 2023, we pass into law treaty and truth. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Resolved in the affirmative under standing order 106(10).

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 143, consideration of the preamble is postponed until the clauses and schedule have been considered.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1—



Mr CRAWFORD (3.58 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 1 (Short title)

Page 10, line 5, '*Path to Treaty Act 2022*'—

omit, insert—

Path to Treaty Act 2023

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

Tabled paper: Path to Treaty Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Craig Crawford's amendments [613].

Tabled paper: Path to Treaty Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Craig Crawford's amendments [614].

This amendment changes the date on the short title from 2022 to 2023.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 19—



Mr CRAWFORD (3.59 pm): I move the following amendment—

2

Clause 19 (Treaty Institute Council members)

Page 18, after line 10—

insert—

(aa) any report about the person's criminal history given to the Minister under section 60;

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 19, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 36, as read, agreed to.

Clause 37—



Mr CRAWFORD (3.59 pm): I move the following amendment—

3

Clause 37 (Appointment)

Page 26, after line 2—

insert—

(2A) In deciding whether to appoint a person as the Treaty Institute CEO, the Treaty Institute Council must consider any report about the person's criminal history given to the Council under section 60.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 37, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 38 to 41, as read, agreed to.

Clause 42—



Mr CRAWFORD (4.00 pm): I move the following amendment—

4

Clause 42 (Appointment)

Page 28, after line 8—

insert—

(2A) In deciding whether to appoint a person as the Treaty Institute secretary, the Treaty Institute Council must consider any report about the person's criminal history given to the Council under section 60.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 42, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 43 to 54, as read, agreed to.

Clause 55—



Mr CRAWFORD (4.00 pm): I move the following amendments—

5

Clause 55 (Disqualification of Treaty Institute Council members and senior executive officers)

Page 36, lines 1 and 2—

omit.

6

Clause 55 (Disqualification of Treaty Institute Council members and senior executive officers)

Page 36, line 7, 'person's term of office'—

omit, insert—

term of the person's appointment

7

Clause 55 (Disqualification of Treaty Institute Council members and senior executive officers)

Page 36, lines 12 to 14—

omit.

8

Clause 55 (Disqualification of Treaty Institute Council members and senior executive officers)

Page 36, after line 14—

insert—

(2A) A person is disqualified from continuing as a member of the Treaty Institute Council or a senior executive officer if, during the term of the person's appointment, the person is convicted of an indictable offence.

Note—

For the requirement to give notice of a change in a person's criminal history, see section 61.

9

Clause 55 (Disqualification of Treaty Institute Council members and senior executive officers)

Page 36, line 15, 'Also, a person'—

omit, insert—

A person

Mr LANGBROEK: It is disappointing to have to rise to speak against amendment No. 5 in a debate that has been largely bipartisan and supportive of the second reading of this bill. When we look at the facts here and the explanatory notes, amendment 5 amends clause 55(1)(d)—‘Disqualification of Treaty Institute Council members and senior executive officers’—to remove the automatic indictable offence criminal history disqualification provision.

Queenslanders believe in equality and non-discrimination. When I look at the committee report, halfway down page 35, it says through the committee comment that—


... in the context of the over-representation of First Nations people in the criminal justice system, the committee is of the view that a more tailored disqualification provision would be appropriate.

Yet we heard from the minister in his summing-up that the issues to do with the blue card are ones that the government are working on to make more culturally appropriate and accessible for communities; that many people in this place have made representations on behalf of communities and there have been very stringent rules applied by the government as to why they would not change any of the rules to do with blue card accessibility, and that basically they were to do with not spent convictions, convictions that were to do with charges where they may have been given less than six months as a sentence. However, we are talking about indictable offences, criminal offences where the accused has the right to be tried before a jury in a higher court. They are more serious than summary offences. They include stealing and assault, as well as more serious crimes like murder, manslaughter, rape and robbery, the majority contained in the Criminal Code Act 1899.

We believe in the LNP that the Treaty Institute senior executive officers and council members must be held to a high standard in order for the public to have trust and confidence in their integrity and ability to hold their position.

When we look at the bill as proposed, under clause 55, ‘Disqualification of Treaty Institute Council members and senior executive officers’, it says they are disqualified from becoming or continuing as a member if they have a conviction, other than a spent conviction, for an indictable offence. We think the same rule should apply—and my time is running down—and we feel it is not fair and equitable to change rules to suit. We do not allow blue cards for people who have been convicted of an offence. I remind the minister that I wrote to him about blue cards for QFES people a couple of years ago. I table a copy of that. He was very strict about the rules that applied with blue cards. It should be the same for this.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 19 March 2020, from the former Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, Hon. Craig Crawford, to the member for Surfers Paradise, Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, regarding blue cards [\[615\]](#).

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (4.04 pm): The Interim Truth and Treaty Body deliberated on this, and there are very loud noises from all across the state about the number of First Nations leaders out there who at some point had been caught up in the criminal justice system. The Katter party even referenced some of this in relation to blue card in their contribution. All this amendment does is removes the automatic part of that. Regard still has to be given by the minister in that situation to the appropriateness of a person. Therefore, I disagree with the shadow minister. This does not give everyone a free kick, but it removes the automatic function only.

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

AYES, 56:

ALP, 49—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, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O’Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 33:

LNP, 33—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, 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.

Pair: McMillan, Hart.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 55, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 56 to 59, as read, agreed to.

Clause 60—



Mr CRAWFORD (4.10 pm): I move the following amendments—

10 Clause 60 (Criminal history reports)

Page 38, lines 8 to 15—

omit, insert—

- (1) This section applies if a relevant official is making any of the following decisions—
 - (a) whether to recommend a person for appointment as a member of the Treaty Institute Council;
 - (b) whether to appoint a person as a senior executive officer;
 - (c) whether a person is disqualified from continuing as a member of the Treaty Institute Council or a senior executive officer.
- (1A) The relevant official may ask the commissioner of the police service for—
 - (a) a written report about the criminal history of the person; and
 - (b) a brief description of the circumstances of a conviction mentioned in the criminal history.

11 Clause 60 (Criminal history reports)

Page 38, lines 25 to 29—

omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 60, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 61 to 63, as read, agreed to.

Clause 64—



Mr BERKMAN (4.11 pm): I rise to make a few comments and ask a quick question on this clause. Clause 64, as we are aware, establishes the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry and sets the maximum term of the inquiry at three years. I addressed this in my second reading contribution in terms of the recommendation that came from both the ITTB, the Interim Truth and Treaty Body, and the committee recommending that that term, the initial term of the inquiry, be extended to no more than five years rather than three years.

I will also very quickly note that the 10 minutes in my second reading contribution did not afford me the opportunity to express my gratitude. I want to reflect what the minister said just moments ago and express my thanks to the ITTB members for all the work they have put in and all those preceding bodies that have carried this work for so many years including the Treaty Advancement Committee. I want to also thank my fellow committee members for the very collaborative way that this inquiry was undertaken and the very hard work of the secretariat, Lynda Pretty in particular.

I appreciate the minister's response on this issue. I accept the rationale and note the provision in the bill for the extension of that minimum term. I suppose I am keen to elucidate in more detail how the minister intends to approach the provision in clause 64(3)(a) to extend the term. I appreciate that, in asking this question, I cannot ask him to make any comments on the position that successors in his role might take. I would put the question to the shadow minister if procedure allowed me to. I ask the minister at this point: should he receive a request from the inquiry to extend the term, will he commit to granting that extension in line with the request?

Mr CRAWFORD: I thank the member for Maiwar for his kind words. I hope I am still the minister in two years time, but there are higher powers, as we all know.

Certainly the intent—and this will come out in the terms of reference and, as I explained earlier—is that at any point during the inquiry the leader of that inquiry, who is yet to be recruited and appointed, can approach me or write to me or whoever is the minister at the time with specific requests. Those requests may or may not include a time frame and they are not restricted to any particular time at all. Should that happen during my term, I would certainly treat that like any other significant request. I would certainly consult with my cabinet peers, but I do not see why the government would knock back a reasonable request.

Clause 64, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 65 to 87, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mr CRAWFORD (4.15 pm): I move the following amendment—

12 After clause 87

Page 56, after line 24—

insert—

87A Report to Minister about particular provisions

- (1) The Inquiry must, within 1 year after the Inquiry is established, give the Minister a written report on the operation and efficacy of division 3, subdivisions 3 and 4.
- (2) The Minister must table a copy of the report in the Legislative Assembly within 14 sitting days after receiving the report.
- (3) The Minister must, as soon as reasonably practicable after tabling the report, prepare a response to the report and give the response to the Premier.

Mr BERKMAN: Again, I want to speak very briefly on this, and I will say at the outset that I very much support the amendment. To give some context, this amendment provides for a report to come back to the minister around the exercise of some powers by the inquiry, specifically the issue of notices to produce documents and notices to appear at truth-telling hearings. A subsequent amendment clarifies—and I very much welcome this—that government entities as defined in the bill, those entities that are subject to the coercive powers of the inquiry, include the Queensland Police Service. However, we are still left with a situation where we are relying on the goodwill and the engagement of non-government actors to participate in good faith and with an interest in accountability and transparency given their role in the inquiry. Again, I did not have time to touch on this in my second reading contribution.

The exercise of these coercive powers and their operation to the exclusion of non-government organisations was raised as quite a substantial concern throughout the committee's inquiry. I appreciate and I will acknowledge that this was a deliberate design choice that was made by the ITTB in establishing its model. However, the central concern that remains is we have a long and dark history of missions operating across the state that were operated by churches and faith groups. The role of these groups in the dehumanisation, dispossession and countless other atrocities committed against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples obviously cannot be overlooked in the inquiry. There were no doubt other pastoral companies and other non-government actors which played really significant roles in this dark history. The fundamental question here is whether churches and other non-government organisations would be forthcoming in providing all information in their possession, especially where it demonstrates their historical culpability.

It is not meant to sound trite, but I think the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. The churches' reticence to fully participate in some other royal commissions of inquiry that we have seen in recent years bodes relatively poorly for the prospects of an honest, collaborative, non-adversarial and a completely forthcoming approach to the inquiry. Again, my question for the minister is: if a report comes back from the inquiry that it is facing any resistance from non-government actors, what is the minister's position on the expansion of those coercive powers to more broadly capture all actors, government and non-government, that have played a significant role in those atrocities against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Mr CRAWFORD: Again, I thank the member for Maiwar for his contribution. I will provide some context to members on this. This is about the amendment that gives us a 12-month checkpoint, if you like. The amendment states—

The Inquiry must ... give the Minister a written report on the operation and efficacy of division 3, subdivisions 3 and 4.

Essentially, in reference to what the member for Maiwar was referring to, whether the powers to compel are working or not working or whether there are sectors of government, community or other organisations that are not playing the game, we do not know what we do not know. No-one has given any indication of refusal at this stage. In all dialogues that I have had with archbishops, they have all indicated significant support for what we want to do, and it is the same when it comes to local governments as well. However, I do not know what their legal advice would look like at that point. That is why we have this ability in 12 months time. Any such change would need to come back to the parliament; it would need to be an amendment. I would certainly give it my support, but I would have to take that through the Premier and cabinet and caucus and we would have to come back to this floor. It is certainly the intention of the ITTB and also of myself that if powers need to be expanded because an entity is refusing, then that does not meet the goal of what we are trying to achieve here.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 88 and 89, as read, agreed to.

Clause 90—



Mr BERKMAN (4.20 pm): Once again, I will keep this as brief as I can. It is certainly not my intention to hold up the timely passage of the bill this afternoon. I referred to these issues in my speech during the second reading debate. I note that the minister did respond briefly on the resourcing of the inquiry. I have raised these concerns given that the inquiry is not an independent statutory body in the fashion of the institute, so it will be directly dependent on future government budgetary decisions for its staffing and resourcing for all of the work that it will undertake.

I do not intend to verbal the minister here, but I was not able to elucidate any clear commitments around the amount of that allocation or where the process is up to at the moment. For example, has the recruitment process for staff begun within the department? I understand that the ITTB is standing in and doing this work at the moment. I am interested to know what detail, if any, can be provided to the House to give us comfort that the inquiry will continue to be resourced as it needs to be over time.

Again, I raised this issue in my statement attached to the committee report. I do not want to labour the point or in any way suggest impropriety or ill intent on anyone's part, but I have heard some expressed concern that the department being the host of the inquiry potentially creates a conflict, given the role that the department has had in the historical actions that the inquiry will have to look into. My question is twofold: around certainty of resourcing; and whether the department is the appropriate host department and whether further consideration has been given to an alternative department, such as the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, hosting that inquiry.

Mr CRAWFORD: This is work that is ahead of us. This is in the next phase. Some of this work cannot begin until this bill passes the House and goes through the appropriate processes. I can assure the member that many of the topics he has just raised have also been part of conversations that the ITTB members have been having amongst ourselves and with us as well. This is work that begins essentially as of tomorrow.

Clause 90, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 91 to 112, as read, agreed to.

Schedule—



Mr CRAWFORD (4.24 pm): I move the following amendments—

13 Schedule 1 (Dictionary)

Page 67, after line 9—

insert—

criminal history, of a person, means the person's criminal history within the meaning of the *Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986*, other than a spent conviction.

14 Schedule 1 (Dictionary)

Page 67, lines 11 and 12—

omit, insert—

government entity means—

- (a) a government entity within the meaning of the *Public Sector Act 2022*, section 276; or
- (b) the Queensland Police Service.

Amendments agreed to.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The House will now consider the postponed preamble.

Preamble, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. CD CRAWFORD (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (4.24 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.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (4.25 pm): I move—


That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

ACTING SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Path to Treaty Bill

 **Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, this regional sitting has produced a historic moment for Queensland—the debate on the Path to Treaty Bill. Even though I was not able to speak on the bill, and I was disappointed by that, I have been incredibly impressed by the quality and dignified tone of the debate and the respect that has been demonstrated throughout the contributions across the House. I commend the House for showing the people of Far North Queensland the parliament performing at its best.

An incident having occurred in the public gallery—


Mr ACTING SPEAKER: No applause, please. Order in the gallery, please.

MONITORING OF PLACES OF DETENTION (OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION AGAINST TORTURE) BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 30 March (see p. 890), on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (4.27 pm): After that little congratulatory message that you gave to members for the previous debate, I look forward to setting a new standard in respect of this piece of legislation, which I am sure all members will appreciate. When it comes to this bill—it has taken a long time to arrive at this part of the debate—the Attorney-General is having a tough old time when it comes to human rights here in Queensland. The Attorney is part of a government that has flagrantly and offhandedly overridden its own Human Rights Act in what are some of the most mendacious political contortions since the last time the Palaszczuk government tried to show that it is tough on crime.

Along with being forced to eat substantial slices of humble pie over previous comments about breach of bail, the Attorney-General has apparently been sidelined in responding to the youth justice crisis enveloping Queensland, and particularly evident here in Cairns, by her comrade in arms the police minister. Has anyone noticed that it is always the police minister bringing in changes to the Bail Act, the Criminal Code or the Youth Justice Act? Where, one might reasonably ask, is the Attorney-General in all of this? Her predecessor was certainly all over the issue when the Labor government started weakening the laws around criminal gangs and youth offenders back in 2016.

Where is the Attorney's advice to cabinet as the state's first law officer? Did she present any of her department's evidence to the cabinet? Surely, all the Attorney would have to do is dust off the cabinet submissions from a few years ago when her predecessor the member for Redcliffe was all about going soft on youth crime. It would seem that, even if she did give advice, the Attorney was overshadowed by the ever-increasing presence of the police minister. Then, just when it seemed things could not get worse for the Attorney and the lefties in this government, they get a blast from organisations that they always thought they could reliably count on—the Human Rights Commission and the United Nations.

What horror! The United Nations and the Human Rights Commission criticising a left-wing, progressive Labor government—the self-proclaimed most progressive government Queensland has ever had, coming under attack not just from the United Nations but now from its own Human Rights Commissioner, and not once but twice. What is the cause of this calamity? It is Labor's failure to implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture—otherwise and sensibly shortened to OPCAT—a United Nations administered international treaty containing obligations that signatories are obliged to meet, and guess what: Queensland has not met them.

First of all, on 23 October last year the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture issued a statement saying that it had been—I use the words that they used—‘obstructed’ and that its OPCAT visit ‘had been compromised to such an extent that they had no option but to suspend it’. This is the United Nations. We remember that the Premier quoted the United Nations only yesterday. What has this government done? It has obstructed the United Nations inspection committee and has compromised that inspection to such an extent that it had no option but to suspend it. That statement from last year went on to say—

It is deeply regrettable that the limited understanding of the SPT’s mandate and the lack of cooperation stemming from internal disagreements—

we know that is this Labor government: chaos, confusion and crisis—

especially with respect to the states of—

wait for it—

Queensland and New South Wales, has compelled us to take this drastic measure.

Thanks to Queensland Labor incompetence, Australia joined only three other countries in having such visits suspended: Rwanda, Ukraine and Azerbaijan.

The second broadside from the UN was delivered on 21 February this year. That is only just over three months ago. The UN announced it was not merely suspending but in fact totally cancelling its OPCAT inspection after being denied full access to institutions in New South Wales and Queensland. That decision was made despite this bill. It was reported the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture said that assurances it asked for in both states—New South Wales and Queensland—were not guaranteed. Again, because of Queensland Labor failures, Australia now joins Rwanda as the only other country to have inspections terminated. What a record!

More recently, this Labor government’s record on the incarceration of young children has come under attack by Queensland Human Rights Commissioner Scott McDougall, who, following revelations on the ABC that the state had locked two boys in their cells for 24 hours a day and in one instance for 22 days straight, reportedly said—

This is appalling treatment and everyone in Queensland and indeed Australia should be reviled by that story.

Mr McDougall went on to warn that such cases may breach Queensland’s Human Rights Act, which states—

All persons deprived of liberty must be treated with humanity and with respect ..

What did His Honour former Childrens Court president and now chair of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council say about that case? He said—

It might well have been unlawful.

He also said that the circumstances of Jack’s detention—‘Jack’ is a pseudonym—appear to ‘run contrary to all the principles and the act itself’, referring to the Youth Justice Act.

A number of District Court judges have blasted the government and the department for their failure to provide information and reliable records in a timely manner. Judge Tracy Fantin recently said in a case involving a child who was held in a detention centre that the child had ‘effectively been held in solitary confinement’, which she described as ‘cruel’ and had ‘no rehabilitative effect’ and was a ‘direct breach’ of the state’s youth justice laws. The result was that the child was immediately released, with no conviction recorded.

What did Judge Horneman-Wren say about another similar case where a child was kept in detention for lengthy periods of time? I have here a report from a media organisation I am not particularly fond of but I do read occasionally, the *Guardian*. I am sure that the *Guardian* would be well read by those on the other side of the chamber. It stated—

The judge said the boy—

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: The Australian version of the *Guardian*.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: It is about a Queensland case.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I do not know it as well as you do, member for Sandgate. It states—

The judge said the boy was kept in solitary confinement for all but 60 seconds a day on 11 occasions, despite—
this is what the judge said—

“not a shred of evidence” that it was for his protection. This included 11 hours 59 minutes during the day, plus a 12-hour lockdown at night, he said.

The judge said—

On its face, repeated separations for 11 hours and 59 minutes cannot be seen as anything other than the most calculated contrivance to avoid the oversight of the chief executive.

This is what is happening in youth detention centres: repeated separation for 11 hours and 59 minutes that the judge says cannot be seen as anything other than a calculated contrivance to avoid oversight. What did the judge do? He granted the teenager bail, saying he had ‘performed reasonably well on a conditional bail program’ and his ‘continued detention for these offences is, on no view of it, justified’.

This again shows this Palaszczuk government in chaos and crisis. When the United Nations, the Queensland Human Rights Commissioner, judges of the District Court charged with dealing with youth justice issues in this state and the chair of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council and a former president of the Childrens Court make these claims about breaches of the Human Rights Act, about it having no effect, of it being a calculated contrivance, of it being cruel punishment—this only demonstrates a government in chaos and a government in crisis.

What does the minister say? The minister says, ‘It was not the correct information.’ But she has said it on every occasion it has occurred. In February and then again in March, with repeated cases, the minister said, ‘We’re having an investigation. I’ve asked for the department to do better.’ But it gets repeated time and time again.

What this leads to is a complete youth justice failure, because we are not getting the proper treatment for these young offenders. How many times do we hear the government say, ‘We have this \$500 million program and it is working’? How is it working when you are locking up a 13-year-old for 23 hours and 59 minutes a day in a ‘calculated contrivance to avoid oversight’? How is it working when you are locking up a youth for 22 days straight, 20 hours a day? How is that acting as rehabilitation?

We make no bones about it: when it comes to dealing with crime—the causes of crime and the effects of crime and the community’s expectation of punishment and deterrence—the LNP supports providing judges with the powers they need so that the sentence fits the crime. If that means removing detention as a last resort, so be it. We are prepared to let the judges make that assessment. That does not mean that people who are sentenced to detention or imprisonment are treated in an inhuman way that does not give them prospects of rehabilitation. That does not seem to be the case with the Palaszczuk Labor government. The evidence is right here before us in terms of how this government is failing—no consequence for actions and no community retribution or effective rehabilitation or treatment.

The Attorney cannot blame anyone for this failure. They cannot turn around and say it is the LNP’s fault. They cannot blame the United Nations; they have already held it up. They cannot blame the judiciary—yet again. This all lands squarely at the feet of the Palaszczuk Labor government. It is a result of this Labor government’s tardiness in implementing legislation necessary to enable visits by the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to places of detention in Queensland and its tardiness in implementing the inspector of places of detention.

Let us not forget that that was a bill that was introduced in 2021. It was passed with the support of this House—both sides—on 30 August 2022. It received assent on 7 September. Parts of it were proclaimed on 9 December 2022, but we still have not seen the inspector of places of detention carry out any functions. In fact, the government has not even started. It is still consulting on what it needs to be doing and what the standards for places of detention are—that is, nine months after the bill was passed and almost 24 months after it was introduced into the parliament.

Chaos, crisis, confusion: that is the Palaszczuk Labor government way. It is not as if the government has not known about its obligations under OPCAT for a fair while, because the treaty was signed by Australia in May 2009 and it was ratified by the coalition government nationally in December 2017 and at the time the national preventive mechanism was postponed at the request of the states to give them the capacity to prepare for it. Since December 2017 this government has known of the need to get the national preventive mechanism in place and Australia’s obligations started in January 2021.

In Queensland the government did not establish its own monitoring process, as I said, until September when the Inspector of Detention Services Act passed the House and the deadline for the full implementation of OPCAT passed in January this year.

Here is what the Australian Human Rights Commissioner said. We have had the United Nations, the Queensland Human Rights Commissioner, the judges, the Sentencing Advisory Council and now the Australian Human Rights Commission weighing into the failures. Ms Lorraine Finlay told the ABC that the cancellation of the visit that I referred to earlier was 'neither unexpected nor undeserved'. She went on to say—

We haven't approached the treaty with the urgency it deserves.

That is the advice and the evidence and the statement from the Australian Human Rights Commissioner. What is it all about? What has excited so much moral condemnation from the United Nations, the Queensland Human Rights Commission, the Australian Human Rights Commission, the judges and other human rights groups as well as some pretty strong suggestions here in Queensland from the submitters to the bill? Well, on 10 December 1984 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Australia and 82 other countries signed that treaty and it has been ratified here in Australia since 1989. There are plenty who might well say, and with good reason, that Australia is one of the better parties to that treaty—not the best but much better than many others—but the reality, as I am sure many members will see instantly, is that talk is cheap and action much harder. In this instance, UNCAT, as it is known, was easy to sign but much harder to check on, let alone enforce. A scheme that had its genesis in Europe was devised to police countries' compliance with UNCAT. That scheme envisaged a system of inspection of places of detention.

Members might hark back with a degree of fondness to my contribution to the debate last September on the Inspector of Detention Services when I outlined the contribution of a certain squire of Bedfordshire, Mr John Howard—a great prison reformer, not the great Prime Minister—whose idea it was to inspect prisons and highlight the shortcomings and failures discovered with the aim of leading to the humane treatment of prisoners. This goes back three centuries. Whilst recently promoted in Europe, the idea of continuous inspection had far earlier origins in the United Kingdom and that scheme of inspections is broadly encompassed in the optional protocol, the subject of this bill.

The inspections consist of two parts. Firstly, there are inspections undertaken by the international Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, the SPT. I can see members are enthralled by this dissertation in relation to the operations of the United Nations and this subcommittee, so I will continue. Secondly, there is a domestic system of inspections known as the national preventive mechanism. This bill deals with the first of those methods and is said to facilitate such inspections. This is quite a contested area. The vast majority of submissions to the committee highlight the concerns of many organisations with the definition of 'place of detention' in clause 4 of the bill. This is the most contentious issue that has been raised by submissions. Most would prefer to see the definition of 'place of detention' reflect Article 4 of OPCAT—that is, reflect what the treaty says, what we have signed up to. Many submissions highlighted the lack of coverage of residential aged-care facilities and secure dementia units where people may be held subject to some form of order or whose practices mean residents are in effect detained, and we only need to turn our minds back to what happened during COVID in places where elderly people were in fact almost against their will detained in residential aged-care centres.

The Australian Human Rights Commission and the Queensland Human Rights Commission as well as Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia, the Commonwealth Ombudsman, NPM Network, the Queensland Law Society, Prisoners' Legal Service, ATSILS and many others all called for the definition to mirror that used in OPCAT. The department response is that, as a matter of policy regarding the scope of the bill, the government has chosen the definitions in clause 4 deliberately. It offers some fairly feeble excuse but does not fully explain why that policy scope has been chosen, and that may be something that the minister may care to elaborate on. Basically, the policy scope it responded to is that this is the decision the government has made and that is why we are doing it, but there is no reason for that policy. There is no explanation as to why that scope has been chosen. It may well be a very worthwhile policy decision.

In passing I note that the OPCAT treaty includes both public and private custodial settings. Paragraph 2 of Article 4 of OPCAT would have made for some interesting findings during the compulsory lockdowns endorsed by this state during the COVID pandemic. The department responses provided in paragraph 2.1.3 of the explanatory notes lacks any intellectual rigour at all. It simply says that the bill is intended to define the places of detention within its scope to provide certainty as to the

procedures to be followed for a visit to those facilities. It totally fails to say how this would be any different if the OPCAT definition was to be used or why different procedures for different types of facilities could not have been developed. If you want to say it is different for a secure dementia unit in a hospital or if you want to say it is different for a secure residential facility, why is it different and can a different definition be used? While not objecting to the bill in its current form, there is certainly no real explanation provided as to why the OPCAT definition is not preferred. There just seems to be a slavish adherence to the Victorian model as if following 'Dictator' Dan is a good excuse. Other issues—

Government members interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: I thought you were falling asleep over there. I thought I would just throw that in.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr NICHOLLS: That is it; exactly right. As if following 'Dictator' Dan would be any reason to do anything, it seems to be the only excuse used here in Queensland.

Other issues are raised by submitters including access to judicial review of ministerial decisions as well as access to information. On this score, it is interesting to note clause 6 of the bill, which on my reading is designed to overcome the excuse that was proffered by the government for the suspension of the original inspections—namely, that the existing laws prevented the SPT inspectors from entering mental health inpatient units and the Forensic Disability Service.

When the original inspections in October last year were cancelled, the excuse was given that the legislation did not provide for access to those types of facilities. Nowhere in the explanatory notes or the bill itself are the restrictive provisions identified. The reasons given to the United Nations subcommittee for not allowing the inspection to occur last year have not been specifically dealt with in the explanatory notes, nor have they been dealt with in the bill itself. It has not been identified what this secret clause or provision was that stopped it going ahead.

It is interesting to note that the Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion CEO, Matilda Alexander, said she was still not satisfied 'of the legislative basis for why the subcommittee could not physically access the inpatients unit at the time'. Perhaps the Attorney-General could do what the department and the explanatory notes do not and actually identify where those restrictions in the Mental Health Act and the Forensic Disability Act are.

I also note the Public Guardian's comments that even as this bill passes this place, Queensland will still not be fully compliant with OPCAT as the creation of the Inspector of Places of Detention—to use the Public Guardian's comment—is not sufficient for Queensland to fully comply with OPCAT as there are significant limitations on where inspections will happen. So another government body—not the LNP, it is another government body, the Public Guardian—is pointing out the limitations in the scheme.

An honourable member: A different guardian?


Mr NICHOLLS: A different Public Guardian, but the same role. You rissoled the last one. You did not like the last report.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Clayfield!

Mr NICHOLLS: I don't think 'rissole' is unparliamentary. It is a term of food and it is a common saying. They would know it in Cairns.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Clayfield, please do not reflect on the chair. I was going to say could you please direct your comments through the chair.

Mr NICHOLLS: Indeed. I am very grateful for your guidance. I have highlighted the serious tardiness of this government in coming to grips with a relatively straightforward piece of legislation that in substance is only 12 pages long—my speech is 17 pages. It could have been done faster. This tardiness has embarrassed this government and the state. This is all down to a chaotic and crisis-ridden Labor government and its lack of direction and focus as its term comes thankfully to an end in the next 20 months. It cannot blame the LNP or past governments in respect of this bill. We will not be opposing this bill.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (4.52 pm): I rise to speak to the Monitoring of Places of Detention (Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture) Bill 2022. The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, in its report No. 42 tabled in this Assembly on 24 February 2023, has recommended to the Assembly that this bill be passed. The committee's task was to consider the policy to be achieved by the legislation and the application of fundamental legislative principles—that is, to consider whether the bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals, and to the institution of parliament. The

committee also examined the bill for compatibility with human rights in accordance with the Human Rights Act 2019. The bill seeks to facilitate visits by the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to places of detention in Queensland. As part of its inquiry, the committee called for and received written submissions from stakeholders, was briefed by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and heard evidence from organisations at a public hearing.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to protecting the human rights of all Queenslanders, including those in detention. In 2019, Queensland's Human Rights Act commenced, ensuring public entities had specific obligations to act and to make decisions compatible with human rights. This historic legislation saw the enhancement of protections for Queenslanders in their dealings with public entities and protects specific rights including protection from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and humane treatment when deprived of liberty.

The purpose of the bill is to facilitate visits by the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to places of detention in Queensland. The subcommittee has the ability to conduct visits to Australia under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture. The Commonwealth government ratified OPCAT on 21 December 2017. The subcommittee is established under article 2 of OPCAT and has a mandate to visit places of detention and make recommendations to state parties concerning the protection of persons deprived of their liberty against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The bill provides a consistent framework to provide the subcommittee with access to places of detention in Queensland and information to assist the subcommittee to fulfil its mandate under OPCAT.

The bill will also remove legislative barriers that restrict physical access to inpatient units of authorised mental health services under the Mental Health Act 2016 or to the Forensic Disability Service under the Forensic Disability Act 2011. The bill defines places of detention that fall within its scope. This will provide certainty to the UN subcommittee and government agencies as to the process to be followed for UN subcommittee visits to these facilities. Places of detention that are defined in the bill are: prisons; community correction centres and work camps; youth detention centres; inpatient units with an authorised mental health service; the Forensic Disability Service; court cells, police watch houses, police holding cells, or other places in a police station where a person is detained; any vehicle primarily used or operated for the purpose of transporting a detainee; and any other place other than a private residence prescribed by regulation where a person is a detainee.

The bill does not prevent the UN subcommittee from visiting places not within the bill's scope. The bill requires the minister with the responsibility for the place of detention and the detaining authority to provide the UN subcommittee with unrestricted access to the place of detention, except in limited circumstances. As provided under OPCAT, the bill provides that a responsible minister may object to a visit by the UN subcommittee on the grounds of national defence, public safety, natural disaster and serious disorder in a place of detention. Given the broad nature of these powers and their potential to affect persons detained, staff, the subcommittee and the broader community in an adverse manner, the committee is pleased to note that care has been taken to include a number of safeguards to limit the use of the proposed power to temporarily prevent the visit, including that: the prohibition or restriction of access must be for the shortest period reasonable in the circumstances; the detaining authority must provide the responsible minister with the written reasons for the prohibition or restriction including the date, time and duration of the prohibition or restriction; the responsible minister could direct a detaining authority not restrict access of the subcommittee to the facility or parts of the facility. On the basis of all evidence submitted, the committee is satisfied the bill will achieve its policy objectives. I commend the bill to the House.



Mrs GERBER (Currumbin—LNP) (4.58 pm): On 21 December 2017 the Commonwealth government ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture. Today, after more than five years of delay by the Palaszczuk government, we are finally seeing this bill debated in parliament. I want to reiterate the LNP's support for this bill. We want to ensure offenders receive the appropriate punishment that fits their crime, but that they are also treated humanely while serving those penalties. Broadly speaking, this bill seeks to deliver accountability for the standards of detention and would allow for the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to visit places of detention in Queensland.

Earlier this year Queensland suffered the embarrassment of contributing to the cancellation of the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture's trip to inspect places of detention here in Australia. This was due to the lack of action by the Palaszczuk government. Not enough progress had been made by the Queensland government to allow the UN subcommittee to visit. In relation to the subcommittee's visit as outlined in this bill, I want to make sure that I put on the record that there are

safeguards in place in this bill. The minister can object to a subcommittee visit if there is an urgent and compelling reason to do so and this would include national defence, public safety, natural disaster or serious disorder in a place of detention and the detaining authority can temporarily prohibit access under certain circumstances. It should also be noted that these subcommittee visits are only one aspect of OPCAT, with the other being the establishment of a domestic national preventive mechanism to conduct regular visits to places of detention. Both South Australia and Victoria have passed similar legislation to the bill we are debating today. Additionally, Western Australia and the territories have already nominated their national preventive mechanism.

I welcome the bipartisan support on this bill but I must point out the delays and recent failures of the Palaszczuk Labor government in this area. Recently we saw disturbing reports, on the ABC and in the *Guardian* respectively, about a boy aged 13 who spent at least 45 days in solitary confinement despite not being sentenced to detention and a 13-year-old with a disability who was held in solitary confinement for a prolonged period. This state government has not implemented the Inspector of Detention Services, which is a body that could ensure oversight of youth detention centres and might be able to ensure that cases such as those do not happen in the future. We are still waiting till the Inspector of Detention Services can perform its duties. The UN had to cancel their trip to Australia, putting us on par with Rwanda, because the state government could not get their act together. All of that demonstrates a state government that is lurching from crisis to crisis and that is in absolute chaos. How on earth did Labor allow children aged 13 to be kept in solitary confinement for more than 45 days in a move that was widely considered to be unlawful?

I wish to turn to the part of the bill that caused concern throughout the committee inquiry and share a local story. While the policy objectives of the bill were broadly supported, many stakeholders expressed concerns over the definition of 'place of detention'. Many stakeholders wanted the bill to adopt the broad definition in the OPCAT treaty rather than the more restricted definition currently in the bill. In examining the definition of 'place of detention', I asked many of the stakeholders, as well as the department, whether quarantine facilities would be covered by this OPCAT bill. It is an aspect of the bill that remains unclear.

Will mandatory quarantine facilities such as hotels be included in the definition of 'places of detention'? We asked the Attorney-General's department this very question because the department's written submission contains nothing to even suggest that quarantine facilities formed part of the department's discussion paper on the bill. Unfortunately, the department has been unable to provide any clarity, advising that it is a policy decision by government and the department cannot take it any further than that. The Queensland Human Rights Commission was also uncertain as to whether a quarantine facility or a quarantine hotel would be covered, stating that places of quarantine could very well fall outside the prescribed list in the bill. The Human Rights Commissioner agreed that, whether it be a hotel or a purpose designed and built quarantine facility, they should be covered by OPCAT.

Both Sisters Inside and the Queensland Law Society stated that, on their interpretation of the bill, quarantine facilities would not be covered. However, they both recommended that the definition should include quarantine facilities. To that end, they supported the broader definition of 'places of detention' in the OPCAT treaty.

I raised this issue because, as most people in the chamber know, I worked very closely with my community to overcome the unique border challenges that we faced during the pandemic. As a result of chaotic communication from the state government about both quarantine rules and border closures, I had more constituents than most who found themselves in forced hotel quarantine, at their own expense and at the direction of the state government. Their experiences were not always pleasant nor where they humane. That is why I was keen to understand whether this bill and OPCAT would also cover quarantine facilities. To illustrate why I think this is so important, I want the parliament to hear Lynn's story. Lynn is a constituent of my mine who lives in Tugun. Her experiences demonstrate why this bill should clearly and specifically include quarantine facilities as part of the places of detention that can be visited and inspected.

On Sunday, 29 August 2021, Lynn was walking around Coolangatta. This happened to be at the same time that others were protesting the border closure. Lynn knew nothing about the protest. She walked up the stairs of the Mantra Hotel to avoid the people in the protest and accidentally walked on the New South Wales side of the border. She did not cross any barricades. She literally walked across the street, believing she was still in Queensland. There she was met by police who took her details and ordered her to go back to the Queensland side of the border, that is, the other side of the path which is just metres away.

Shortly after arriving back at her home in Tugun, Queensland police showed up and informed her that she had to pack her bags and go immediately into hotel quarantine for 14 days. That came as an incredible shock to Lynn. The whole situation was extremely wrong. Lynn was placed in hotel quarantine in Surfers Paradise. Despite raising concerns about her mental health, Lynn was kept in that quarantine facility for a week before I was successful in getting her an exemption—not from the quarantine itself, which is what she should have got, but merely an exemption to complete the rest of her quarantine at home. Lynn's experience in hotel quarantine is what this chamber needs to hear about and it is a reason why quarantine facilities should be inspected.

Lynn was subjected to a number of grossly disturbing issues that no person should have to deal with. She was in a fragile mental state and she was not provided with the care she needed. In a letter to the Premier and the health minister, Lynn detailed her experiences and the conditions she was forced to live under for seven days: vomit on the curtains, dangerous fungal growth on the walls and in the air conditioning, and stains throughout the room. I want to quote from Lynn's letter to the Premier and the health minister. She stated—

Where was any level of compassion afforded to ME? Compassion in my case was ZERO.

Instead, I was isolated and uncared for, incarcerated in a quarantine hotel in Surfers Paradise—going crazy at the injustice of it all. There was NO duty of care afforded to me.

She also wrote—


The entire situation that we had to endure caused myself and my husband a great deal of stress and upset for no good reason. And seriously affected my mental health, but there have been no apologies received ...

I implore everyone to read Lynn's account and to look at the despicable conditions that she was forced to live in at the hands of the state government. The photos are confronting. They are shocking. Quite frankly, it is hard to believe that this could have occurred in our great state. I table the letter for the benefit of other members in the House.

Tabled paper: Letter, undated, from Ms Lynn Tait to various recipients, regarding treatment of certain individuals during Queensland quarantine period [616].

Lynn's forced detention in hotel quarantine was extremely degrading for her. I have met with Lynn on many occasion and I have assisted her through her ordeal. The worst part about all of this is that the state government is still trying to chase Lynn for payment of the hotel quarantine bill. That is right: \$2,000 for her time in quarantine—time that she never should have been subjected to in the first place; time that was degrading and has severely affected her mental health.

I have written to the health minister and her department regarding this billing. Lynn has made an official request for an application to have the fee waived. On 28 April 2023, Lynn finally received an email saying that her circumstances were not grounds for submitting a fee waiver application. After all this time, after everything that Lynn has been through, this state government is still after her money. I am calling on the health minister to waive that quarantine bill not only because of the injustice of it but also because of the impact that quarantine had on Lynn's mental health. I am imploring the health minister to read Lynn's account and to ensure that the state government does not chase Lynn, through a debt collector, for payment of a quarantine bill when she should never have been forced into quarantine in the first place to endure an experience that has caused severe mental health issues and was a degrading experience for her. That should never have happened in the first place. I am imploring the state government to consider the OPCAT definition of 'places of detention' and include quarantine facilities in the definition.

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (5.07 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Monitoring of Places of Detention (Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture) Bill 2022. Isn't it lovely to hear the LNP, two speakers in, already attacking our frontline service delivery staff! They are absolutely on point. I will be ensuring that—

Government members interjected.

Mr HUNT: Do not worry, I will be taking your interjections and the *Hansard* to all of the custodial officers and youth detention workers in Queensland so that they can hear your magnificent contributions as you slur them again and again.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Caloundra, please ensure that your comments are directed through the chair.

Mr HUNT: I thank my fellow committee members: the chair and member for Toohey, Peter Russo; the inextinguishable Jonty Bush, the member for Cooper; Laura Gerber, the member for Currumbin; Jon Krause, the member for Scenic Rim; and Sandy Bolton, the member for Noosa. Manners cost nothing. As always, thanks go to the secretariat whose tireless efforts make these reports and hearings possible. The bill was referred to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee on 1 December 2022. After hearing submissions on 24 January, the report was handed down in February 2023. A single recommendation came from the committee, which was simply that the bill be passed.

Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky once famously opined that the degree of civilisation in a society can be judged by entering its prisons. The purpose of the bill is simply to facilitate visits by the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to places of detention in Queensland. The Commonwealth government ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture in December 2017, and article 2 of the OPCAT mandate means that visits can be made to places of detention and recommendations can be made to state parties.

To make this a reality, ratifying parties are obliged to provide the UN subcommittee with: unrestricted access to all places of detention and their installations and facilities, subject to particular grounds for objecting to a visit; unrestricted access to all information concerning the number of persons deprived of their liberty in places of detention, and the number and location of places of detention; unrestricted access to all information referring to the treatment of those persons and conditions of detention; the ability to privately interview persons deprived of their liberty and any other person the subcommittee believes may supply relevant information; and, finally, the liberty to choose the places it wants to visit and persons it wants to interview. The bill will also make this possible in relation to our international obligations.

The bill makes plain that places of detention are: community corrections centres, prisons or work camps; youth detention centres; inpatient units of an authorised mental health service; the Forensic Disability Service; court cells; holding cells and other places in a police station where a person is detained; or any other place where a person is detained.

Having established this, the bill ensures that the responsible minister must ensure that the subcommittee and any accompanying person have unrestricted access to any part of the place of detention. Almost all submitters asked in one forum or another for an extension to the definition of a 'place of detention', to which the department responded quite correctly—

... the Bill does not prevent the subcommittee from visiting a place outside the Bill's scope. This would be by consent and in accordance with any relevant legislation.

...

DJAG notes clause 4 ... of the Bill allows the Governor in Council to make a regulation to prescribe other places of detention ... to be within scope of the Bill.

The committee comment is worth noting at this point. It states—

We are ... satisfied that due consideration has been given to clause 4 regarding the definition of 'place of detention' and the facilitation of visits by the subcommittee to other places outside the scope of the Bill with consent and in accordance with relevant legislation.

We are also satisfied that the regulation-making powers demonstrate sufficient regard to the institution of Parliament having regard to the subject matter left to regulation and the need for flexibility.

This should be set against the minister's responsibilities relating to national defence, public safety, natural disaster and serious disorder in the place of detention. Similarly, the detaining authority may temporarily—emphasis on 'temporarily'—prohibit or restrict access to the place of detention by the subcommittee if allowing access may prevent the maintenance of the security, good order and management of the place of detention or the health and safety of persons in the facility. These precautionary exceptions were not without criticism from some submitters. Sisters Inside contended—

... the castral system continuously uses the good order and management of a place of detention as a reason to restrict access, including because of issues with governance, such as staff shortage or lockdowns.

I would add that Sisters Inside is partially correct in making this assertion. Lockdowns and critical incidents do indeed make custodial operations challenging, but it must be remembered that 'challenging' in a custodial setting means fundamentally unsafe. This is precisely when it would be disastrous to invite any outside body, UN or otherwise, into a secured facility. A critical incident in a modern custodial facility requires all focus and attention to be on the management of the incident as safely and as expediently as possible. In short, the inspectors would be seeing a very atypical, almost misleading, snapshot of regular operations.

As with any body or process that accesses information or conducts interviews with complainants, provisions that safeguard people from reprisals are vital. Clause 19 protects any person who has provided or may provide information or other assistance to the subcommittee from reprisals. Clause 20 of the bill makes it an offence for a person to take a reprisal. The maximum penalty for the offence is over \$14,000, or 100 penalty units.

The grounds for establishing a reprisal are outlined in clause 19 of the bill and state that a person must not cause, or attempt or conspire to cause, detriment to another person because that person has provided or may provide information or other assistance to the subcommittee. Detriment to a person includes anything that prejudices a person's safety or a person's career. Sisters Inside provided that this definition of 'detriment' was too narrow because, in their words—

... reprisals from staff and the institution are a dangerous reality in places of detention. We often hear stories of abuses of power by detention staff, including increased surveillance, room search, harassment by detention staff ...

These concerns were heard, and it is proposed that 'detriment' will include injury, damage or loss and an onerous change to the conditions of detention. That said, any suggestion that abuses of power from detention staff are common, uncommon or even rare is simply nonsense. These instances, if they occur, are extremely rare and no more prevalent than in any other facility where human failings will periodically occur.

To contextualise my strong believe in the professionalism of Queensland's modern first responders, let us remember that Jean Jacques Gautier, the visionary behind OPCAT, put forward his idea in 1976. In 1976, the understanding and approaches around penology were nowhere near as developed as they are now. OPCAT was designed to inspect places of detention far removed from a 21st century custodial setting in Queensland today. That is not to say that the motivation behind the adoption of OPCAT is outdated—far from it. I believe it is necessary if only to benchmark that our own places of detention are good and look for opportunities for improvement.

Let me be absolutely clear: torture does not occur in modern places of detention in Queensland, as the LNP are suggesting. Our first responders in places of detention are highly trained professionals who day in, day out strain every sinew to ensure that the entitlements of detainees are met. Places of detention can be violent, but the staff who work in them crave nothing more than a violence-free shift so they can return home to their families at the end of each day after having the much sought after 'quiet day'.

Cell searches for contraband, ramifications of a breach of discipline and the aftermath of restraint after an assault on a staff member or another inmate are not instances of torture, though they may be characterised that way by an offender or, in this debate, by the LNP. They are very simply the consequences and repercussions of a detainee's action. Similarly, restraints like handcuffs and body belts, though imposing to the untrained eye, are not instruments of torture.

I welcome the implementation of the monitoring of places of detention bill because it will invite scrutiny to our places of detention and highlight how civilised they are. For that reason, I commend the bill to the House.



Ms BOLTON (Noosa—Ind) (5.17 pm): The inquiry into the Monitoring of Places of Detention (Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture) Bill 2022 is designed to allow visits and reporting by the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture to places of detention in Queensland. The need for this bill arises from Australia's ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, known as OPCAT. Under this treaty, Australia, and therefore Queensland, first must set up a domestic mechanism to conduct regular visits to places of detention and, second, must allow periodic visits by the UN subcommittee to inspect them for potential torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishments.

During our Legal Affairs and Safety Committee inquiry into this bill, a key issue was around which Queensland facilities would be open to UN subcommittee inspectors. This bill specifies prisons, forensic mental health facilities and watch houses—the core detention facilities run by the Queensland government. Many submissions questioned this definition. The Australian Human Rights Commission and the Queensland Law Society wanted the broader definition used in the OPCAT protocol, which is any place under the state's jurisdiction where people 'are or may be deprived of their liberty'.

Aged and Disability Advocacy Australia proposed that detention facilities should include residential aged-care facilities and secure dementia units. A similar proposition was put forward by Townsville Community Law. These facilities with dementia places often have locked doors and

residents are unable to leave. These can be considered places of detention and, as such, could be covered by this bill. During COVID, with the lockdown of aged care, even more of these premises became detention facilities.

Legal Aid Queensland submitted that the bill's definition would not capture situations where a person is in Wacol contingency accommodation, also known as the Wacol precinct, due to an order made under the provisions of the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003. Another type of facility not covered is quarantine facilities, and that has already been brought up. During COVID thousands of Queenslanders were directed by government to isolate in hotels. During the public hearing the Queensland Human Rights Commission stated that these facilities should be captured as places of detention, as did the Queensland Law Society. The department in its response stated that the bill allows the Governor-in-Council to make a regulation to prescribe other places of detention. This is not adequate given that during COVID what happened in quarantine and aged-care facilities was inhuman. You only need to speak to those who are still impacted emotionally, financially and physically. Many Noosa constituents during that time suffered some really horrendous conditions.


Another issue was the temporary restriction of access for the UN subcommittee. The bill provides a list of factors including security, good order and management of the place of detention, and the conduct of essential operations by the detaining authority. Australian Lawyers for Human Rights argued instead for the use of the OPCAT provision for denying access to a facility, which is only for urgent and compelling grounds of national defence, public safety, natural disaster or serious disorder. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service pointed out that these do not rise to the level of seriousness and urgency of the OPCAT provision, providing a much broader set of reasons to exclude the UN committee than what is provided for by OPCAT. The department in response argued that the bill does provide that restriction on access must only be for the shortest period reasonable in the circumstances and requires a detaining authority to provide the responsible minister with written reasons for the restriction.

Finally, the bill states that interviews must be conducted with no other person being present other than an accompanying expert, interpreter or support person. Sisters Inside submitted that more detail should be provided, including that interviews should be in a private room with no-one able to view or overhear and no audible recordings or video camera recordings to ensure privacy. However, the department considers that the term 'private' covers these issues sufficiently and was informed by the subcommittee's recent visit to Australia.

While this work is incredibly important, it is also a baseline level of performance for our justice system. At the very least we should expect that cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is not experienced in our detention centres. With youth crime constantly in the headlines—and we have spoken endlessly of the ongoing trauma being inflicted across the state—understandably, our communities are more interested in seeing perpetrators apprehended and jailed to create greater safety and are not impressed that we are spending time on conditions for prisoners. However, how we treat others, whether fellow humans or our furry friends and livestock, is a key indicator of how balanced we are as a society. As I said a couple of sittings ago, two or more wrongs do not make a right.

Justice Action, which represents prisoners, argued that the strain on prisoner infrastructure and services has resulted in deteriorating prisoner health conditions and rising incidents of self-harm. This makes attempts to rehabilitate and reintegrate into society difficult. We need to reverse this trend. Most importantly, we must keep trying to give fewer Queenslanders any reason to commit crimes against others. We have argued for further early intervention and additional options for the court such as relocation sentencing or diversion centres. Noosa MP community surveys show that over 70 per cent are in favour of boot camps or an equivalent and over 60 per cent are in favour of other options for youth detention. I will say it again: it costs over \$1,500 plus per day for imprisonment. It makes logical sense that taxpayer funds be used for efforts to decriminalise rather than criminalise, which leads to less safety. We need more support for victims and their families.

Thank you to our chair, the member for Toohey, fellow committee members, our amazing secretariat and department submitters as well as participants in the inquiry for their examination of this bill.

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (5.24 pm): 'A measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members.' This quote by Mahatma Gandhi is a favourite of mine and it captures two of the values that I hold close: justice and equity. The introduction of this bill is an opportunity to progress those values, and I rise to speak in support of the monitoring of places of detention bill 2022. The people this bill seeks to protect are defined. They are prisoners, they are those residing in authorised mental

health facilities, they are those detained in watch houses, they are young people in youth detention. Whilst some may debate the degree of vulnerability these people hold, no-one could argue that their statutory detention creates a positive obligation on the state to ensure that their human rights are protected and upheld. This is not just a concept recognised by our government but an international doctrine.

Australia is signatory to the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, otherwise known as OPCAT. The OPCAT agreement aims to prevent torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment for those held in detention. In accordance with OPCAT's requirements, Australia has agreed to establish an independent National Preventive Mechanism, or NPM, to conduct inspections of all places of detention and closed environments and to also agree to international inspections of places of detention by the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture. Earlier this year our government took another step in this direction by establishing an Inspector of Detention Services to promote the improvement of detention services and places of detention and prevent harm to detainees. This bill makes yet another contribution towards this objective in bringing greater transparency and public confidence by establishing a stand alone legislative framework to facilitate a consistent approach to the UN subcommittee's visits to places of detention in Queensland.

One of Australia's obligations in relation to monitoring places of detention is to facilitate periodic visits by the United Nations subcommittee. This is an important oversight and monitoring mechanism. Many of us would be aware of the UN subcommittee's visit to Queensland in October last year. While our state agencies cooperated and worked to support that visit, the UN subcommittee did encounter legislative barriers which were frustrating and only allowed the subcommittee to partially exercise their functions and powers. The introduction of this bill will address those legislative barriers around access, including issues faced in accessing authorised mental health services and the Forensic Disability Service. Importantly, the bill recognises that the observance of human rights is the most effective and safe way to manage custodial settings.

The focus of the bill is: to enable the UN subcommittee to undertake visits to places of detention; to conduct private interviews with detainees and any relevant person for the purpose of its mandate under OPCAT; to provide access to relevant information to the UN subcommittee; and to offer protection from reprisals against anyone assisting the UN subcommittee. The bill also provides safeguards to enable detaining authorities to preserve privacy, security, good order, welfare and safety in places of detention during visits by the subcommittee. Importantly, the bill will provide certainty to the UN subcommittee and government agencies as to the process to be followed for visits to facilities by defining the places of detention that fall within its scope.


There were a couple of areas of interest to me within the bill, so I focussed my inquiries as a member of the parliamentary committee oversighting the bill on those areas within the public hearings. The first area of interest for me was in relation to the giving of consent. This relates particularly to clauses 15(2)(b) and 16(2)(b), which prescribe that the subcommittee cannot talk to an individual without consent. If the person is unable to consent, the person's legal guardian must consent to the interview. For me this was an important part to interrogate, because many of the individuals captured under the bill probably do have formal guardians appointed as decision-makers. For example, some people who are experiencing mental health challenges may also have fluctuating capacity to make decisions about their lives. If a person has been admitted into an authorised mental health facility, particularly under an involuntary treatment order, it may be that they are not the legal decision-maker for matters relating to their treatment.

Children in the youth justice system may have the chief executive appointed as their legal decision-maker. This was an area I inquired into during the public hearings. The department did commit to looking at these particular provisions and doing a cross-jurisdictional analysis. I can see that the Attorney-General will be moving amendments to the bill during consideration in detail that will deal with this issue by omitting these clauses. This will remove the requirement for a legal guardian to consent to the interview where a person does not have the capacity to consent. The bill will instead be silent on what should occur where a person does have capacity to consent, but this would not preclude the subcommittee from seeking express consent from the formal guardian if the person does not have legal capacity to participate in an interview.

Debate, on motion of Ms Bush, adjourned.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Federal Budget

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (5.30 pm): Last night's federal budget provided welcome cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders, funding to strengthen Medicare and support for new job-creating industries. Our government is funding half of the \$500 in power rebates for 1.1 million households and \$650 in rebates for small businesses. As I have said before, our government will provide even more cost-of-living relief with more power bill rebates in the upcoming state budget.

It is great to have a federal Labor government in Canberra that recognises that cost of living is a real issue. I welcome further cost-of-living relief, including: a \$40 per fortnight increase to JobSeeker; a \$31 per fortnight increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance; a \$176.90 per fortnight increase to the single parenting payment for 57,000 families until the youngest child turns 14; and a 15 per cent increase to award wages for aged-care workers.

At National Cabinet, we called for funding to strengthen Medicare to improve access to our GPs, and this budget has now delivered \$5.7 billion, including: a tripling in incentives for bulk-billing, with \$3.5 billion to help GPs provide free consultations to 11.6 million eligible Australians; and support for GPs to stay open longer and integrate services with nurses and allied health professionals—something we have been asking the federal government in the past to do and the LNP federal government refused to listen.

I have been leading the national discussion on vaping and welcome the \$737 million commitment in the budget towards initiatives to stop vaping and to establish a national lung cancer screening program. As I said yesterday, it is important that reform of NDIS does not impact on Queenslanders with the highest needs. It is welcome that \$732.9 million has been committed to lift the capability of the National Disability Insurance Agency. It is also great to see the commitment to another 300,000 free TAFE places—a policy our government started at the last election—and 4,000 new university places for STEM.

There are plenty of wins for Queensland in this budget: a \$2 billion Hydrogen Headstart program to make Australia a world leader, support we have been calling for with Queensland leading the nation with our hydrogen strategy; \$3.4 billion to support venues for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games that all of Queensland will partake in; \$230 million for two major construction projects in Cairns, including another \$30 million for the Cairns Marine Precinct and a new Central Queensland University campus; a commitment to future funding for the Borumba pumped hydro energy storage, which is so important for the future of our state—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There is so much good news, and it continues: a \$1.9 billion Powering the Regions Fund to assist regional industries and manufacturers to achieve net zero emissions—isn't it great to have a federal Labor government that actually recognises that climate change is real and is prepared to do something about it; \$236 million to improve flood warning infrastructure across the country with the Bureau of Meteorology; and \$40 million to support strata title properties in North Queensland to undertake disaster mitigation works.

While there is plenty of welcome, I am disappointed that the budget does not have funding for CopperString 2032 which will open up the nation's largest renewable energy zone and \$500 billion in critical minerals.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!


Ms PALASZCZUK: That is all right. We are putting money in. The budget papers—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Members, I have been calling the House to order. I would like to get to question time without placing anybody on a warning. I acknowledge that the Premier has made some provocative statements, but at the current time she is delivering a factual-based ministerial statement and I would ask that it be heard in silence.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The budget papers set out that over six years a net 170,300 people are moving from interstate to Queensland. Most of these people are coming from New South Wales, with a net 167,600 leaving. That means we need federal transport infrastructure to keep flowing in

Queensland. That is why we will fight for Queensland to receive funding to ensure key projects continue under the federal infrastructure review. We will always put Queenslanders first and fight for our fair share.

Far North Queensland, Cost of Living

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (5.34 pm): I know that Queensland families are struggling. Our government understands Queenslanders are having to make sacrifices they may not have imagined after they have been hit by an unprecedented 11 interest rate hikes in a row. I am acutely aware as I move around the state that more and more Queenslanders are approaching me to share the fact that they are facing grave cost-of-living pressures. We understand that those pressures are being more acutely felt by those Queenslanders who live in remote and regional communities.

Last year we provided a \$175 cost-of-living rebate to all Queenslanders through their electricity bills. In our state budget next month, we will provide a further larger rebate in excess of the \$175 to help families with rising electricity prices—because we own our assets, and on this side we will keep our assets in public hands. This will build on the total of \$575 in energy bill relief our government has provided since 2018, made possible only because our government has kept our energy assets in state ownership. More is coming. Together with the Commonwealth government we are finalising an energy support package to provide tailored support to vulnerable households and small businesses in the next financial year.


Our government knows that paying the rent or a mortgage makes up a large proportion of a typical household budget. Here in Cairns we have a portfolio of more than 3,650 social housing rental properties to support the needs of this community, and we are investing \$100 million over four years to build 255 new social homes in the Far North, including 23 new social homes in First Nations communities. Our government has also committed \$16.7 million to fund specialist homelessness services in Cairns, including more than \$2.5 million in immediate housing response.

I would like to also highlight the tangible, realistic solutions for Queenslanders feeling pressures in remote and regional areas of our state, including the Torres Strait Islands, Cape York, the gulf and Northern Peninsula Area. We convened the Cost of Living Summit on Thursday Island in March to listen to and discuss the specific issues facing the community and to generate initiatives that will help navigate these challenges. As I said earlier, that was the result of our previous cabinet meeting. Today I can table the *Torres Strait Island and Northern Peninsula Area cost of living summit: outcomes report*.

Tabled paper: Queensland government document, undated, titled '2023 Torres Strait Islands and Northern Peninsula Area Cost of Living Summit outcome report' [\[617\]](#).

We heard from community members on key issues of marine and transport infrastructure, freight services, energy, housing and food security. We will provide: \$80 million in joint federal and state funding to improve marine infrastructure, such as jetties and boat and barge ramps; a \$64 million package to support freight services; and \$10 million towards an energy and bills savings package. We will also consult with local communities to create positive, lasting and systemic change for food security in the region. These initiatives will provide practical, community-driven, local solutions and they are the result of the authentic engagement with government, community members, local businesses and industry stakeholders. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who participated in the summit.

Far North Queensland, Health Services

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (5.38 pm): Our government is investing in health infrastructure for Cairns and Far North Queensland. In this region we have invested a record budget of \$1.5 billion, and in Cairns alone we have more than \$350 million in health infrastructure projects underway right now. This morning I joined the Treasurer, the health minister and the member for Cairns to announce that Hansen Yuncken has been awarded the tender for the \$250 million Cairns Hospital expansion.

The Cairns Hospital expansion will deliver around 96 additional beds and a new state-of-the-art surgical centre. It includes a major refurbishment to the hospital. The refurbishment will provide additional beds and will ensure a modern, fit-for-purpose space to care for acute surgical and medical patients. We are investing in other health facilities in the Far North. In March this year—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr Healy interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Kawana and member for Cairns!

Ms PALASZCZUK: In March this year—


Mr Mickelberg interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: In March this year, our government delivered a 45-bed subacute expansion for the Cairns Hospital. This facility provides for both rehabilitation and care of people living with dementia. Also underway is a new \$70 million mental health unit. This will add five extra beds to the existing 45 beds. Plans are also underway for a new youth alcohol and other drug treatment service in Cairns. This will include 10 beds for residential rehabilitation and a suite for non-residential treatment. The capital planning and design phase is underway and construction will commence later this year.

We are progressing plans for the Cairns University Hospital. A university hospital will position Cairns as a future global leader in tropical health care and research. Further north, the Atherton Hospital redevelopment will open its doors next month, which is great news for the local community. This \$86 million project now means the hospital has a new maternity ward, emergency department and helipad. Our government will always invest in health care for Queenslanders no matter where they live.


Health Workforce

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (5.40 pm): Since 2015, in Far North Queensland we have hired 271 more doctors, 798 more nurses and midwives, 65 more ambulance officers and 181 more allied health professionals. Since 2015, across Queensland we have hired over 17,000 extra frontline workers. We have committed to boosting frontline health services through hiring 9,475 more health workers over this term of government, including 1,500 doctors and 5,800 nurses and midwives.

Today I can announce that we will invest \$21 million to attract frontline health workers. We want to attract medical practitioners, oral health specialists, nurses, midwives, allied health workers, scientific officers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.

Interstate and international workers who move to Queensland will receive a payment of \$10,000 and a further \$10,000 after 12 months of continuous service. For the next two years, registered medical practitioners who move to rural and remote locations will receive a \$25,000 payment after three months of service and an additional \$25,000 after 12 months. This is about attracting people to rural and remote areas of our state. This is all part of our government's commitment to delivering more frontline health workers right across Queensland.


2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (5.41 pm): This morning the sports minister and I attended a community breakfast on the Esplanade to talk about how the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games will benefit our state and our regions like Cairns and the Far North. It was great to see the member for Mermaid Beach there as well. For example, Barlow Park is set to undergo a multimillion dollar upgrade. Thirty students from the Cairns region have already made it through to phase 2 of the Youfor2032, our biggest talent recruitment drive for future Olympians and Paralympians. The region will be able to attract major sports and entertainment events and pre-games training and, importantly, it will deliver a big boost to tourism, trade and business.

Last year I also announced our \$100 million Go for Gold Fund. This is set to give students from the Torres Strait to the Tweed an equal opportunity to realise their dreams of becoming our future Olympic and Paralympic champions. The fund gives all schools the opportunity to buy sports equipment and build new sports infrastructure. Today I can announce that 680 schools will benefit from round 1 of the Go for Gold Fund with schools receiving up to \$5,000 worth of sporting equipment. Of those schools, more than half are located in regional Queensland. Across Far North Queensland, there are 73 successful schools, and in Cairns there are 28 schools receiving \$250,000 in grants for those things like balls, gym equipment, netball goals, high jump mats and soccer nets, including Cairns State High School, Edge Hill and Parramatta state schools et cetera.

I am also pleased to announce today that applications for round 2 of the Go for Gold Fund will open this week. This major \$96 million round will give schools an opportunity to enhance existing facilities or build new school sports infrastructure with grants up to \$5 million available. This is great news for Queensland. Applications close in late June.

Cairns Marine Precinct


 **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) (5.43 pm): The gateway to Queensland's Tropical North is also a premiere destination for the repair, maintenance and overhaul of naval, Border Force, commercial and superyacht vessels. At the heart of this local industry is the Cairns Marine Precinct, Northern Australia's home of maritime maintenance. Together with the Albanese government, we are delivering a significant upgrade to the Cairns Marine Precinct. Expanding the Cairns Marine Precinct by building a common-user facility will ensure Cairns' future as a world leader in maritime maintenance and overhaul. It will allow local service providers to pursue additional maintenance work from the Royal Australian Navy and Australian Border Force, as well as from the private sector. We have a significant opportunity, particularly in the lead-up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games to leverage the growth in the tourism vessel sector. Last night's federal budget cemented the Albanese government's commitment to the common-user facility and included an additional \$30 million, bringing our joint investment to \$330 million.

That is not all. We want to ensure local industry can meet growing demand for vessel maintenance work while this game-changing facility is being constructed. Yesterday the Premier announced our government is investing a further \$39 million to boost infrastructure at the marine precinct. We will invest \$27 million over two years to a road upgrade and bridge that will give local shipyards direct access to the precinct's common-user facility. The 1.2-kilometre road will have increased load capacity as well as a 30-metre bridge. We are committed to ensuring the common-user facility is viable and supports the local maritime industry to grow. That is why our commitment includes an additional \$12 million to work with local shipyards within the Cairns Marine Precinct on upgrade projects that will help to strengthen their businesses. Investment in enabling infrastructure and upgrades will help ensure local shipyards can capitalise on emerging maintenance work from the Royal Australian Navy, Border Force and the private sector.

Our commitment to the Cairns Marine Precinct will strengthen the Cairns marine sector and the 4,600 jobs it supports, ensuring economic benefits flow to the community, delivering good, secure, highly skilled jobs for locals. This is an investment in a strong economic future for Far North Queensland. We are on board to see Cairns continue to ride a wave of success as a global leader in maritime maintenance.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before I call the next speaker, I would like to acknowledge the former member and minister, Warren Pitt, who is in the gallery tonight. Welcome.

Federal Budget

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (5.46 pm): Last night's federal budget was a strong demonstration of the targeted, responsive, fiscally disciplined economic strategy that only Labor governments deliver. The second budget of the Albanese Labor government was focused on addressing cost-of-living pressures facing Queensland households, just as the state Labor budget will next month. Just like our state Labor budget, the federal budget delivered that cost-of-living relief in a way that will not add to existing inflationary pressures.

The joint Commonwealth-Queensland funded electricity bill relief of \$500 for eligible households and \$650 for small businesses will reduce inflationary pressure because of its effect on the consumer price index. I might remind the House that that \$3 billion national package to reduce power prices for all Australians, including Queenslanders, was voted against by the federal coalition. Although more than 1.1 million Queensland households will benefit from bill relief, not all Queensland households will qualify for that targeted relief.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Treasurer, I am sorry to interrupt. Leader of the Opposition, as was discussed yesterday, in that position, with the configuration of the House, we would appreciate you maintaining silence while the ministerial statements are occurring.

Mr DICK: As a consequence, our government is considering what further electricity bill relief measures can be delivered through our budget next month.

The federal budget also takes action to address the challenge of housing affordability facing Australians. Our government was pleased to see the federal government further incentivise the build-to-rent industry by halving the managed investment withholding tax from 30 per cent to 15 per

cent for build-to-rent projects. This complements the build-to-rent tax incentives I announced last month, comprising a 50 per cent discount on land tax, full exemption of foreign investor land tax surcharge, and exemption on additional foreign acquirer duty for eligible projects. The 15 per cent increase to Commonwealth Rent Assistance is the largest increase in more than three decades.

What a contrast it is to the approach of the previous Morrison LNP government when just last year Scott Morrison said, 'The best way to support people renting a house is to help them buy a house.' Need a house? Buy a house. That is what Scott Morrison said. Need to rent? Buy a house. That is what he told Australians facing affordability challenges.

An amount of \$1.9 billion will help support single parents, and the federal budget also makes provision for a \$40 per fortnight increase to JobSeeker, Austudy and Youth Allowance payments. These are measures that assist the most vulnerable Queenslanders but do so in a way that does not risk increasing the inflationary burden on all Queenslanders. An investment of \$3½ billion, making it easier to visit your local GP, goes to the heart of the biggest issue facing healthcare systems across Australia, the dysfunction in primary health care. This additional funding will reduce pressure on our emergency departments in our state's public hospitals and will have a positive flow-on effect right across our nation's health system.

As we have done earlier this week, the federal government recognises the importance of the maritime industry in the Far North with an additional commitment of \$30 million for the Cairns Marine Precinct. The Albanese Labor government is on board for the Borumba pumped hydro project, and the \$2 billion Hydrogen Headstart initiative will help deliver a new renewable energy export industry that will help decarbonise our global trading partners.

There are still some questions to be answered about future funding of vital infrastructure for Queensland. We need to see the outcome of the federal government's 90-day review of projects across the nation to understand what it means for our state. We will continue to press for a federal contribution to the \$5 billion CopperString 2032 transmission line given its vital role to the entire nation in expanding our critical minerals sector and untapping the renewable energy potential of the north, the project that our government's progressive coal royalties is helping to fund.

At its heart, this is a budget that delivers for our most vulnerable and for Queensland while ensuring additional commitments that do not increase the pressure in households. In short, it is a budget for Queensland battlers and a budget that will deliver on Queensland's future.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs, the acoustics are very different here, but I can still clearly hear 'Emu Swamp Dam'. I would ask that you refrain and we will continue the ministerial statements in respectful silence.

Cairns Hospital; Rural and Remote Queensland, Health Workforce




Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (5.52 pm): Today I was delighted to join the Premier, the Treasurer and the member for Cairns to make two very significant health announcements. We were able to let locals know that we are delivering the next phase of our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan here in Cairns. We confirmed the award of the tender for the \$250 million Cairns Hospital expansion to Hansen Yuncken, a local company. This project will support 610 jobs during the construction and has an expected completion date of the first half of 2026. The expansion will deliver 96 new beds, 64 subacute beds to improve patient flow and 32 beds as part of a brand new surgical centre, which will further enhance the capacity of Cairns residents to access planned care.

Of course, more beds require more staff, which is why our Workforce Attraction Incentive Transfer Scheme is such a game changer. It provides a compelling reason for interstate or international healthcare workers to choose to live and work in Queensland. Any interstate or international healthcare worker who takes up a job in our public health system will receive \$10,000 upon commencing the role and \$10,000 after 12 months of service. In addition, we are making a further offer to our doctors to attract them to work in our rural and remote locations. We know that attracting our medical workforce to the rural and remote Queensland areas has been a challenge, but we also know that when our health professionals do make the decision to move to our beautiful rural and remote areas they never look back.

With the erosion of primary care over the last decade it is vital that we do all we can to ensure Queenslanders can access the right care at the right place at the right time. That is why we are offering an additional \$50,000 to doctors who make the decision to move to rural and remote communities. Any doctor who moves to a Modified Monash 4 to 7 location will receive \$25,000 after three months and

\$25,000 after 12 months of service. That means that doctors will have additional incentives to live and work in locations like the Torres Strait, Mareeba, Atherton, Blackall, Roma or Mount Isa. This offering builds on the strong offers we put to our Queensland Health workers through our enterprise bargaining agreements including nation-leading wage rises that have not been matched by any other government in Australia. The Palaszczuk government is proud of our record of employing more than 17,000 more frontline health workers and we know that this new policy offer will help us employ even more.

Go for Gold Fund

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (5.54 pm): I had the absolute pleasure of meeting former Olympian Carmel Bakurski this morning at the community breakfast on the beautiful Cairns Esplanade. Carmel was a member of the famous Hockeyroos team which competed at the Athens Olympic Games in 2004 and is now a teacher at the Cairns School of Distance Education. It was great to chat about her feats as an Olympian and, of course, her important role now teaching our distance education students.

I say how fitting it was because today it was fantastic to launch round 2 of our \$100 million Go for Gold Fund at Parramatta State School here in Cairns with hopefully some future Olympians. As we know, round 1 which provided funding for sports equipment is now closed with 680 successful schools, state and non-state schools, city and country schools, regional and remote schools. I know how much Parramatta State School is looking forward to receiving \$5,000 for new netball posts for their netball academy. It was great to watch a game this morning and also to shoot a few goals.

In terms of round 1, I can advise that over 70 schools in Cairns and the Far North Queensland region will receive over \$280,000 for new sports equipment.

An honourable member interjected.


Ms GRACE: It took me three tries to get one goal. As well as Parramatta State School, there is Miallo State School in Cook, \$1,000 for soccer and basketball equipment; Woree State High School in Mulgrave, \$5,000 for new gym equipment; and Redlynch State College in Barron River, \$3,000 for volleyball posts.

With the 2032 Olympic Games around nine years away, who knows where the next Ian Thorpe or Cathy Freeman may be. Round 2 is now open with \$93 million up for grabs, offering grants of up to \$5 million for new or upgraded school sports infrastructure projects. They can include multipurpose courts—I know I built many of those—synthetic pitches to facilitate athletics and field sports, refurbishment of outdoor court services, and oval upgrades. It is a Queensland-wide initiative and I am especially keen to see applications from our regional and remote schools so we can spread the funding as far and as widely as we can. This is a really exciting program that will make such a difference to so many students and local communities across Queensland.

I cannot wait for the applications to roll in and the sporting infrastructure to be delivered in our schools to support the Queensland medallists in 2032.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I saw many members across the chamber testing their speed on the laser sprinting machine. I do not think there are going to be many Cathy Freemans coming out of the Queensland parliament, but good on everyone for having a go.

Seniors

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (5.57 pm): I figured I would run to the box, Mr Acting Speaker, because I was ready to go. Today in Queensland almost 900,000 people are aged 65 years or older. By 2050 seniors are expected to make up nearly a quarter of the population, or 22 per cent, or 1.8 million people. The Palaszczuk government is committed to creating an age-friendly Queensland where seniors feel connected, cared for and supported. We want them to be able to live, enjoy and contribute to their communities in a way that suits them.

We acknowledge that one of the biggest challenges that faces older Queenslanders is cost-of-living pressures. The Palaszczuk government provides \$725 million for concessions and rebates that support Queensland seniors. For example, a retired couple in their 70s living in their own home with no dependants, both with a Queensland Seniors Card and on the pension will receive concessions including a \$372 electricity rebate and a \$175 cost-of-living rebate on their power bill. If they own a car, they could receive a reduction of around \$174 on the annual registration of a small four-cylinder vehicle. As ratepayers, they may be eligible for a 20 per cent state government subsidy, up to a maximum of \$200. That is more than \$900 in savings.

Last night the Albanese federal budget delivered some direct benefits that seniors may be eligible for including energy relief of up to \$500 a year, cheaper medicine, more GPs bulk-billing for pensioners and healthcare cardholders, and other benefits that support seniors. Today we held a seniors forum and a seniors community afternoon tea here at the Cairns Convention Centre as part of regional parliament. I want to thank all the seniors who made the time and effort to come along as well as the Premier, who came along with me to say hi.

As we do at all of our seniors expos across the state, we ask them to contribute to a survey that will inform our next seniors strategy. It helps us to empower them, amplify their voices and deliver what Queenslanders want as we age. Through the seniors strategy survey it has been invaluable to hear from older Queenslanders about what is important to them, their experiences and their aspirations. Since April 2021 about 4,200 people have completed the survey in person or online, and tonight I can reveal the latest findings from the survey.

It shows that Queensland seniors rate health care, cost of living, independence, mobility and staying in their own home as what matters most to people aged over 65. Eighty-one per cent said they could get out and about easily using their own vehicle or affordable user-friendly transport. Sixty-seven per cent felt confident accessing information they needed to stay informed and connected with their community, family and friends.

While there is much to celebrate in the survey findings, older Queenslanders also shared their concerns, with 72 per cent of respondents referring to health care as a top priority. Other concerns were the cost of living, at 68 per cent; maintaining independence and mobility, at 55 per cent; and staying in their own home, at 54 per cent. The survey results confirm how much the increasing cost of living continues to weigh on older Queenslanders. That is why the Palaszczuk government continues to support Queensland seniors.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Question time will conclude today at 7.01 pm.

Police Resources



Mr CRISAFULLI (6.01 pm): My question is to the Premier. In 2020 the Premier made the commitment of an extra 1,450 police personnel. The police minister says that commitment was not for actual police personnel, just the money to fund them. Was the Premier's commitment to provide actual police personnel, or just the funding?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As the minister outlined yesterday, we are committed to recruiting more police. We give police the resources that they need to do their job. As the minister outlined, we have launched a campaign, with \$90 million of incentives, to attract more police to our state—unlike those opposite, who in government cut senior officers. I find it ironic that they come in here and talk about police numbers when they sacked. Not only that, the commitment they made at the last election was less than what we have promised. Members opposite should go and ask the police.

The Police Commissioner has confirmed that the QPS is on track to recruit an additional 1,450 police officers over and above attrition. The commissioner recently said, 'Certainly into the future I am confident we will meet these figures. The government allocates the positions so they are there. It is up to us as an organisation to fill them.'

Teachers

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. Following the police minister's revelations that promises only mean funding for positions, not actual people in positions, can the Premier confirm if the government's election promise of 6,190 extra teachers is just for the funding, or for the actual teachers?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I find it absolutely hypocritical that members opposite have the hide to talk about frontline services in this state.

Mr Crisafulli: There it is—eight years.

Ms PALASZCZUK: There it is. The member for Broadwater—well, he was the member for Mundingburra—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The House will come to order.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He did not like Townsville. He did not like regional Queensland.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Premier, I have paused the clock. I would ask you to resume your seat. Leader of the Opposition, your comments will be directed via the chair. I am finding that behaviour to be disruptive. I ask you to cease.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Those opposite seem to forget that in the very first budget they handed down when they came to office they axed 14,000 public servants—14,000. We had to build back the front line so that we had more nurses, more doctors, more paramedics and more teachers. Those opposite wanted to close schools; we have built schools. That is happening in their electorates as well. We had school students here today telling us about the great halls that the Minister for Education is building for them.

We on this side of the House value our hardworking men and women in Queensland—the ones who helped us get through the pandemic. Do members opposite remember that—when they were screaming for the borders to be reopened, meaning thousands of people would have been killed? I remember meeting with nurses who lost their jobs. I remember how those opposite decimated the regions. I remember that extremely well.

Mr POWELL: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). The question was about extra teachers and an election commitment given by the Premier.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I have been listening to the Premier's response. She has responded to that particular matter, from what I could hear, and is expanding on that. Premier, if you have anything to add you have another minute and eight seconds.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We value our teachers. We value our TAFE teachers as well. We have rebuilt TAFE. They wanted to sell off TAFE; they wanted to close TAFE. We rebuilt it.

Ms Fentiman: Free TAFE.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We put in place free TAFE to make sure the young people in our state get an opportunity. We on this side believe in good jobs and good services. We believe in the future of this state. Queenslanders do not forget. People in Cairns do not forget. There are four hardworking members of the Labor government who hold seats in the Far North because they work hard each and every day.

Mr Bleijie: You can't work on a superyacht, Premier.

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

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, you are warned under the standing orders. The Premier has taken personal offence. I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr Brown interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Capalaba, you are warned under the standing orders. I shall take some advice from the Clerk and I will take that advice in silence. I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Since 2015 we have appointed 7,105 new teachers and teacher aides across Queensland.

Health System

Ms LUI: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Will the Premier please update the House on how last night's federal Labor budget delivers for Queensland, and is she aware of any other approaches?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Cook for the question. We finally have a federal Labor government that cares about Queenslanders—that cares about health care and is prepared to put money into primary health care to ease the pressure on our emergency departments. I say very clearly that our \$9 billion infrastructure fund is set in concrete to expand hospitals right across the state. This is the largest investment we have ever made into hospitals, and we will deliver.

What we have said very clearly is that, coming out of COVID—it is not just Queensland but right across the nation—there are pressures on our emergency departments and there are pressures in our hospitals. The best way to ease those pressures is for people to see a GP. That is why bulk-billing rates have been increased—something this health minister has been calling for and something I have been calling for at National Cabinet. That means people will be able to see their GPs after hours and they will be bulk-billed more. This will benefit millions of Australians and millions of Queenslanders.

We on this side of the House understand the difficulty of getting doctors and nurses to some of the more rural and remote parts of our state, including in Far North Queensland. That is why today I was proud to stand alongside the Treasurer and the health minister to announce those added incentives. We are saying to people in other states and overseas: 'Come here. We will pay you extra to stay and deliver services in these communities.' As the member for Cairns said, once they see the beautiful parts of Queensland they will want to stay, because Queensland is the best place to live and the best place to raise a family.

We on this side of the House recognise how important health care is. For years under LNP governments at the national level all we heard was crickets. We did not even get a response from the federal government when it came to dealing with health. Finally we have a government that is prepared to listen, that is prepared to deliver and that understands that families need good access to health care. I will continue to work with the federal Labor government, led by Anthony Albanese.

Social Housing

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Premier. Now that the police minister has admitted that government promises only mean funding for promises, not actually delivering on them, will the Premier clarify whether the Palaszczuk government's commitment to deliver 5,600 social houses through the Housing Investment Fund is to actually build them or only fund them?

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. That question clearly had imputations and inferences in it in seeking to verbal the police minister. I ask that it be ruled out of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I have taken advice regarding the question. Member for Everton, can you please verify the facts that you stated in that question are correct?

Mr MANDER: I can.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I will allow the question and I will allow the Premier some latitude.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is very ironic that the member for Everton wants to talk about housing. His is the party that when in government wanted people in social housing to share with strangers and that was prepared to sell off the social housing stock. That is how much they cared about housing for Queenslanders.

Mr Mander interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: We on this side of the House recognise that there are housing pressures. I might need to correct the record. I said that we have helped over 119,000 people. I can confirm that it is now 199,000. We recognise that there is nothing more important to a family than to have a roof over their head. We do not treat people like second-class citizens, like those opposite did. A Labor government cares about people. I care about this state. I care about delivering housing. I care about delivering frontline services. I am not like the member for Clayfield, who delivered the worst budget this state has ever seen, with cuts of 14,000 and cuts to community organisations. It decimated rural and regional areas.

We have a clear vision for this state. It is a vision of creativity, of making sure our young people have opportunities and making sure we build more housing across our state. That is why we have set up our own construction arm company at QBuild—we are going to have one in Cairns—to build the accommodation that is needed for our frontline service workers. Minister de Brenni has led that through the department of public works. Well done, Minister. What does that mean? It means jobs. Just today I met an apprentice who works at QBuild. Where those opposite decimated QBuild, we have rebuilt QBuild and it will continue to grow in this state.

We will not be lectured to by those opposite. Those opposite should call their federal leader and get their colleagues in Canberra to pass legislation for extra housing. Those opposite do not care about housing.

(Time expired)

Tropical North Queensland

Mr HEALY: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Will the Premier please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is delivering for Tropical North Queensland, and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Cairns for the question. What a hardworking member he is. If you walk down the street with him you realise that he knows everybody. His energy and enthusiasm are unbelievable. As he comes from the tourism industry and is the assistant minister for tourism, he understands tourism and its potential in this region.

When we first came to office, in 2015, the unemployment rate in Cairns was 7.9 per cent. Now it is 4.2 per cent. We have created thousands of jobs in this region, halving the rate of youth unemployment. Those opposite cut Skilling Queenslanders for Work. The member for Clayfield did not believe in that. That went in his first budget. The member for Surfers Paradise also wanted to get rid of schools.

There is money going into transport, with the Smithfield Bypass. There is the \$481 million Bruce Highway upgrade between Edmonton and Gordonvale. We have seen \$127 million on the inlet widening so that the cruise ships can come in. We have more flights coming in to Cairns. Today I am pleased to announce that the member for Cairns will lead a delegation from Far North Queensland to Hong Kong to get even more flights to this region. That is what local members do: they back the industry. They know the jobs it can bring into this state. I back this member to get those flights for this region. He is passionate and he is committed.

There are then our exports from our agricultural and seafood industries right across the tropical Far North adding to our fantastic export bill. I mentioned in the House the other day that it was \$130 billion. A lot of that is coming from the tropical Far North and it is going in the underbelly of those planes to Asia and hopefully soon, in the not-too-distant future, to the Middle East as well. What did those on the other side do for the far north of this state? They cut 430 local frontline jobs.

An opposition member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is relevant. Those opposite want to come in here and talk about jobs. We are adding to the number of jobs and they took away jobs. That is the truth. That is the reality of it. The locals up there in the gallery do not forget. The public do not forget.

(Time expired)

Inland Freight Route

Mr MINNIKIN: My question is to the Premier. The \$1 billion inland freight route was a key commitment prior to the last election. With just \$4 million of the \$1 billion budget to be spent by the end of the financial year, can the Premier advise why the government's 2022 election commitment update showed this project as completed, or are motorists expected to drive on funded bitumen rather than actual bitumen?

Mr Skelton interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nicklin, you are warned under the standing orders. I will just take some advice from the Clerk. Member for Chatsworth, I ask you to reword that question, removing the last argumentative part of the question.

Mr MINNIKIN: My question is to the Premier. With just \$4 million of the \$1 billion budget to be spent by the end of the financial year, can the Premier advise why the government's 2022 election commitment update showed this project as completed and explain when the project will be fully completed as per the budget?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The inland freight route is a 10-year project. It is something that we—

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It will be done and it will reduce long-distance truck movements on the Bruce Highway by up to 49 per cent.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. The Premier has only just started responding. I thought if the member had asked the question you would want to hear the response.

Ms PALASZCZUK: So rude.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I will warn the member for Scenic Rim. There were many offenders, but I spotted you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The Queensland Trucking Association has called for this as well. The RACQ has called for it. As I said, it is a 10-year project if you want to have a look. It is not like the Bruce Highway hoax. Remember the member for Nanango going up the Bruce Highway? That was a rolled-gold announcement, wasn't it?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Premier, you will put your comments through the chair please.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That rolled-gold proposal turned out to be a hoax. It turned out to be an absolute hoax. The time the costings came down, I think it was—

Mr Dick: \$20 million.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—\$20 million—that is right—all the way up to Cairns. We know that the member for Chatsworth has said on occasion that he has already identified a couple of billions dollars worth of savings.

Government members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. He said we know already that we could prune things back. What does that mean, members? It means cuts. It means infrastructure cuts. That is what it means. It means infrastructure cuts. We are not going to be lectured to by those opposite.

Far North Queensland, Infrastructure

Mr WALKER: 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 working with the Albanese government to deliver infrastructure for Far North Queensland and is he aware of any other approaches?

Mr Head interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before I call the Deputy Premier, member for Callide, the Speaker has given guidance on many occasions about questions being heard in silence and not using the intervening space to interject. You are warned under the standing orders.

Dr MILES: I thank the member for his question. He knows that when we deliver economic development in one part of the state it has benefits throughout the state, so when we deliver economic development here in the state's Far North there are flow-on benefits to businesses and workers in the state's north in Townsville and indeed right around the state. The Palaszczuk government is delivering that economic development. We are creating the jobs of the future and training young people in places like Cairns to take those jobs.

It is an incredible relief to have an Australian government willing to work with us on that task. The Albanese government's commitment of an additional \$30 million to the Cairns Marine Precinct, bringing our total funded commitment to \$330 million, will allow us to create jobs in Cairns, the Far North and right across the state. It will allow Cairns to leverage its position, its existing fleet, its workforce and its strategic location in the Pacific to further diversify its economy and to create jobs across a diverse range of industries—good, secure jobs, jobs that will continue through the inevitable ebbs and flows of international tourism. Some 4,600 jobs will be supported in that maritime supply chain—local manufacturing jobs, allowing local businesses to tender for work with the Royal Australian Navy, Border Force and the private commercial vehicle fleet.

This is the kind of vision Labor governments deliver and it is the kind of vision the LNP can never have. Let us remember what the LNP member Warren Entsch said when federal Labor funded the Cairns Marine Precinct. He said that he absolutely supports it but will not commit one dollar to it—supports it but will not commit a single dollar to it. The Palaszczuk government and the Albanese government support it and we support it with the dollars it will take to build it, \$330 million—a lot more than not one dollar that the LNP committed to it—because jobs in Cairns and a diversified economy for Cairns are worth every one of those cents, every one of those \$330 million.

Far North Queensland, Youth Crime

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Premier. After the police minister's comments on police personnel promises and with the Queensland government workforce data showing there are fewer frontline police now than two years ago, how can the residents of Cairns and the Far North have confidence in a single promise this government makes to deal with the youth crime crisis gripping this region?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Kawana for the question. The member for Kawana sat around the cabinet table and sacked police. Those opposite sacked 110 senior police officers. That is what happened. We are building our Police Service. We are recruiting more police officers. It is not an issue that is uncommon to other parts of the country. Western Australia is overseas trying to recruit extra police officers. It is not uncommon. The Police Commissioner has told the police minister and myself—

Mr McDonald interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You are so rude!

Ms Camm interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Lockyer! Member for Whitsunday, order!

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is so disappointing that I am trying to answer the question and I am constantly interrupted.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, Premier. I will maintain the decorum of the House.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As we know, we have put in place stronger laws tackling the issue of crime. They are laws that were put forward by the government and laws that the LNP voted on. We understand that there are issues in communities and we are throwing everything at this. We are determined to get results for the people of this state. That is why over \$1.2 billion has been invested in this area, including \$500 million in early intervention and prevention.

Ms Bates interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is working, member for Mudgeeraba. It is working. I am actually out there talking to people who are on the streets late at night helping to break that cycle of youth crime. There are many good men and women who are doing great work out there who want those young people out of a life of crime and want them to be in jobs. What did those opposite do with youth justice? They cut the funding for a start; they cut the courts. They talk about unshackling the courts—they abolished the courts. That was the member for Kawana's contribution to youth justice.

(Time expired)

North Queensland, Coal Royalties

Mrs GILBERT: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on what Queensland's progressive coal royalties are delivering for North Queensland and is the Treasurer aware of alternative approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Mackay for her question. She is a great champion of mining in Queensland. I am pleased to inform the House that among the world's major producers of metallurgical coal, the most attractive place in the world to invest is Queensland. The Fraser Institute's Annual Survey of Mining Companies ranked Queensland highest for investment attractiveness among the major producers of steel-making coal, the coal we need for electric vehicles, for wind turbine towers, for railways, bridges and buildings. Among all mining jurisdictions around the world, for all minerals Queensland was ranked 13th overall, a rise of five places on a year ago.

To be clear to members of the LNP—in fact, everyone in the snake pit tonight—it is now more attractive to invest in Queensland mining after the introduction of progressive coal royalties than it was before them. We have heard a lot from the mining lobby about progressive coal royalties making the state less attractive for investment. We have heard a lot from the mining lobby about our progressive coal royalties being higher than New South Wales. Members will be pleased to know that according to mining companies Queensland is a better place to invest than New South Wales who finished 10 places behind us in global rankings, and that was under a New South Wales coalition government—another State of Origin win for the maroons!

The absolute mistruth of the LNP's campaign against our progressive coal royalties has been revealed in full because everyone in the parliament knows it is the people of Queensland who own the minerals extracted from beneath the Queensland soil. Those resources belong to one group and one group alone, and that is the people of Queensland, and they deserve the royalties that come from those minerals, including coal. We know that the Leader of the Opposition opposes progressive coal royalties. What is a necessary consequence of that—a cut of \$250 million to the Cairns Hospital; 141 beds that will go; \$70,000 for doctors to relocate to regions like Cairns cut; \$20,000 for health workers to move to regions like Cairns cut. Why does the Leader of the Opposition want to cut progressive coal royalties? Why does he want to deny jobs and services, infrastructure and health care and all of those things that

the people of Cairns and the Far North deserve? Because the Leader of the Opposition is in the pocket of the mining lobby. He is in the pocket of the mining lobby and he is not on the side of the people of Cairns, the Far North; he is not on the side of the people of Queensland.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before I call the next speaker, Leader of the Opposition, as discussed yesterday by the Speaker, the position that you hold there, due to the configuration of this chamber, puts you very directly in the line of sight for interjections so I would ask that you moderate your behaviour in terms of interjections. I know it is difficult when there are situations where there is provocation, but I would ask you to do that.

Maternity Services

Ms BATES: My question is to the Premier. I refer to Gabriella's harrowing story of having to transport her dead baby home from Rockhampton in a Spotlight box because of the Gladstone maternity bypass. It is now 306 days—

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Minister for Health, the question will be heard in silence. Member for Mudgeeraba, you can restart the question.

Ms BATES: I refer to Gabriella's harrowing story of having to transport her dead baby home from Rockhampton in a Spotlight box because of the Gladstone maternity bypass. It is now 306 days since the bypass began. Why did the Premier not attend the community organised meeting last week?

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member has to authenticate what she stated. I have already clarified in the media, publicly they are aware, that the statement the member has just made is completely incorrect. She needs to authenticate it or have it ruled out of order.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Mudgeeraba, it is difficult for me to deal with points of order while you are interjecting. I will take some advice from the Clerk. Member for Mudgeeraba, the statements you are making are quite serious. Can you authenticate that they are correct, bearing in mind, before you respond, that any member has the capacity to pursue issues of misleading the House via other mechanisms?

Ms BATES: Mr Acting Speaker, I was there and heard the mother say that about the Spotlight box.

A government member interjected.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member, resume your seat. I consider it highly disorderly to utilise the dispatch box in that manner. I will take some advice.

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

Acting Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before I hear your point of order, member for Glass House, I will rule that question out of order because the member has not authenticated the entire question and I am going to warn the member for Mudgeeraba for utilising the dispatch box to interject in the way that she did.

Mr POWELL: The shadow minister for health, the member for Mudgeeraba, was responding to a direct provocation by the Minister for Health and happened to be standing by the dispatch box at that time.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member, you can resume your seat. I have given a ruling in relation to that.

Education

Mr SMITH: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister please update the House on how the measures in the 2023-24 federal budget complement the work that the Palaszczuk government is doing to support Queensland workers, Queensland students, Queensland teachers and Queensland families, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Bundaberg. I know that as a former teacher he cares deeply about the educational outcomes and wellbeing of our students and the support we provide to our teachers so that they can deliver a world-class education. This morning we met many of them with the member and the Premier. They are teaching our children. An orchestra from Cairns State High School played and it was absolutely unbelievable. That is because of the world-class music program that we provide in our schools right throughout Queensland.

I will say one thing to the member for Bundaberg, and he knows this very well: we will not be lectured to by those opposite on teacher numbers in our schools. There were times when we needed 500 additional teachers. Do members know how many they employed? None! Zero! Absolutely none! Here we are and we have teachers in our classrooms. We can talk about the number of teachers in our classrooms when they were in office. We can also talk about cuts to the number of nurses in our hospitals, which they started in Townsville at a time when the Leader of the Opposition was the local member. There was not a public servant in Townsville, Cairns and throughout the Far North whom those opposite did not want to sack. They all came to us in relation to that.

What am I looking at here today? The Leader of the Opposition has been doing exactly what Campbell Newman said he has been doing: absolutely nothing! Do members know what he is doing over there? There is a little bit of arrogance coming in and you can feel it. The member for Kawana comes up and does a bit of play acting and puts on a bit of a show. We hear the Leader of the Opposition at the dispatch box. Do members know what he is doing? He is talking to himself because he cannot put up any policies or alternatives—not one.

When they were in government they did not employ teachers. Do members know what happened? Teacher-to-student ratios went up. Do members know what happened when we came to office? Those ratios went down and are now the best in the nation. We have air-conditioned every single school in Queensland, six years ahead of any alternative approach. School students would have retired by the time they finished air-conditioning classrooms and yet they have the audacity to come in here and ask whether we have funded positions or allocated them.

Can members imagine them running a budget or a business? They would say, 'We might employ more staff.' 'Can we afford it?' 'Nah. Don't worry about that! There's no funding in the budget but employ them anyway.' They are all crazy. They do not know what they are doing. There are no policies. They are not fit for government.

(Time expired)

Federal Budget, Water Security

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question is to the Premier. Federal Labor has completely abandoned Queensland's water security projects. Emu Swamp, Urannah and Hells Gates dams and the Northern Queensland Water Infrastructure Authority have been cut and the Hughenden irrigation scheme is on life support. Given that federal Labor cuts have put Queensland water security at risk, has the Premier picked up the phone to the Prime Minister to express her disgust?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I want to pick up the phone and thank Anthony Albanese, the Prime Minister of our country, for what he has delivered for Queensland. He understands health, he understands housing and he understands cost of living. He is a person who is in touch. He is a person who is prepared to work with us. The member seems to forget the money we are putting into Paradise Dam. This government has put over \$1 billion into water infrastructure, as opposed to those opposite who talked the talk but nothing much happened.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Please resume your seat, Premier. Member for Southern Downs, we came so close but you are warned.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We want Warwick to have water security and we are happy to fund that. I find it absolutely ironic that the member would come in here and talk about water infrastructure when there were hardly any commitments from the former federal government when it comes to water infrastructure. They go out and talk the big game.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Here we go. Here is the problem: the National Party is so absorbed with the Liberal Party that they do not know what they are doing any more. That is why the Katter's Australian Party is coming in and taking over the National Party. I would not be surprised if they have even more members after the next election. They will take members from the LNP because the Nationals have been completely absorbed by the Liberals. That is what has happened.

The member for Broadwater sits across the chamber talking about Campbell Newman. I am sorry, member for Broadwater: Campbell Newman keeps talking to the media. He was on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*, attacking everybody about what those opposite did when Campbell Newman was the premier. We would absolutely welcome him to say more because we know—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the Opposition!

Ms PALASZCZUK: We know that the Leader of the Opposition likes slogans but there is no action and there are no policies.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You are so childish.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Through the chair, Premier and Leader of the Opposition. Comments will come through the chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We will continue to deliver for this region because we value the people of this great state.

(Time expired)

Federal Budget, Health System

Mr O'ROURKE: My question is of the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. Can the minister advise the House how the federal government's budget impacts the delivery of health care in Queensland and advise of any alternative approaches?

Mrs D'ATH: I thank the member for Rockhampton for his question. I know that he is as thrilled as we are with the investment of the federal Labor government. It is a government that recognises the importance of supporting our primary healthcare system, our GPs and the Medicare system that was proudly set up by a Labor government. This was a good budget for the people of Queensland and it invests in Medicare.

Under the Turnbull-Abbott-Morrison governments there was a decade of neglect when it came to Medicare and we have seen some of the lowest bulk-billing rates in this state as a consequence. In fact, in Far North Queensland only 5.9 per cent of GPs are bulk-billing. GP accessibility and affordability is at an all-time low and we know what that means: people will not go and get the care that they need and will end up with chronic and acute health conditions requiring long stays in our hospital system. That is why we need to invest in Medicare.

We acknowledge the great investment announced in the budget last night. It triples the Medicare rebate for consultations for the most vulnerable such as families with children under the age of 16, pensioners and concession cardholders. We want to thank the government for that. It reverses a decade-long freeze on the indexation of Medicare rebates. It will provide greater access to health care for 11.6 million Australians such as parents who know the struggles of trying to get to a GP.

My concern is what those opposite have actually promised. It is what they promised, because we know that the member for Chatsworth has let the cat out of the bag.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer and the member for Toowoomba South will cease interjecting.

Mrs D'ATH: The member for Chatsworth has said, 'We know at the moment that, if you look at the budget, we have areas where we have already identified a couple of billion dollars worth of savings.' They even tweeted a cut list which has ambulance stations and health facilities on it! That is shocking. When we have committed to building a new ambulance and operations centre here in Queensland, they have ambulance stations on their hit list. We know that, if they had been elected in 2020, there would be 5,035 fewer health workers this parliamentary term alone, and they have the nerve to come in here and criticise our health response! It is only a Labor government that will look after the health system.

(Time expired)

Youth Crime

Mr DAMETTO: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Eight people have died because of the direct actions of juvenile offenders since Christmas. This week victims of crime were warned by the Premier not to take matters into their own hands because someone could get hurt. Will the Premier acknowledge that the government's laws are failing to keep Queenslanders safe and do more to protect perpetrators than victims?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. The member very well knows that it was only a couple of months ago that this House debated at length stronger laws. I gave everyone in this House the opportunity to speak. I gave everyone the opportunity to go back to their communities and to come back in and speak. Let me say very clearly: the LNP voted for these laws. They voted for these laws. All we hear—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have strong laws. We are giving the police extra resources. The police have more high-visibility patrols going out. They are targeting those Facebook users where juveniles are spreading information through those social media networks. They are drilling down and providing advice to community members across our state.

We acknowledge that there has been hurt in the community and that there have been tragedies, and there is not one Queenslanders who has not been impacted or who is not grieving with those families who have lost loved ones.

Ms Camm: Premier, have you met with families?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I do meet with families, so I find that offensive. After court proceedings at the right time, yes, I do meet with families, so I find that extremely offensive.

What we are doing—and I have said this at length—is we are putting \$500 million into early intervention and prevention programs. The best way to break that cycle of people coming into contact with the youth justice system is to get them a job and get them out of a life of crime. That is why last night I was out there with the member for Cairns, the Minister for Sport, the Minister for Police, the Police Commissioner and the assistant commissioner talking to people on the ground about the programs that they are running to try to turn these young people's lives around to get them out of crime. These extra resources—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Nanango!

Ms PALASZCZUK: As we know, those opposite talk the talk but in government they axed youth justice programs and they abolished the courts.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a fact. They abolished the courts and they cut police.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Nanango!

Ms PALASZCZUK: They cut police. We do not hide the facts because they are even in published crime statistics!

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, Premier! Your time has expired.

First Nations, National Disability Insurance Scheme Providers

Mr TANTARI: My question is of the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Can the minister advise the House on what work has been done to support First Nations businesses to become providers to the National Disability Insurance Scheme?

Mr CRAWFORD: I thank the member for the question. I recognise his recent commitment, along with the member for Maryborough, to First Nations people where we unveiled a memorial for the Butchulla warriors a couple of weeks ago in Maryborough.

It is great for me to be on my feet here tonight in my home town with the Cairns community in the gallery. We have five or six minutes yet to run. I think by now they have a good idea that this side of the House is organised, know what they are doing, listening. Over there—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order. Minister, you will put your comments through the chair.

Mr CRAWFORD: Of course the crossbench, in the corner, again are very respectful of the process. I am pleased to provide an update—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr CRAWFORD: They are still going.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I will maintain order in the House.

Mr CRAWFORD: I am pleased to provide an update on my department's work—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr CRAWFORD:—to support First Nations businesses to become NDIS providers. This is really important. We have engaged the Community Services Industry Alliance, partnering with expert First Nations presenters and trainers from Iscariot Media, to deliver the third and final phase of the First Nations NDIS business development seminars.

Phase 3 of this highly successful program is being delivered now—between March and May this year. More than 120,000 Queenslanders receive NDIS supports, totalling more than \$9 billion. This includes over 12,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants. An extra 40,000 Queenslanders are expected to enter the NDIS by 2025. This will provide even more opportunities for First Nations-owned businesses to grow through delivering disability supports to participants. We want First Nations businesses at the front line of being able to tap into that money and deliver services.

The free seminars will provide market intelligence and business development advice to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations who are considering entering or expanding into the NDIS provider market. I certainly acknowledge anyone in the audience tonight who is either on NDIS supports or who runs an NDIS business—and I know there are a few advocates up there as well.

Key topics in the First Nations NDIS business development seminar include things like understanding the NDIS, understanding the needs and goals, business opportunities, and of course worker screening. Anyone who is interested in expanding into this market—such as the 190 people who have already attended seminars—can go on the website and register.

Crocodile Management

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for the Environment. A state government commissioned independent panel recommended over nine months ago for the annual removal of 2.4-metre-plus crocodiles on Queensland's populated east coast in addition to the removal of problem crocodiles. In light of recent crocodile attacks, will the minister explain why this recommendation was not acted on immediately to help protect North Queenslanders?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for the question. Of course we did conduct that independent review. In fact, the independent experts endorsed Queensland's program—our world's best practice crocodile management program. We have seen a \$20 million investment to try to make sure that we balance the protection of crocodiles and, of course, the protection of human safety.

When it comes to the particular recommendation around considering the annual removal of a modest number of crocodiles at 2.4 metres or more in length, it did say that we should consider it. The department is at the moment looking at that information. We need to make sure that we conduct research. We also need to make sure that we deliver consultation. We need to make sure that we look at what the data is showing. That is what the independent experts advised. They also advised that we need to look at the impact it will have on the broader population. That is why it is incredibly important that we do that modelling work.

I know that the Katter's Australian Party and the One Nation party have been calling for a cull despite the fact that they know that the evidence does not show that that will work. In fact, it lures people into a false sense of security. That has been said time and time again. What we are doing is investing significantly. Just earlier in the week I announced additional funding—

Mr Dametto interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook!

Ms SCANLON:—of \$4 million on top of the \$20 million that we have already provided.

Mr Dametto interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Hinchinbrook, the minister is being responsive to the question asked.

Mr Dametto interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Hinchinbrook, you are warned under the standing orders. You have asked the question. The minister is being directly responsive to that. I ask that you listen to that response.

Ms SCANLON: There are \$4 million in new initiatives to work in partnership with councils to develop barriers that prevent attacks in high risk areas and to work with First Nations organisations and councils to deliver behaviour change education to make sure the public understand the risk of going into crocodile country. We also will be funding new detection Sonar and AI technology that will enable warnings like light signals at boat ramps to alert the public when crocs are present. We are significantly investing to make sure we deliver the best management options available. We have 20 rangers on the front line who respond to sightings. They have obviously done an incredible job. We have a whole range of zones that have different criteria around how we deal with problematic crocodiles. We look at the population size, how many people are in that area, as well as the crocodile population size. You can see that we have a very thorough model. We have a very thorough program that we will continue to invest in to deliver world's best practice crocodile management programs.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The time for question time has expired. I would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the public who have joined us here this evening. I am sure you will join me in doing that. I would encourage members of the public to stay around for the adjournment speeches, where you will learn much about many members' electorates. They are always entertaining and you learn about Queensland by listening to adjournment speeches.

ADJOURNMENT

Kambouris, Mr G




Mr MINNIKIN (Chatsworth—LNP) (7.01 pm): I rise to pay tribute to an outstanding member of the Chatsworth community, Mr George Kambouris, who recently passed away. He was a tireless advocate for many volunteer organisations in my local community. George will long be remembered for his strength of character, courage and as a fierce advocate for those less fortunate.

Born in 1963, George was the eldest of four boys. Every stage of his life was a first for both he and his family. When diagnosed with spina bifida, it was an uncommon medical condition in the 1960s. His family discovered that resources were limited to wheelchair education. They also faced the uncertainty that George may not live past 25. George did not let life in a wheelchair slow him down. He went out of his way to help others, despite spending considerable time in hospital undergoing many surgeries. He never stopped setting new goals for himself and maintained a high standard of fitness.

Despite his spina bifida, George was a multiple medal winning athlete. He represented Australia in power lifting, swimming, hand cycling, basketball and track. He never ceased to exercise, led a healthy life and constantly set new life goals. In 2000 he was inducted into the Greek-Australia Hall of Fame for power lifting. Later in his life he dedicated his time to helping others, particularly those less able. George became a mentor for young people confined to wheelchairs, helping them discover activities and sports. He became an ambassador for SpecialCare Central Inc. and subsequently founded the Living on Wheels program. This program allowed him to share his expertise of living with a disability. Participants could interact and learn valuable life skills to support disabled children in their day-to-day tasks and sporting pursuits. To quote George, 'If you are a wheelchair user it's easy to overlook exercise and fitness. Physical activity will help you acquire a more positive and healthier attitude towards life. This is my ultimate passion—to help others enjoy the same freedom in life as I do.' George supported the 1200kms for Kids cycling fundraising event between Sydney and Brisbane to raise funds for the Brisbane and Sydney children's hospitals. Even when he could not ride the entire distance George became a support vehicle volunteer to ensure everyone had plenty of water and food.

You cannot buy character: it comes from within. George had character in spades. George supported many community organisations during his life, including Para-Cycling Queensland and Rotary. He was a proud Rotarian, past branch president, past area governor and a Paul Harris Fellow. A few years ago I was privileged to attend his incoming Rotary branch president's dinner, and the look of pride on the faces of both of his parents was priceless. George Kambouris will be remembered for his zest for life and generosity of community spirit. My sincere condolences to his father Michael and family. Vale, George Kambouris, a life well lived.

Redcliffe Electorate, Small Business Breakfast

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (7.04 pm): I rise today to share with the chamber the success of an event I jointly hosted with the Redcliffe Peninsula Chamber of Commerce in my electorate of Redcliffe last week—an event that celebrated the vital role of small businesses in our economy and local community. The Small Business Breakfast was attended by more than 90 guests and warmly welcomed speakers, including: the Hon. Di Farmer, Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development; Dominique Lamb, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner; Deputy Mayor Jodie Shipway from Moreton Bay Regional Council; and Victor Nicholls, president of the Redcliffe Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. This event was a testament to the enthusiasm and dedication of the business owners and professionals in our community. The business community was well represented by a range of attendees, including small business owners, CEOs, managing directors and managers across many sectors and areas of expertise including finance, digital marketing, health care, consulting, hospitality, education, manufacturing, real estate, security providers, disability services and retail.


I was also delighted to welcome student leaders and teachers from Redcliffe State High School and Clontarf Beach State High School. Their presence and engagement truly embodied the collective passion and commitment that drives our local economy forward. As I mentioned earlier, we had the honour of hosting Minister Farmer, who shared with us the exciting developments taking place this Small Business Month. She highlighted a series of events and grants that will provide invaluable support and resources to all small businesses.

I was also thrilled to hear that two Redcliffe businesses, Kitchen Remedy in Clontarf and Health Focus Manufacturing, were successful recipients of business growth grants. Kitchen Remedy received a generous grant of \$30,000 which will enable them to acquire freeze-drying equipment, while Health Focus Manufacturing was awarded \$40,000 to invest in much needed capping machinery. These grants are a testament to the Queensland government's commitment to foster the growth and success of our local businesses.

In addition to these grants, I was delighted that the Redcliffe Peninsula Chamber of Commerce, under the leadership of Victor Nicholls, was also granted a Chamber Wellness grant. This grant will allow the chamber to organise mental health workshops tailored to the small business owners and operators in our region. Mental health and wellbeing are crucial elements of running a successful business, and I commend the chamber for prioritising this important issue. I encourage all small businesses in Redcliffe and across our great state, including all those in Far North Queensland, to take full advantage of the support and resources available to them from the Queensland government.

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those who attended the Small Business Breakfast and made it such a resounding success, including our students. I acknowledge all of the students who joined us in parliament this week. If only we saw the level of maturity and respect they have shown while they have been here from the opposition leader during question time it would have been pleasant.

Youth Crime

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (7.07 pm): There is a youth crime crisis gripping this state. Like every Queenslanders, I have been deeply saddened and sickened to hear of death after death, week after week, caused by young criminals in stolen vehicles or invading everyday Queenslanders' homes. My heart goes out to those families who have lost loved ones and those victims of crime. While we in Glass House have not experienced such tragic consequences yet, youth crime is still having a devastating impact. Marie from Bellmere recently emailed me the following—

Please someone has to get a backbone ... for almost 20 years I worked at a Hotel and would knock off at 11pm and walk out to my car by myself and never feel in any danger. But now I feel unsafe just shopping in Caboolture or Morayfield in the day time.

Shaeleigh from Beerwah shared—

Just emailing you today in regards to some things happening around Beerwah town centre and at a loss of what to do ... [there is a group of] about 10 up to 20 kids most days that hang around Beerwah shopping centre causing trouble [and] fights ... My family and daughter have been personally threatened. [A] young 14 year old girl who has been bullied by them for the past two years was bashed yesterday by these girls and ended up in hospital. Everyone is feeling very, very unsafe going into town ... They threaten innocent people ... It's intimidating it is scary not only for us but a lot of the town people.

Kelly, also from Beerwah, wrote to me with the same details but concluded by saying that she was—

... very concerned and can't stand by anymore but do not know what to do. I would love to take Beerwah back from these kids and ... everyone feel safe :(please help me.

For others, the increased crime is being displayed through an increase in hooning. Dorothy from Rocksberg has reported it on Caboolture River Road, particularly at the intersection with Old North Road. Lisa from Glass House Mountains and Kirsty from Beerburrum have reported it at the corner of Beerburrum Woodford Road and Old Gympie Road and at the intersection of Beerburrum Road and Beerburrum Woodford Road. Hoons have damaged the roads, covered the white safety lines, graffitied signage and left black rubber waste all over the scene.

In each case—Marie, Shaeleigh, Kelly, Dorothy, Lisa and Kirsty—I have raised the matter with the relevant local police and encouraged the hoon reports to be made online, as requested by the QPS. I know my local police are doing what they can with what they have. This increased crime is not their fault. As the Premier's own briefing note has shown, there are fewer police now on the Sunshine Coast than there were two years ago, despite record population growth. The fault lies firmly at the feet of the Palaszczuk Labor government. They are bereft of solutions. So, in the same way they adopted the LNP policy of breach of bail word for word, how about they adopt our other policies: consequences for actions, putting victims ahead of criminals; unshackling the judiciary by removing detention as a last resort; and gold standard early intervention and prevention services. Queenslanders have had enough. The Premier must listen to victims and start keeping Queenslanders safe.

Bribie Island Satellite Hospital


 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (7.10 pm): Our Bribie Island satellite hospital is just what the doctor ordered for our community, so I am excited to share the full list of 100 per cent free public health services it will deliver. Once our satellite hospital opens next year, if you are sick or hurt, you will not need to wait two to three weeks for a GP appointment or wait in the ED at Caboolture Hospital. You will be able to get the care that you need in the heart of our community. Whether you have an infection, a broken bone, a sprain, a wound that needs stitching or a minor burn, you will be able to walk through the door of the minor injury and accident centre seven days a week from 8 am until 10 pm, with health workers on site providing care up until 11.30 pm.

Our Bribie satellite hospital will also treat a range of chronic health conditions so people do not have to travel. There will be six renal dialysis chairs so locals currently travelling long distances multiple times a week can get life-saving care closer to home. There will be day medical chairs for treatments like iron infusions, IV antibiotics, steroids, anti-nausea medication and blood transfusions. The oral health services will provide essential dental care on Bribie, which is so important to our community. There will be a rehabilitation gym for people recovering after surgery. There will be medical imaging and diagnostic services, including ultrasound, X-ray and pathology to support other satellite hospital services. There will also be an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health hub for our large and growing First Nations community.

I can report that 480 locals per week will be able to attend appointments for mental health, geriatric assessment and intervention, kidney care and rapid access clinics, with Queensland Health doctors, nurses and allied health workers in the consult and treatment rooms. Our satellite hospital will dramatically expand hospital services in Pumicestone, taking pressure off Caboolture Hospital ED, with up to 490 walk-in urgent care places per week and 132 renal dialysis and day medical treatments per week.

I worked hard to get our satellite hospital so our community can get more hospital services closer to home. That is why it is so disappointing to hear the LNP continue to talk it down. Let us be clear: the LNP would not have built this satellite hospital. The local LNP demanded that we give the funding to build a private hospital instead. They put our satellite hospital on their list of projects to cut. They have complained about the site, the services and even the size of the trees in the concept drawings. The LNP do nothing but criticise and complain. If they get their way, the LNP will sell off our satellite hospital to their big business mates because they just do not back public health services in our state. That is their record and that is what they stand for.

Gatton, Westpac Branch


 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (7.13 pm): In early February we were advised by the Westpac bank that the Gatton Westpac was going to close. Fortunately, our community rallied and we were able to turn that around and we have some great news. When that announcement was made, the vulnerable in our community and all of those many members who use the Westpac bank were going to have to travel 35 minutes to the nearest bank. There are 20 banks in Brisbane, and if one of those were to close I am sure it would have been a lot less inconvenient for those people.

When we heard that news, many of the community and businesses affected reached out to me, Scott Buchholz the federal member as well as the local council. Together we put on a united front and made some really significant representations to the Westpac bank about the economic boom that is happening through the Lockyer. We have population growth there, and this announcement by the Westpac bank was premature and not well informed. We were able to tell Westpac that there has been a new Bunnings created, that the Catholic Church are opening a high school and that a new Mitre 10 has opened in Gatton. There is great economic growth there. Even a pet store has opened in the main street, and there are many other professional services. Fortunately, with the representation of Scott and Tanya, we have been able to turn that decision around, and earlier this week the Westpac bank advised us that they have changed their decision and they are going to keep that Westpac bank open.

Things happen in our community when any of those services are taken away. This Westpac branch has a great spot in the main street of the town in a very significant position, and it would have been a very dark position on the landscape if they had left. Importantly, that closure would have also affected five families. Five people would have lost their job, including four full-time-equivalent employees. When corporate Australia does not get the right information and makes premature economic rational decisions without considering the growth that is happening in our areas, then it is very badly informed.

I wrote directly to Westpac CEO Peter King and chair John McFarlane after hearing this and making those representations. I thank them for listening to us. I thank Richard Shields, the government relations manager at Westpac, for listening to us and taking our community's voices forward. On behalf of the Lockyer electorate and the Gatton community in particular, thank you. Those who use the bank will not have to travel 35 minutes. We are going to be able to keep our business in town and keep families in town. I hope more businesses and more banks listen to the Westpac example and stay in regional Queensland.

Path to Treaty; Voice to Parliament; Nash, Ms I

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts) (7.16 pm): 2023 is a cornerstone year for reconciliation between the First Peoples of this state and non-Indigenous Queenslanders. Today in this House the Palaszczuk government and this parliament have made history with our historic Path to Treaty legislation—legislation that provides the foundation for Queenslanders to look deeply and honestly into the truth of our shared past so as to begin the journey of healing and map out our shared prosperous future together.


Every parliamentary sitting day, we recognise and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in this state. When we do that, it is a reminder that every day wherever we might travel across this great state we are breathing in the DNA of thousands of generations of story. Every time we do that, that DNA becomes part of who we are and we carry that story and the responsibility of those stories are with us in all that we do.

Later this year, every Australian will have the opportunity to achieve Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the form of a Voice to Parliament and carry that DNA into those deliberations. The Uluru Statement from the Heart is a generous offering from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the wider Australian public. It is not a complex proposition—voice, treaty and truth. A Voice to Parliament will not provide an immediate remedy for past and present injustices, nor will it create a new bureaucracy. As Noel Pearson has said, it is an enhancement of our democracy, not an affront to it. It will simply ensure recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians in our nation's Constitution and enshrine the right of First Nations Australians to be heard. Not every generation is offered the profound opportunity to reflect upon and contribute to the social and cultural identity of the nation in the way that we are about to in this year's referendum. Not every generation gets to speak to the DNA that they have been breathing in all of their lives. We cannot miss this opportunity.

When all Queenslanders and Australians have their say and vote in this important referendum, we will be speaking to the truth of who we are as a nation and asking our Constitution to reflect that back to us. We will be seeking to recognise what we have known to be true for thousands of generations. I ask that every person in this House, in this state and in this nation reflects on the DNA that you carry when you cast your vote later this year.

In the last few moments of my speech, I want to acknowledge that the Acacia Ridge Fire Station is mourning the loss of one of their own. Izabella Nash passed recently in the line of duty. I want to acknowledge her family and her service and the service of all of those at the Acacia Ridge Fire Station.

Federal Budget, Young People

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (7.19 pm): As the saying goes, budgets are all about choices, and this week the federal Labor government chose a surplus over young people's lives. They chose tax cuts for billionaires over support for renters. They chose nuclear subs and increased fossil fuel subsidies over bringing welfare payments up to the poverty line. I am asking this government not to make the same mistake.

Let's start with renters. More people of all ages are renting, but especially under-35s. Most young people see home ownership as out of reach these days. They have lower relative wages and higher living costs than previous generations. Federal Labor is raising Rent Assistance by as little as \$12 a week, while average city rents increased \$115 last year. Millions of renters without that payment still get nothing—no rent freeze, no rent controls, no new money directly invested into social housing.


Under Labor, uni students will accumulate \$6 billion more in debt over two years. Labor is making more from rising student debt than they are from changes to their gas tax. Education should be free. The Greens have said many times that the federal government should wipe student debt and make TAFE and uni free again. Where the federal government is failing on education, the state government should commit to fully funding the minimum schooling resource standard from 2024 so that every young person can access free, quality education.

Similarly, in health, where the federal government has failed to make Medicare genuinely universal and free, the state government must step in. Young adults are largely excluded from the pitiful bulk-billing incentive payments to GPs in the federal budget, and the ramifications for mental health, the most common reason for GP visits, are particularly significant. Mental ill health incidence is highest among 16- to 24-year-olds and is the leading cause of disability and death among young people. Queensland has the lowest per capita spending on mental health services in the country. We also have a much higher rate of suicide among young people.

During the select committee inquiry into mental health, experts said we needed around \$700 million to a billion dollars in new money each year, and this government committed just \$350 million. We still have no commitments on how the mental health levy will be spent apart from 10 new beds at the Mater. Those beds are obviously welcomed, but the private Mater Hospital alone cannot provide the flexible, accessible care our communities need. If the government was willing to tax the big banks, as the Greens have proposed, they could fund public health clinics across the state where Queenslanders would access free GP and allied health professionals. We brought a fully costed plan for 200 of these clinics at the last election, and the need is even greater now.

Young people are just one of the groups left behind by the federal Labor government's budget this week. Disabled people are left behind. Working people are left behind. Renting families are left behind. I am asking this government to choose a different path with its next budget, one that genuinely leaves no-one behind.

Woodridge Electorate, Multicultural Events; Domestic and Family Violence Services

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (7.23 pm): Even though I may be 1,720 kilometres from home at this historic sitting of the Queensland parliament in Cairns, my heart is always with the Woodridge electorate. Ours is a community made stronger by diversity and the rich cultural heritage of its people. What each community holds in common is a deep generosity of spirit and commitment to our local area and our multicultural society. May has been an exciting month for many local communities, welcoming cultural new years and new beginnings.

For our friends in the Burmese community, it was a pleasure to join the celebrations of Thingyan, the water festival, and the start of the Myanmar New Year, in Eradani Park, Kingston, hosted by the Australian Myanmar Friendship Association of Queensland. Thingyan is a time of renewal and


reflection, marking the transition from the old year to the new. It was wonderful to enjoy food, music and cultural performances with the community. I would like to make special mention of the following people, amongst others, who helped organise the event: Michael and Hilda Po Saw, Zaw Lwin Maung, Evelyn and Win Pe, Wendy Colvin, Aye Mon and Peggy Langle.

On another happy note, I joined the Cambodian community in Woodridge for the Khmer New Year at the Khmer Buddhist Society of Queensland's temple complex in Marsden. I was proud to wish everyone present, 'Sursedey chnam thmey!' or, 'Happy new year!' and to once again share in a wonderful occasion with the community. I would like to thank the venerable monks at the temple and to congratulate Sovannary Uk and the Khmer Buddhist Association of Queensland for a great event. In particular, I want to thank community leaders Mr Kam Pholaket, Mrs So Chinda Pholaket, Mrs Phaly In, Miss Sandra Thach, Mrs Sureiyah Ouch, Miss Vanni Yim, Mrs Lih Sinn and Miss Morny Uk.

On the same weekend, I was pleased to join the Queensland Mizo community in celebration of Chapchar Kut, the harvest festival. Held at Marsden State High School, this was the largest public event of its kind held by the community and was a great success. Thank you to the Mizo community and its president, Mr C Lalenkawla, Ms Jenny Bochung and everyone else involved.

The Woodridge community has also gathered in reflection over recent weeks. As members would be aware, May is Domestic and Family Violence Awareness Month. On Wednesday, 5 May I spoke at a candlelight vigil in Logan, organised by the Centre for Women & Co and supported by the Logan City Council. The vigil was one of many held across Australia that evening to commemorate and honour the victims of domestic and family violence. I want to sincerely thank Stacey Ross and the staff of the Centre for Women & Co, Aimee Prowse and the staff at the Centre Against Sexual Violence, Mayor Darren Power and everyone in the community who work in this sector for the important work they do in protecting vulnerable people across Woodridge and Logan.

Agnes Water, Health Services

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (7.26 pm): Agnes Water and 1770 are arguably one of the top places in the Burnett electorate. It has the reef at its doorstep, it has beaches for days, awesome small businesses and very welcoming and friendly locals. However, it is missing something that is vital for any community: there is no health infrastructure for 125 kilometres, with no Queensland Health facility in the region. We are lucky that the area currently has two hardworking doctors who support a population of up to 6,000. In peak times this population expands by another 5,000. That is a population of around 10,000 in the care of two GPs and paramedics. These two doctors are feeling the pressure and very rarely leave the area or stop for a family holiday. They know that if they do, the community will be put at risk. This serious issue should not rest on the shoulders of these two individuals.


We know that for around 20 years there has been very little change to the level of service delivery in Agnes Water. Currently, residents have no choice but to travel a three-hour round trip to Bundaberg or Gladstone for hospital care or specialist treatment. It is also important to note that due to the locality of the Discovery Coast, residents access both the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service and the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service. This is a real issue. It complicates intake and referral processes. Often the referrals say, 'The client is out of our catchment,' with no-one accepting responsibility for where that client lives.

It goes without saying that we desperately need a health and hospital presence in the Agnes Water community. Almost exactly one year ago I asked the Minister for Health to advise on any plans to roll out further health services and associated infrastructure for the Discovery Coast region. I thank the minister for her response as it gave our community some much needed hope. The minister advised that the Department of Health recently supported an application from the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service to the Commonwealth Department of Health for the establishment of a multipurpose health service in Agnes that would provide an opportunity to deliver health and aged-care services, but unfortunately 12 months has passed and we have heard nothing. We would love the answers. A multipurpose health service would quite frankly be a life changer for residents. We need it to become an immediate priority for the Wide Bay Hospital and Health Service. A promise has been made and I will not stand to see this promise broken. The residents of Agnes Water and 1770 deserve access to health care just like everyone else. I look forward to hearing an update from the minister in the very near future.

Meanwhile, a huge thanks must go to Impact Community Services' Managing Director, Tanya O'Shea, and Pam and their team who did a pop-up care clinic over the Easter weekend in Agnes Water. They saw a very serious problem emerging with both local doctors closed for the weekend, so they

acted quickly. They treated more than 70 patients over four days. The patients presented with a range of urgent illnesses and injuries such as wounds requiring sutures, respiratory issues, earaches, dental issues, broken bones, vomiting and shortness of breath. A number of people who attended the clinic indicated that if the clinic had not been available, they would have suffered through their condition or simply have done nothing, and it could have been a lot worse. We have to remember that Bundaberg or Gladstone are 1.5 hours' drive away. We simply cannot afford delays on this project. Thank you.

Logan Hospital, Expansion

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (7.29 pm): We heard some exciting news today about Cairns and the hospital expansion there. However, that is not the only expansion that is part of the Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan. In fact, there is some fantastic work going on at Logan Hospital. What is exciting—and I am sure everyone in Cairns is excited about it—is that this week it is going to be Logan Hospital's birthday. I am wishing Logan Hospital a happy birthday with the best present ever, and that is the announcement that we made last week along with the minister of the tender for the new \$540 million expansion of the Logan Hospital. That is some 280 new beds, but it builds upon some of the other investments we have made.

We know that this is a growing area. We also know that the LNP does not support growing areas in terms of the services they need. They actually make cuts—cuts to nurses, cuts to doctors—but, of course, no new investment. We saw no investment in this project from the Morrison government. It is something that we are doing alone. I look forward to actually working more productively with the new federal government.

What we have seen, as I said, is the \$540 million expansion. Building upon the previous expansion, there is an \$18.8 million new maternity refurbishment and expansion. There is the \$61 million eight-level car park, and we know it is such a valuable thing for the retention of staff for them to have a safe and clean car park. There is also the refurbishment of the existing clinical and support areas in other buildings. Importantly, that is part of the transfer area, which will contribute to efficiency of the hospital. That transfer area allows patients to get out of beds quicker but still be in an area where they can be monitored, wait for their drugs and also wait for a pick-up, especially if it was an after-hours drop-off. That means that more beds are free for other patients. The other one is the really innovative two modular units that have gone in onsite that have delivered beds earlier and quicker, and we are seeing a second one come online.

We have seen amazing change over the last 30 years since Wayne Goss first opened the Logan Hospital and then immediately turned around to make the investment that had not been put into it early in his term. The city has absolutely been transformed and we are investing along with it. I note that there are members here from Logan: the member for Springwood, the member for Macalister and Leeanne Enoch, the member for Algeester, who are really passionate about continuing to see this investment because we know a growing area with young families with complex social needs requires a great hospital, and it is this government that is investing in it. Why do we have that? It is because we have a health minister and a Premier who absolutely understand the needs of our growing outer suburban areas. That is why I am happy to wish Logan Hospital a happy birthday for next week.

The House adjourned at 7.32 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, 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, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke, Palaszcuk, Pease, Perrett, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting