



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Hansard Home Page: <http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/work-of-assembly/hansard>

Email: hansard@parliament.qld.gov.au

Phone (07) 3553 6344

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 25 May 2023

Subject	Page
ACTING SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS	1657
Cystic Fibrosis Queensland	1657
School Group Tours.....	1657
MOTION OF CONDOLENCE	1657
Phillips, Dr AF	1657
PETITIONS	1661
TABLED PAPER	1661
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS	1661
India	1661
Kindergarten.....	1661
Technology.....	1662
State of Origin	1662
Defence and Aerospace Industry Development Fund	1662
North-West Queensland Floods, Recovery	1663
Economy.....	1663
Electricity Prices	1663
Electrical Safety	1664
Maternity Services	1665
Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.....	1665
Housing	1666
Seniors Legal and Support Service	1666
World Mining Congress	1667
Beef Australia 2024	1668
Science Research Agreement, Bavaria	1668
Electric Vehicles.....	1669
SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT	1670

Table of Contents – Thursday, 25 May 2023

ETHICS COMMITTEE	1670
Report	1670
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Ethics Committee: Report No. 214, 57th Parliament—Matter of privilege referred by the State Development and Regional Industries Committee on 26 May 2022 in relation to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings	1670
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	1670
Housing Supply	1670
Housing Supply	1671
Energy and Jobs Plan	1672
Housing Supply	1673
Business	1674
Youth Justice	1675
Regional Queensland, Investment	1676
Child Safety, Youth Crime.....	1676
Workplace Health and Safety.....	1677
Health, Data Reporting.....	1677
Electricity Prices	1679
Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games.....	1680
Acting Speaker’s Ruling, Question out of Order	1680
Voice to Parliament; Path to Treaty.....	1680
Ingham Hospital, CT Scanner	1681
Public Transport.....	1681
Residential Tenancies	1682
Acting Speaker’s Ruling, Question Out of Order	1682
Foster and Kinship Carers	1682
Star Entertainment Group.....	1683
JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL	1683
Message from Governor	1683
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Message, dated 24 May 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023	1683
Introduction	1683
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023	1684
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes	1684
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights.....	1684
First Reading	1689
Referral to Legal Affairs and Safety Committee	1689
TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL	1689
Second Reading	1689
PRIVATE MEMBERS’ STATEMENTS	1698
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance	1698
Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month.....	1698
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance	1699
Redlands Satellite Hospital; Cairns Regional Sitings of Parliament; National Volunteer Week.....	1699
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance	1700
Voice to Parliament	1701
Forensic and Scientific Services; Star Entertainment Group, Casino Licence	1701
Great Barrier Reef Arena.....	1702
Nash, Ms I	1702
Jobs, Skills and Training	1703
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance	1704
Lytton Electorate; Winnam Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation	1704
Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance	1705
Townsville University Hospital	1706
Electricity Prices	1706
Hervey Bay Electorate; Tracey, Mr J	1707
Housing.....	1707
Leader of the Opposition, Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road Upgrade.....	1708
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Media release, undated, titled ‘Parliament records expose central Queensland MPs: Central Queensland Labor MPs went silent on crime during Regional Parliament’	1708
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract, dated 11 May 2023, from the <i>Record of Proceedings</i> , Queensland Parliament, of a speech by the member for Keppel, Ms Brittany Lauga MP.	1709
Redland Hospital; Former Minister for Health and Ambulance Services.....	1709
Childhood Brain Cancer, The Cure Starts Now	1710
COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE	1710
Report, Motion to take Note	1710
STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE	1718
Report, Motion to Take Note	1718
COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY	1720
Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates and Referral of Auditor-General’s Reports.....	1720
TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL	1720
Second Reading	1720


Table of Contents – Thursday, 25 May 2023

<i>Tabled paper</i> : Letter, dated 22 November 2022, from the member for Southern Downs, Mr James Lister MP, to the Australian Federal Police Commissioner, Mr Reece Kershaw, in relation to enforcement action for unlawful tobacco sales.	1723
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Article from the <i>Ipswich News Today</i> , dated 30 March 2023, titled 'They're banned in Australia, but here they're... \$16 a packet'	1725
Consideration in Detail	1736
Clauses 1 to 39, as read, agreed to.	1736
Clause 40—.....	1736
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Shannon Fentiman's amendments.	1736
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Shannon Fentiman's amendments.	1736
Amendment agreed to.	1736
Clause 40, as amended, agreed to.	1736
Clauses 41 to 46, as read, agreed to.	1736
Clause 47—.....	1737
Amendment agreed to.	1737
Clause 47, as amended, agreed to.	1737
Clauses 48 to 66, as read, agreed to.	1737
Schedule, as read, agreed to.	1737
Third Reading	1737
Long Title	1737
WATER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL	1737
Second Reading	1737
ADJOURNMENT	1741
Indigenous Councils Critical Infrastructure Program	1741
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Answer to question on notice No. 1092 asked on 25 October 2022.....	1741
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Answer to question on notice No. 481 asked on 20 April 2023.	1741
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Email, dated 23 May 2023, from the Opposition Media, referring to a media statement by the Shadow Minister for Seniors, Communities and Disability Services and Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, regarding reports of drinking water contamination at Yarrabah.....	1741
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Media release, dated 21 June 2022, from the then Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic Infrastructure, Hon. Dr Steven Miles, titled 'Budget back infrastructure for a growing Queensland'.	1742
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Article, dated 4 May 2023, from the Local Government Association of Queensland titled 'LGAQ: review will put key infrastructure projects at risk'.	1742
Queensland Volunteering Awards; National Community Languages Schools Day	1742
St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital; Annat, Ms I, MBE, OAM	1742
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Document, dated 17 May 2023, titled '65th Anniversary of St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital A memorial service for the late Isobel (Pixie) Annat MBE OAM'.	1743
Caloundra Electorate, Events	1743
Titles Queensland, Morecroft Family	1744
Smith, Mr CJ	1744
Gold Coast, Housing	1745
<i>Tabled paper</i> : Spreadsheet, undated, titled 'Department of Housing and Public Works' relating to social housing in Queensland.	1745
Titles Queensland, Member for Mermaid Beach	1745
Theodore Electorate, Roads	1746
Pine Rivers Small Business Awards	1747
4MBS Festival of Classics	1747
ATTENDANCE	1748

THURSDAY, 25 MAY 2023


The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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

Cystic Fibrosis Queensland

 **Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, since 1960 Cystic Fibrosis Queensland has been the peak not-for-profit charity providing support, services and hope to people living with cystic fibrosis. Cystic Fibrosis Queensland funds research and advocates on behalf of people living with cystic fibrosis receiving support and care from Queensland Health. It also delivers welfare, support and service programs to people experiencing the illness.


Their mission is to see a world where 'Lives are unaffected by Cystic Fibrosis' and to assist everyone affected by cystic fibrosis to live fuller, healthier lives. The month of May is the national awareness month for this very important issue, with events and activities taking place across the country to raise funds and awareness for people living with cystic fibrosis. Tomorrow, 26 May 2023, is the national awareness day for cystic fibrosis and the parliament will be showing its support by lighting the building in red for the night.

School Group Tours

 **Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise members that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Nanango Valley State School in the electorate of Nanango and Flagstone Creek State School in the electorate of Lockyer.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Phillips, Dr AF

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.33 am): I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Dr Anita Frances Phillips, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased lady the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the Members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

Dr Anita Frances Phillips was not a Queenslander by birth; she was a Queenslander by choice—and what a contribution she made! Born in Melbourne in 1945, Anita was educated in Victoria and was such a good scholar she was appointed head prefect. Scholarship was to become a hallmark of her life. She completed a Diploma of Social Studies in 1968 but the following year moved to Townsville to set up a home in what she called her tropical paradise.

She opened a shop in Shaw's Arcade but, at the urging of a friend, closed it in order to start a new career as one of two social workers at Townsville General Hospital. She started this new job when she was six months pregnant and excelled. Healthcare workers appear to be born, rather than made. The broad streak of kindness and concern required in people who devote their lives to helping others certainly shone through in Anita. It is this quality of kindness I remember most when I met her.

The same friend who encouraged her into her role at Townsville Hospital also encouraged her into a new career when, in 2001, Anita ran as the Labor candidate in Thuringowa and won. Sadly, the friend who had been such an influence on Anita's life died 10 days before her election.

Anita's service during her term was marked by her fierce advocacy for the people of Thuringowa. She helped secure funding for an upgrade to what was to become the Cowboys' home ground. She also served as a member of the members' ethics and parliamentary privileges committee across the term, on estimates committees in 2001 and 2003, and was on the Panel of Temporary Speakers.


I am told that, following the state election in 2001, the then member for Bulimba and stalwart of the Queensland Parliamentary Bowls Club, Pat Purcell, went on a recruitment drive and signed up many new members to the bowls club—one of whom was Anita. I am told that what Anita lacked in classical training she made up for with enthusiasm. She represented the Queensland parliament at the Interstate Parliamentary Bowling Carnival held in Sydney in 2002, alongside many of her colleagues of the time—and, in particular, those from North Queensland, such as Lindy Nelson-Carr, Warren Pitt and Steve Rodgers—and readily made many new friendships with members and former members from all of the states from across the political divide.

She decided not to recontest her seat at the February 2004 state election in preference to running for the federal electorate of Herbert. Alas, she was unsuccessful, but she never stopped serving her community. After the federal election in 2004, Anita returned to social welfare and community services work in many and varied roles, as well as working in executive positions in local government. Among those roles, Anita was the Public Advocate in the Australian Capital Territory from 2006 to 2013. She completed a Master of Public Administration at the University of Canberra and, later in life, a postgraduate diploma in law in 2012 and a PhD in 2022. I understand that the thesis of her PhD was the process of policy development using the NDIS as a case study and that the federal Minister for the NDIS, Bill Shorten, has described her work in this field as a remarkable scholarship.

The Commonwealth government appointed Anita as a community member on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board, on which she served from 2017 to 2022. She also served as an elected director on the national board of the Australian Association of Social Workers from 2013 to 2019. From 2018 to 2022, Anita was also an Adjunct Professor with the Institute for Government and Policy Analysis at the University of Canberra. In 2017, our government was pleased to appoint Anita to the board of the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service, on which she served until March last year.

In her maiden speech, as is so often the case, Anita paid tribute to her parents and spoke of her upbringing in a housing commission home. She lived the Labor values of the benefits of hard work and a good education—and she never stopped studying and learning. She blazed a trail for women at a time when that was by no means easy. She said she could have achieved nothing without the support of her three wonderful daughters—Rebecca, Melanie and Keinton. Keinton is the name of the UK town where Anita worked at one time. Rebecca and Keinton join us in the gallery today, along with Juliet, her sister; Richard, her son-in-law; and Obelia and Oakley, her grandchildren.

Sadly, Anita Frances Phillips passed away on the 4th of February, aged 77 years. I know that not just me but many members of the government were very sad when they heard this news. I place on record the government's thanks for the years of service Anita gave to the institutions of our democracy and to the broader Queensland community. On behalf of the government, I take this opportunity to extend our sympathy and that of this House to Anita's family and friends.

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.38 am): The opposition wishes to be associated with this motion moved this morning by the Premier. I am honoured to offer our support as we recognise the contribution of Anita Phillips, the former member for Thuringowa. I first met Anita when I was a journalist in the Townsville region and she was on the verge of launching her political career. What impressed me was her commitment to her community. There is no doubt that her desire to contribute to the region, backed up by some sincerely held beliefs, was the principal factor that propelled her into the career of politics.

Anita Phillips was born in Melbourne in the final days of the Second World War and raised in a housing commission estate in the city's outer suburbs. It was this environment that inspired her in later life. In her first speech in this place she said—

My parents inspired me to believe that I could experience a better world. My mother assured me that anything was possible, even for girls. My father showed me that it was possible to struggle out of the stranglehold of poverty and class. During my school education I encountered other people who provided inspiration, in particular one or two Catholic nuns—women who encouraged me to believe that there are no barriers to achieving our dreams.


Upon moving to Townsville in 1969, she drew on her qualifications and accepted a position as the second social worker at the Townsville General Hospital with the encouragement of Joan Innes-Reid, Townsville's sole social worker, who later became the city's deputy mayor. It is to her credit that throughout her many careers Anita Phillips embodied the notion of continuous learning. Her social work degree was followed by a Diploma of Social Studies, an arts degree, a Master of Public Administration, a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Studies and a doctorate.

She was drawn to politics and after a whirlwind campaign won the seat of Thuringowa in 2001. In her term in this House she sought to fulfil three objectives: to give power to people in the community who had become marginalised; to support ecologically sustainable economic development; and to encourage the development of better leisure, art and sporting pursuits—as she said, 'putting more fun and enjoyment into the quality of people's lives'. Upon her election she thanked those beyond her family and the campaign team who had supported her, including former Victorian premier Joan Kirner, Emily's List and various trade unions. Such an undertaking, embraced without any guarantee of success at a time of political volatility in Queensland, points to an undoubted willingness to fight for the causes in which she believed.

Anita Phillips gave up her seat in this House in 2004 in what was an unsuccessful bid to win the federal seat of Herbert. As an indication of how well she understood the mood of a garrison city, when then Labor leader Mark Latham promised to return troops from Iraq by Christmas Anita famously said, 'I don't know if Latham said which Christmas.' What might have acted as a roadblock to many appears to have spurred her on to new endeavours after this election loss. Her doctorate, undertaken through the University of Canberra and completed in 2022, examined the NDIS. As the Premier said, Minister Shorten described it as 'a remarkable scholarship'.

At various times she served as the ACT Public Advocate, a ministerial adviser, in various roles in local government, an academic at the Australian Catholic University, in professional associations and as a member of the Sunshine Coast Health and Hospital Board. Though a member of this House for a short time, Anita Phillips made a meaningful contribution in whatever field she choose.

During her term in this House Anita paid tribute to the support she received from her family. We are particularly pleased that so many of her family are here today, particularly two of her daughters, Rebecca and Keinton. You have much to be proud of. We offer our condolences on the passing of Anita Phillips.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (9.42 am): I rise to provide my contribution to this condolence motion for Dr Anita Phillips. I start by offering my condolences to her family. I briefly met them earlier. Thank you for being here today. It is a privilege to speak to this motion. I did not think that in the last 12 months I would be speaking to two condolence motions for former members of Thuringowa, Dr Anita Phillips and of course Ken McElligott.

I got to meet Anita in 2018 at an event. We had a great chat on all things Thuringowa. Anita was very pleased that we kept government in Labor's hands following the 2017 election. Whilst we were years apart in terms of being members for Thuringowa, we had a number of things in common. The No. 1 thing we had in common was our love for the North Queensland Cowboys—although we will not talk about the result of the last game. Anita was a great supporter of the team and, as the Premier has mentioned, also the former home of the Cowboys then, the Dairy Farmers Stadium, and was in fact responsible for funding the upgrades to that facility. When we met in 2018 the new stadium was literally coming out of the ground, and I know she was very excited about that. I think she would be very proud to have seen what we have achieved.

Reading her maiden speech in April 2001 it was clear that her political motivation came from her parents, coming from a working class background and living in a housing commission estate on outskirts of Melbourne. Interestingly, I note she lived in a struggling community with high juvenile crime and a poor community image. I believe Anita came with a vision for change and to lift the image of Thuringowa. She had qualifications as a social worker when she moved to Townsville—indeed, it is a tropical paradise. Anita worked hard in the community setting up that retail business and then becoming only the second social worker at the Townsville General Hospital. When I said we had things in common, in 1985 I commenced work at the old Townsville General Hospital before joining the ambulance in 1990. I know the value of social workers, particularly in times of crisis, so I pay tribute to Anita's role there. She had done that with her friend and fellow social worker, Joan Innes-Reid.

Anita proudly represented the Townsville seat of Thuringowa in the Queensland parliament between 2001 and 2004, beating One Nation turned Independent candidate Ken Turner before quitting and unsuccessfully standing for the federal seat of Herbert held by the Liberal Party's Peter Lindsay. After being elected Anita had three priority areas for the people of Thuringowa: to help the most vulnerable, create employment and expand people's lives through fun and enjoyment. I did remark to the family earlier that there will be a little bit of fun from the current member of Thuringowa today at around two o'clock, and I am glad you will not be here for that.


Anita had a passion for community renewal, particularly in the Upper Ross, and I expect she would be very happy to see the duplication of Riverway Drive—of course I had to get that in there—and the \$50 million it has developed in the private investment we have seen, which has created more jobs. I know that she would be enormously proud to see the low unemployment that Townsville has right now at two per cent. In her maiden speech Anita mentioned a skate park. How proud Anita would be to see our beautiful Riverway precinct, which holds so many community fun days for the good people of Thuringowa today. The new council library has just moved over there as well. Anita also pushed for a bridge to cross the Ross River at Condon. That major work connected our cities. She was then working with the minister for transport and main roads to get it done, connecting the hospital, the university and Lavarack Barracks to the Upper Ross. How ironic that I now work with Minister Mark Bailey on that same ring-road. I note the names in Anita's maiden speech who helped her get elected—names that are not unfamiliar to me; names that remain in our branch—Mike Reynolds and Mick and Evol Keane, who are Thuringowa branch members to this day. It is clear we have many similarities.

On 4 February 2023 Dr Anita Frances Phillips passed away at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital following a short illness. Anita's daughters Rebecca, Melanie and Keinton were at her side. Anita's three surviving sisters Diana, Juliet and Melissa were all able to spend time with Anita in her final days, which was indeed a blessing.


A senior member of the Albanese government, the Hon. Bill Shorten, paid tribute to Dr Anita Phillips, describing her as 'incredibly active in progressive causes' and holding 'strong Labor values'. Former Queensland premier Peter Beattie also said—

Anita was a powerful advocate for the people of Thuringowa and a trail blazer for women in Queensland politics at a time in Queensland when both were a challenge. She was a key part of the Labor team in 2001. Her strength of character and determination were admired by both sides of politics.

To her family and friends either here today or watching this, thank you for giving us Anita Phillips. Her time in serving the good people of Thuringowa will not be forgotten. Vale, Dr Anita Phillips.

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (9.48 am): Today I would like to pay my respects and offer my condolences to the family of the late Dr Anita Phillips. My connection is that my parents are constituents of the current member for Thuringowa and would have been constituents of the good doctor. I would like to acknowledge her legacy, which will continue to better the lives of many for generations to come. Anita was committed to lifting standards and lowering barriers for everyone. She led with compassion and authenticity. Anita dedicated her life to public service, was a voice for the voiceless, and has motivated and inspired so many others to do more to better their communities.

We were very lucky to have had Anita's presence and positive influence in our region as a board member of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital where her research and depth of knowledge of the NDIS was invaluable. Her leadership and collaboration on the board fostered numerous positive health outcomes, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, all of which has helped to keep our community safe and healthy. On behalf of everyone on the Sunshine Coast, I would like to express our gratitude for everything that Anita has done for us and for the state and I thank her family for being part of what made Dr Anita Phillips such a well-respected and kind person.

 **Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I felt I did not know Dr Anita Phillips and that I had not met her, but after sharing a cup of tea with her family this morning, it seems that perhaps I might have known her, or she would have at least observed me on a number of occasions. I connected with Rebecca this morning and we both graduated from Magnetic Island State School so Anita would have been there in the graduation party and at many other events at that time. In her role at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, she clearly played a significant part in the great care that was provided to my mother.

When reading Dr Phillips's biography, there was something that struck me, and I think it would strike all members of parliament. She only had a short time in this place, but what was very evident from the time she arrived in Townsville and Magnetic Island was that, when she saw something that she thought could be done better or could be improved, she put aside the things that perhaps she

wanted to do or would be nice to do and she did the things that she knew needed to be done for her community. She continued to do that, and parliament in effect became a vehicle for her to continue to live those values, and she continued to do that after she left parliament. I think that is a mark of a great person. I want to place on record my condolences to her family. It was very nice to have met them this morning. Will honourable members indicate their agreement with the motion by standing in silence for one minute.

Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

PETITIONS

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, sponsored by the Clerk—

Youth Crime

4 petitioners, requesting the House to undertake a number of initiatives to end youth crime in Queensland [707].

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

Cooloola Cove, Tin Can Bay Road and Bayside Road Intersection

Mr Perrett, from 1,164 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade the intersection of Tin Can Bay and Bayside Road, Cooloola Cove and that this upgrade is included in the works program [708, 709].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPER

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

MINISTERIAL PAPER


The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water (Hon. Butcher)—

[710](#) State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 38, 57th Parliament—Examination of Auditor-General reports on the water sector, government response


MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

India

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.53 am): Overnight I had the honour of representing Queensland at a business dinner with the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. It was a celebration of the close ties between our two nations. I also had the opportunity to thank the Prime Minister personally for the announcement of a consulate to be established here in Queensland.

As I told the House yesterday, both the Treasurer and education minister have recently led delegations on trade missions further developing the relationship between India and Queensland. Last night the importance of these visits was noted and cannot be overstated. I was also very pleased that the Chancellor of the University of Queensland, Peter Varghese, was able to join this dinner. A million people in India turn 18 every month, and the opportunity to attract more of them to study here and visit here with the tourism opportunities is something that we need to continue to explore together.

Kindergarten

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.54 am): As I shared on Tuesday, we have started a conversation with Queenslanders about free kindy and what it would mean to them. On Sunday we released a survey to hear what Queenslanders think. As of this morning, I am advised that more than 3,000 people have had their say. One parent said—


I think this would help thousands of families, including mine and my extended family now and into the future ...

Another said—

... absolutely it should be free. It is essential for preparing our children for school. As a one income family, having free Kindy would benefit us immensely.


We are continuing these discussions. Today the education minister and I will hold a round table with stakeholders in the early childhood sector—CEOs from organisations including C&K, Goodstart Early Learning and Australian Childcare Alliance Queensland, along with other peak bodies, major providers and unions—to get their thoughts on how this policy could work. Kindy gives kids a great start in life. Teachers tell us you can really see the difference between kids who go to kindy and those who do not. The cost of kindy should not be a barrier to all Queensland children getting a very good, decent education.

Technology

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.55 am): South-East Queensland is one of the fastest growing regions in the Australian tech sector. That is one reason some of the world's best and brightest will descend on Brisbane next month for the TCA national tech summit. What an incredible opportunity this will be for the next generation of tech entrepreneurs. More than 350 tech leaders will be in attendance, including the likes of Mel Silva, the CEO of Google Australia; Robyn Denholm, global chair of Tesla; Scott Farquhar, co-CEO of Atlassian; and Richard White, founder and CEO of WiseTech. Attendees will hear from these experts, vie for investment and deep dive into emerging trends, including the rise in AI, which I think everybody should pay very close attention to.


This event could not have come at a more opportune time. With the leadership of our Minister for Innovation, Queensland is in a strong place to drive our innovation agenda even further. Well done, Minister. Last year our government launched the \$142 million Advance Queensland road map to drive good jobs in new technologies over the next 10 years. This investment has already leveraged more than \$1 billion in additional funding for Queensland businesses and it is supporting more than 28,000 new Queensland jobs. We are already seeing that innovation success come to life with Queensland startups like Logan-based Go1 and Brisbane's soda. I look forward to welcoming the Tech Council of Australia to Brisbane, and I thank them for choosing Queensland.

State of Origin

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.57 am): Next week marks the start of this year's State of Origin. The men play the first match next Wednesday night in Adelaide and the women play on Thursday in Sydney. There is nothing that unites and inspires Queensland more than the State of Origin. The Mighty Maroons are the reigning champions, wrapping up the series with a 22-12 thrashing of New South Wales at Suncorp last year—not that anyone needs reminding.


Last night I met with the New South Wales Premier, Chris Minns, and we agreed on a bet. When Queensland wins the series, the New South Wales Premier will wear the Queensland Maroons jersey for one full day and the Queensland flag will fly over the Sydney Harbour Bridge all day. In the unlikely event of a Blues win, the New South Wales flag will fly from the Story Bridge—and I thank the Lord Mayor for his cooperation here—and I will have to wear that New South Wales jersey all day, and I do not want to do that. I wish the Queensland Maroons men and women all the very best.

Defence and Aerospace Industry Development Fund

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (9.58 am): More than 40 per cent of Australian Army personnel and their vehicles are based in Queensland. Our government is leveraging this opportunity to support small businesses to develop their defence, aerospace and space capabilities to create more good jobs for Queenslanders. I am pleased to announce 24 small to medium-sized Queensland businesses will share in more than \$420,000 through the next round of the Defence and Aerospace Industry Development Fund. This \$1.5 million Defence and Aerospace Industry Development Fund is designed to give small to medium-sized businesses the extra help they need to take their operation to the next level. One of those businesses is Australian Training Works in Cairns, which is a registered Indigenous business offering tailored solutions for Indigenous training and employment outcomes. They are actively pursuing opportunities to supply the defence, aerospace and space sectors and we are helping them to do just that.

The successful applicants come from across the state, including Atherton, Coolumb, Brisbane, Logan, Cleveland, Toowoomba, Chinchilla and Maryborough. Whether it is building armed reconnaissance vehicles at Redbank, shell forging in Maryborough or sustaining naval vessels in Cairns, these projects all have one thing in common—jobs for Queenslanders.


North-West Queensland Floods, Recovery

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (9.59 am): Last month I visited flood-affected parts of north-west Queensland with the member of Traeger and Major Jake Ellwood, the Queensland Reconstruction Authority's CEO. Spending time on the ground there was valuable for us to understand what further support was required.

I am pleased to announce to the House today that, together with the Albanese Labor government, we will provide north-west Queensland councils with an additional \$5 million package to go towards further disaster recovery, as well as targeted mental health and wellbeing services. Some \$4 million of this funding is specifically for the councils of Boulia, Burke, Carpentaria and Doomadgee to assist with recovery and support locally led resilience initiatives. The additional \$1 million is earmarked for a community mental health package for people in Boulia, Burke, Carpentaria, Doomadgee and Mount Isa.

These floods were record-breaking and the road ahead will be long, but with support packages like this \$5 million investment, the Palaszczuk and Albanese governments are making sure every Queenslanders feels supported while we build back better.

Economy


 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.00 am): National data released recently shows that Queensland's economy continues to grow in the face of global headwinds. The latest data released last week shows that the wage price index in Queensland rose 0.8 per cent in the March quarter to be 3.7 per cent higher over the year. This is the fastest annual wages growth in over a decade. This return to solid wages growth will help address the cost-of-living challenges hardworking Queenslanders face. Queenslanders deserve every opportunity to benefit from our strong economy, including access to quality, well-paid jobs.

Our Economic Recovery Plan is working. The latest ABS data shows labour market conditions in Queensland remain very strong. Employment in Queensland rose once again in April 2023. There are now 5,300 more people with a job than a month earlier. Since March 2020, before the pandemic, we have created 226,300 more jobs, and almost 90 per cent of those jobs are full-time jobs.

This strong job creation has driven down our unemployment rate to its lowest level in many years. The unemployment rate is now 3.8 per cent. To put all of this in context, there are a quarter of a million more working-age Queenslanders now than there were three years ago, but there are 100,000 fewer unemployed people than at the peak of the pandemic. Queenslanders are now more confident that they can look for work and find a job.

The jobs growth and wage increases are also reflected in our business conditions. The latest NAB monthly business survey reported that business conditions in Queensland are the second strongest in the nation. The latest employment wages and economic data shows that the Palaszczuk government has continued to deliver our promise to create jobs—more good jobs for Queenslanders.

Electricity Prices

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (10.02 am): The Palaszczuk government is serious about helping Queenslanders with cost of living, whether it is help via concessions, free kindy, rebates for electric vehicles or textbooks, dental treatment, even help with rego for your tinnie, but we are also focused on keeping electricity prices down. Today it is official: low-income Queensland households will have among the cheapest electricity bills in the nation. Across all regions in the Australian Energy Regulator's determination today, small businesses in Queensland will have the cheapest power bills.

In partnership with the Albanese federal government, we have worked hard, and our message to Queenslanders is: we are on your side. The determination by the energy regulator shows that thanks to additional government measures, more than one million vulnerable Queenslanders will effectively

get a bill decrease on a default market offer. This is thanks to our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. We are delivering relief via cost-of-living rebates, renewables to push down prices, and retention of public ownership. It means more money going back to Queenslanders in the pockets of hardworking mums and dads, and on the ledgers of Queensland's small businesses, and more support to lift up our most vulnerable Queenslanders. We can deliver this whilst building more hospitals—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Members, there is far too much noise in the chamber coming from both sides of the House. Members to my left, the minister is providing a factual ministerial statement. There will be ample opportunity to ask questions or make other speeches during the remainder of today or in future sitting weeks. I ask that we hear the ministerial statement in silence.


Mr de BRENNI: We can deliver this for Queenslanders whilst building more hospitals, employing more nurses, more police and more teachers because Labor has kept Queensland's electricity assets in the right hands. They have been kept in the hands of Queenslanders. That is right—public ownership keeps electricity bills down.

Per kilowatt hour, Queensland's electricity is the cheapest in this year's AER determination—the cheapest in the nation. I am advised that thanks to the interventions of the Palaszczuk and Albanese governments, electricity bills for low-income earners in Queensland are \$816 lower than they otherwise would have been.

Crucial to keeping costs down is our partnership with the Albanese government who have committed even more to Queensland with investment in community batteries for household solar, including in Capalaba, Toohey, Stafford, Morayfield, Caloundra, Greenslopes, Noosa, Murrumba, Cooper, Coomera, Cairns and in the new environment minister's electorate of Nudgee. They have delivered \$2 billion for the Hydrogen Headstart, something our hydrogen champions in Redlands, Mundingburra and Rockhampton will look to maximise for Queensland. There has been a \$30 million contribution to clean hydro power at Borumba, benefiting Nicklin, Caloundra, Gympie and even Glass House. There has been an investment of \$1.3 billion in energy efficiency measures, \$300 million for those living in social housing, which is important to all Queenslanders.

Today we have the cheapest power per kilowatt hour for vulnerable Queenslanders and that is because of public ownership. It is the difference between this Labor government and the alternative. We will never sell off Queensland's electricity assets.

Electrical Safety

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (10.07 am): Electrical safety is an issue which affects all Queenslanders. That is why it is a key priority for the Palaszczuk government. We were reminded last week of how dangerous electricity can be with the tragic death of a 50-year-old man who cut through an electrical cable on his property north of Mackay. I send my deepest condolences to his family and friends.

Over the last 20 years since the Electrical Safety Act was introduced, the way Queenslanders have used and interacted with electricity has changed dramatically with many new technologies and products on the market now that could not be imagined in 2002. That is why we commissioned an independent review of the act undertaken by Mr Dick Williams.


As you would expect after two decades, the review report is extremely thorough and detailed. It contained 83 recommendations that were broad-ranging, complex and technical, covering the full gamut of electrical safety. They look at emerging energy generation and storage technologies including solar panels and batteries, electric vehicles, hydrogen-based electricity generation, storage technologies, off-grid generation and regulatory, licensing and supply chain duties reform.

The Office of Industrial Relations has undertaken careful analysis of these and has identified that, if implemented in full, they could have a significant impact across business, government and the community, so we want to make sure we get it right. That is why the Palaszczuk government has decided to release the full report for feedback from employer groups from businesses, unions, workers and the community so that we can fully understand the impact of the recommendations before we make any policy decisions.

Through a targeted discussion paper we are seeking priority feedback on three key topics by 27 June: electrical safety considerations of new and emerging technologies, the changing landscape of electricity and the workforce, and electrical vehicle safety. Feedback on the remaining recommendations will be open until 15 August.

It is imperative that these changes ensure Queenslanders are electrically safe now and into the future. I encourage all stakeholders and Queenslanders to log on and have their say. While they are online, they can check out our excellent Wiggles electrical safety song. I am pleased to advise the House now—and contrary to public view I am not the pink Wiggle; that is not true—the song clip has had more than 2.2 million views.

Maternity Services

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (10.10 am): I have been clear that as the Minister for Health and the Minister for Women, women's health is one of my top priorities. All women in Queensland should have access to high-quality care close to home no matter where they live. That is why on my first full day as health minister I travelled to Gladstone and Mackay to meet with mothers who have been impacted by maternity services. Joined by the member for Gladstone, I had a chance to sit down with Jemma, Coco and Marlena to discuss the importance of local birthing services close to home.


I also visited the Gladstone Hospital and met with new parents and frontline staff in the maternity ward. I met Jessie, Ben and their beautiful baby daughter, Thea, who was born at the hospital just the day before our visit. I want to thank Jessie and Ben for introducing me to their little baby girl and I hope they are settling into their new life well. Christina, one of our incredible midwives, was also there providing support to the new parents.

Our health workers are committed to supporting us which is why I am committed to supporting them. Although these challenges are not unique to Queensland, we know that our maternity services are facing challenges, especially in regional and rural areas. That is why we set up the Workforce Attraction Incentive Scheme to attract healthcare workers to our regions. As the Premier said yesterday, we have had almost 700 inquiries, which is great news for Queensland. However, we know there is more to do.

In the coming weeks I will be holding a statewide maternity services round table with the federal government to discuss solutions for our regional communities. This round table will bring together a mix of key health professionals and consumer groups. It is vital that the federal government is also extended an invitation because this is not just an issue for Queensland. I am pleased to see that Queensland will lead the way, and I have already spoken with the federal Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care, Ged Kearney, to discuss what more we can do in this space.

I am excited that Queensland will lead the discussion about how we can strengthen maternity services across the country. I look forward to updating the house as this work progresses and ensuring that we are providing the people of Queensland with calm and considered facts and ideas as well as support our women with health care close to home.

Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.12 am): Today I will introduce the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, which amends a broad range of legislation relating to the administration of justice including: the operation of courts and tribunals, the regulation of the legal profession, civil proceedings and electoral matters. Importantly, the bill includes amendments to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1978 to remove the restrictions which prohibit identification of an adult defendant charged with a prescribed sexual offence prior to finalisation of committal proceedings. Currently only defendants charged with rape and attempted rape, assault with intent to rape and sexual assault have their identity protected before committal. Queensland is only one of two jurisdictions in this country to offer this protection. Even alleged murderers and others accused of serious crimes can be identified before committal.

These amendments implement recommendation 83 of report 2 of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. The previous protections for accused rapists were based in part on the false assumption that women maliciously make up complaints to damage reputations. These rape myths have absolutely no place in our society and our laws need to reflect this.

The bill also delivers on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to consider reforms to better recognise the deaths of unborn children as a result of criminal conduct. The loss of an unborn child is devastating, and to lose an unborn child as a result of another person's criminal conduct is profoundly distressing for the parents, their families and the wider community.


I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge all of the families and the broader community who have advocated for reform to better recognise the death of an unborn child as a result of criminal conduct, particularly Sarah and Peter Milosevic, who I acknowledge are joining us in the gallery today. Peter and Sarah's tremendous courage through their continued advocacy needs to be acknowledged, and we thank them for that. I know this has been a long time coming. I do want to acknowledge the former attorney-general in relation to her work in both of these really important reform areas.

These particular amendments in relation to the loss of an unborn child due to criminal conduct go to allowing the name or description of an unborn child to be stated in relevant indictments and requires the court to treat ending an unborn child's life as an aggravating factor in sentencing for relevant serious offences. It is important to acknowledge what those serious offences are. Under the Criminal Code it will be murder, manslaughter, grievous bodily harm, wounding, dangerous operation of a vehicle and assault occasioning bodily harm. In addition, careless driving of a motor vehicle under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 will be included as a serious offence so that an aggravating factor can be taken into account at sentencing.

The bill will expand the definition of 'victim' to include family members of the unborn child, allowing family members including siblings to share their trauma at the loss of an unborn child due to criminal conduct in witness statements before the court. We will expand eligibility for funeral financial assistance to funerals of unborn children.

The Palaszczuk government is proud to be introducing legislation that supports a modern, fair and timely criminal justice system. I look forward to introducing these important reforms in this House later today.

Housing


 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing) (10.16 am): Every person deserves a roof over their head no matter where they live in our state. It is why this Palaszczuk government is delivering the largest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing from the Gold Coast to the cape. As part of this investment we are looking at innovative ways to deliver housing including through things like prefabrication.

Today I am pleased to advise this chamber that the first of 50 factory built houses that the Palaszczuk government has funded have arrived at their new home in Longreach. Built right here in Queensland on the Sunshine Coast, two of the prefabricated homes have now made the 1,200-kilometre journey out west with four more to join them soon. More of these homes will soon be distributed around South-East Queensland, craned onto trucks bound for Ipswich, Logan, Central Queensland and the Wide Bay-Burnett region. They are quick to build and join more than 600 social and affordable homes currently under construction by this government.

As I said earlier this week, to build thousands of new homes sooner we need to look at new ways to do things. Prefabricated houses will help us fast-track the delivery of homes to the most vulnerable in our community who need them. More than 4,400 homes have been built since we came to government and Queenslanders can expect more through our record \$3.9 billion investment to help deliver our 13,000-home target. On average, we have built more than 10 homes a week since coming to government, and I want to make sure we get more projects like this delivered as soon as possible.

While those opposite are focused on a secret plan for cuts and working with the federal coalition and the Greens to hold up vital housing legislation, we are standing up for Queenslanders. This is what our social housing program is about: helping Queenslanders no matter where they live to get a secure roof over their head when they need it most.


Seniors Legal and Support Service

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services) (10.18 am): I am pleased to inform the House the Palaszczuk government has expanded its Seniors Legal and Support Service. Older Queenslanders in the Moreton Bay North, Logan, Beaudesert and Ipswich areas are now benefitting from the expanded service. Additional outreach services are also available to regional and remote communities including outback Queensland, Cape York and the Torres Strait. This will add to the services already available in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Hervey Bay, Cairns, Townsville, Bundaberg, Gladstone, Gold Coast, Mackay, Rockhampton and the Sunshine Coast.

We now have 16 seniors legal and support services in Queensland and have delivered an additional \$2.85 million per year to fund these services across the state. The Seniors Legal and Support Service provides vital support to older Queenslanders who are experiencing or are at risk of elder abuse. These services help them to access individualised support, referral, counselling and mediation services.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering better services for our state's seniors. All Queenslanders—especially older Queenslanders—deserve to live free from abuse and have their financial assets protected. The Seniors Legal and Support Service can provide free legal advice, advocacy as well as strategies to keep money and assets safe. The Caxton Legal Centre, a community organisation with a long history of providing free legal and financial advice, is working with older people in the Logan, Beaudesert and Moreton regions. With increased funding, Caxton Legal expects to help more older people in these regions by visiting them in hospitals, in aged care and in their homes. They hope to connect seniors with the supports that they need to stop abuse and to maintain supportive family relationships. Specifically, they will work with First Nations older people through community-led and community designed programs. Queensland as a state owes a debt of gratitude for the contribution of our seniors. That is why it is important that seniors are supported to lead full, active and safe lives.

World Mining Congress

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.20 am): This government knows that Queensland's resource sector and our deposits are world-class, and we are ready to showcase them to the rest of the world. In one month the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre across the river will host the World Mining Congress, and I am excited. It is the first time in its 65-year history that this event is being held in Australia. What better place to do it than Brisbane? Where else but Queensland! More than 3,000 delegates and more than 200 CEOs from more than 50 countries will be here seeing what a great state we are and what we have to offer.

Queensland's resource sector has a proud history that has underpinned our state's economic development and prosperity. We are hosting the World Mining Congress at a time when the world seeks to address and limit the impacts of climate change by reducing emissions. It is also a time when we are actively investing in the right infrastructure and projects to be ready to capitalise on this global transition. We have the copper needed for powerlines, the vanadium to make grid sized batteries to store renewable energy, the high-purity alumina to make battery separators, the graphite to make anodes for lithium batteries and the cobalt and access to nickel for the cathodes in lithium ion batteries. In short, because we have what it takes to lead the world's efforts to decarbonise, they are coming to Queensland.


Delegates at the congress will hear about the Palaszczuk government's investment in critical minerals through our \$68.5 million Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan—not to mention the Queensland Resources Common User Facility that will be built in my home town of Townsville. This will be an Australian-first facility designed to prove up the commerciality of critical minerals. Through these investments, Queensland will be not only a supplier of critical minerals but also a manufacturer of products made from critical minerals and, importantly, a creator of good quality jobs for Queenslanders. Not only do we have resources below the ground but also Queensland has the sunshine to win energy above the ground to produce renewable energy. Queensland has some of the best scientists and research in the world right here to make it all happen.

After the event, I will be leading a tour to North Queensland to showcase our critical minerals to the world in the hope of driving more investment in our critical minerals sector. From pit to product, from Mount Isa to Cloncurry to Townsville, delegates will have a chance to see the best geology and geography Queensland has to offer and, of course, to experience the very best of Queensland's culture and warm hospitality. They might even get a chance to have dinner under the stars in the outback. I cannot wait for the World Mining Congress to get underway to showcase that Queensland truly is the land of resource opportunity.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members. I know that the minister's excitement is infectious, but the House will come to order.

Beef Australia 2024

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.24 am): If you want excitement, listen to this. The countdown has begun and I, for one, could not be more excited to join the stampede of government members to the beef capital of the world, Rockhampton, next year for Beef 2024. I am sorry to Casino, but if Queensland and New South Wales were to have a 'Steak of Origin' I know who I would be backing. I was thrilled to mark 'one year to go' alongside the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport last Wednesday night at a Beef Australia event at the Breakfast Creek Hotel. Given the quality of Queensland steak on offer, it was a good choice of venue.

Winding the clock back two years, I was absolutely thrilled to join the Premier, the Treasurer, copious number of Labor members and a couple of LNP members at Beef 2021. I know that the members for Rockhampton and Keppel are strong supporters of the jobs, tourism and enjoyment that Beef Week brings to the city, and I look forward to joining them in Rockhampton next year. Beef Week 2021 was held at a time when border closures and other COVID restrictions were in place to keep Queenslanders safe. Despite the fact that Beef 2021 was unable to welcome international guests, it still broke attendance records. With the borders now well and truly open and with the Palaszczuk government's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan continuing to take Queensland from strength to strength, I am looking forward to seeing Beef 2024 break that attendance record.

Beef Australia does a mountain of work in organising the event. I want to place on the record my appreciation for the efforts of Beef Australia chair and #eatqld champion Bryce Camm, Beef Australia CEO Simon Irwin and their team. Not too long ago I spoke with Simon Irwin in Rockhampton about plans for Beef 2024, and I can say that we are in for a treat. The Palaszczuk government is a strong supporter of Beef 2024, as well as the entire Queensland beef industry, for the good jobs and good food that it brings to our state.

Science Research Agreement, Bavaria

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.26 am): Later today, on behalf of the Queensland government I will sign a new science research agreement with the Bavarian state government in Germany. This will help Queensland in its drive to address climate change and to reach its goal of net zero emissions by 2050. The new agreement puts in place formal cooperation between the two governments to support collaborative university-level research on priority topics. This six-year agreement builds on existing research and industry connections between the two states which include the Queensland University of Technology's collaboration with Bavaria's University of Bayreuth and the University of Queensland's partnership with the Technical University of Munich.


The collaborative research priorities supported by this agreement include artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, additive manufacturing, life sciences biomedical research, bioeconomy and aerospace. It also includes a focus on sustainable energy including green hydrogen, synthetic fuels and energy storage, clean tech and emission reduction technologies. These are areas of particular interest to Queensland as we work to manage the risks of climate change and achieve our state's renewable energy and zero net emissions targets.

Among other things, the research opportunities resulting from the agreement will help Queensland and Bavaria develop prosperous and resilient economies that manage the risks of climate change and make the most of the many opportunities that go along with transitioning to a net zero emissions economy. Importantly, the science priorities promoted in the agreement—especially green and synthetic fuels, better energy storage, emission reduction technologies and bioeconomy—will help the state in its drive towards achieving the goals of the Queensland Climate Action Plan 2020-2030.

Queensland enjoys longstanding trade investment links and industry collaborations with Germany. Last year, we signed a Joint Declaration of Intent for Cooperation in Bioeconomy with the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. We also have a number of existing knowledge-based partnerships with some of Germany's leading organisations such as BMW, Siemens and the German Space Agency. There are currently more than 700 German researchers and academics based here in Queensland making valuable contributions to our scientific research collaborations. We look forward to continuing to strengthen our international science partnerships as we build our reputation as a global science leader.

There is no doubt that Queensland is well positioned to be a hub for international collaboration. We are home to a vibrant science and technology community and have world-class research institutions and a strong track record of innovation. Our researchers are global leaders in fields such as environmental science, material science and biomedical research. Together, these capabilities make Queensland the perfect place to research, design and test new ideas and products. I look forward to seeing the benefits and outcomes that this new partnership delivers both here in Queensland and in Bavaria.

Electric Vehicles

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (10.29 am): The Palaszczuk government is delivering full employment, better services, a modern economy and action on climate change right here in Queensland. As part of our lifestyle, Queenslanders love to take a road trip. Whether it is to drive to one of our beautiful beaches, our mountains or our picturesque regions of the cape, Queenslanders get around, so every day we see more and more Queenslanders making the switch to an electric vehicle.

A couple of weeks ago Queensland reached a record 20,000 electric vehicles on Queensland roads. Today I can report that we have now passed 21,000 electric vehicles only a couple of weeks later, so the momentum is there. We know transport is responsible for 14 per cent of Queensland's carbon emissions. One way we will cut emissions is to bolster reliable and available EV charging infrastructure no matter where you live in this state, and stages 1, 2 and 3 of the Queensland electric vehicle superhighway have done exactly that. Stage 3 is now advanced and is delivering 18 sites across rural and regional Queensland, making it a true regional connector and investment. This investment will create more tourism travel and economic opportunities across the state.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr BAILEY: I hear the member for Burleigh backing me in there. Isn't that wonderful? Since the first Queensland electric vehicle superhighway site opened in 2017, over 106,000 Queensland electric vehicle charging sessions have occurred to date. This has saved between 2,421 and 2,841 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

As momentum grows and more people want to make the switch, we need to make sure that the infrastructure keeps up with the pace as it exponentially increases. That is why today I am happy to announce—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Coomera!

Mr BAILEY: Some of us will join the 21st century eventually. This is why today I am happy to announce—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! You have the call, Minister.

Mr BAILEY: I am trying to get an announcement out about electric vehicles here, Mr Acting Speaker, but there is a lot of opposition to it. This is why today I am happy to announce the successful candidates of our \$10 million electric vehicle co-contribution fund as part of acting on climate change. We will partner with RACQ, NRMA, Tesla, Evie Networks and Engie to build 44 new charging stations across regional Queensland. This co-fund will bring the joint—

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Southern Downs!

Mr BAILEY: I know the regional members within the Palaszczuk government support this all the way. This co-fund will bring the total joint investment to \$24½ million, which is the single biggest investment in EV charging in Queensland history. Feedback from electric vehicle owners is that they would like to see more fast chargers integrated into the network, and that is exactly what this package will deliver. The new locations will deliver fast and superfast charging units that range between 75 and 250 kilowatts. Every site allows for multiple electric vehicles to fast charge at the same time which will improve queueing times and improve accessibility for all users. Once completed, this will almost double our current network where the publicly owned Queensland electric vehicle superhighway has done the hard, early yards in terms of getting a network up and bring the overall total to 99 across Queensland.

The construction of these electric vehicle charging sites will kick off in the coming months and they are expected to be fully operational by next year. There are too many locations for me to run through today, but I would encourage those who are interested to jump on the TMR website to find out more and watch this space, because I will have pleasure in announcing them as we progress. Infrastructure has a huge role to play in breaking down barriers like range anxiety and will encourage more people to make the switch. Cleaner transport means that we will have quieter streets, less emissions, more acting on climate change and reducing running costs, creating jobs, boosting tourism and our local economy. It is sad to hear the level of interjections on a matter of a modern economy. It is something that every MP in this place should support. This government will lead in the new economy on renewable energy and on new technology and will not be stopped by the Neanderthals on the other side.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Minister, you have used unparliamentary language. I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr BAILEY: I withdraw.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.35 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 13 June 2023.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Report



Ms HOWARD (Ipswich—ALP) (10.35 am): I table report No. 214 of the Ethics Committee titled *Matter of privilege referred by the State Development and Regional Industries Committee on 26 May 2022 relating to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings*.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 214, 57th Parliament—Matter of privilege referred by the State Development and Regional Industries Committee on 26 May 2022 in relation to an alleged unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings [\[711\]](#).

The report deals with allegations of an unauthorised disclosure of proceedings of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee and consideration of a potential inconsistency between the Local Government Act 2009 and the Parliament of Queensland Act 2002 regarding the release of information by local government employees to councillors.

The committee has recommended that the House make a finding of contempt for an unauthorised disclosure of committee proceedings and, noting an apology received on 12 May 2023, take no further action in respect of this matter; and that the Minister for Local Government considers proposing an amendment to the Local Government Act 2009 to include parliamentary privilege as an exemption under section 170A, with any proposal to be considered by the House as soon as possible. I commend the report to the House.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Question time will conclude at 11.37 am.

Housing Supply



Mr CRISAFULLI (10.37 am): My question is to the Minister for Housing. New data released to the opposition reveals that this year there were 434 state government homes sitting empty for more than 30 days. What does the minister say to vulnerable Queenslanders sleeping in their cars and tents while the Palaszczuk government owns hundreds of vacant homes?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for his question—for finally asking me a question. When it comes to those properties, as he knows and as the explanation to him provided, we need to do maintenance and repair on some of those properties to make sure they are safe. Are those opposite

suggesting that we have people live in unsafe houses? Is that the position of those opposite? We provided a comprehensive overview that outlined that those are the reasons that we need to make sure that those properties are fit for purpose.

I am more than happy to stand up on our track record of the thousands of social and affordable homes that we have in this state under our government, and that number is growing. It is actually growing unlike what it was doing under those opposite. Under the member for Everton as the then housing minister we actually saw social housing go backwards in this state. That is his legacy. Then the Leader of the Opposition made the decision to put him back in the portfolio of housing.

Mr Crisafulli: The same speaking notes.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Miller! Order!

Honourable members interjected.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Members, the level of interjections is getting very loud. The minister is being directly responsive to the question asked. I would ask members to my left to hear that response.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection of the member for Broadwater because nothing has changed for those opposite. It is all the same faces—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! Members, I had asked the House to come to order and gave my reasons for that and interjections started immediately. I warn the member for Theodore under the standing orders.

Ms SCANLON: They appointed the bloke who not only saw social housing go backwards but actually cut the social housing construction budget by 90 per cent. He did not even deliver in his own electorate. That was his legacy. I have not seen any new policies from the opposition around what they would propose to do. All I have heard are comments from people such as Senator Matt Canavan, who said that they want to block social and affordable housing investment. Bert van Manen is the federal member for Forde. He has a low profile so people may not know who he is. He said that if we add a huge number of new houses to the current situation then the problem will only get worse. The position of the Liberal National Party is that they do not want to add any more social and affordable housing to the market.

In stark contrast, our government is investing record amounts in social and affordable housing. We are doing redevelopments in areas like the one that I visited with the member for Mansfield yesterday and like the one in my electorate at Nerang where we are actually creating more housing on a block of land. We are looking at innovative solutions.

(Time expired)

Housing Supply

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Minister for Housing. The new data reveals that state government owned homes remained vacant for over a year, including some for over 600 days and another for 892 days, while the government has failed to repair three fire damaged properties for over 940 days. As the third housing minister under whom some of those properties have sat idle, will the minister set a date for families in need to move into those vacant homes?

Ms SCANLON: Again, I thank the member for the question. As I just said, we have a record investment and I will be making it very clear to the department that I expect that they get homes off the ground as quickly as possible in terms of repair and maintenance. You would have to have been living under a rock—in fact, I think those opposite are often living under a rock—if you did not accept that there are a whole range of challenges right now in terms of supply and labour shortage constraints. We are absolutely focused on investing whether that be in repairing or maintaining our existing stock, which has increased compared to when those opposite were in government when it actually decreased, or in delivering more social housing.

Again, I find the questions from the opposition pretty hypocritical given that they have made no comments about their federal colleagues who are blocking investment in social and affordable housing that could actually unlock around 1,200 additional homes. Those are homes for women and families fleeing domestic and family violence and those opposite are standing in the way of that. We have only really heard from the opposition—

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Apologies, Minister. I ask you to resume your seat. Member for Bonney, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms SCANLON: All we have heard from the opposition are 'vibes'. There are no actual plans from the Leader of the Opposition. The person sitting behind him, the member for Bonney, continuously opposes any increased supply in his electorate. In fact, I reckon I could find a whole range of examples where those opposite oppose supply in their own electorates.

A government member: What about Bonney?

Ms SCANLON: From the member for Bonney there are many examples. In fact, he is continually arguing with the Gold Coast city council around the city plan not being able to demonstrate how they will unlock affordable housing. We need everyone to play their part. At the moment the state government is doing a lot of the heavy lifting with record investment and we will continue to roll that out.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Resume your seat, please, Minister. Member for Nanango, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection of the member for Nanango because I looked for the policy when the member for Nanango was the Leader of the Opposition and I could barely find anything. Those opposite talk about recycling, but half of them are ex-Newman government ministers who are just recycling old ideas, which really are just to cut. In fact, we have heard from the member for Chatsworth that they want to prune. I do not know whether that refers to social housing. We have the debt reduction plan from the Leader of the Opposition. Is social and affordable housing on that debt reduction plan? We will stand on our record any day of the week to make sure that Queenslanders have a roof over their heads.

(Time expired)

Energy and Jobs Plan

Mrs GILBERT: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Can the Premier update the House on how the Palaszczuk Labor government's Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan will support jobs and economic development in the Mackay region and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms PALASZCZUK: On this side of the House, we have a plan. It is called the Energy and Jobs Plan. It is a very comprehensive plan about how to convert our renewable energy to 70 per cent by 2032 in Queensland. That is right: we have a plan, a policy, that is taking effect and will change the lives of people in this state. That is what being in government is all about. When you are in opposition you are also supposed to come up with ideas and plans. Unfortunately, we do not hear anything from those opposite. We have an opportunity to make the Pioneer-Burdekin hydro dam the largest dam—

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Resume your seat, please, Premier. Member for Southern Downs, that interjection was extreme. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have the opportunity to make the Pioneer-Burdekin hydro dam the largest hydro dam in the world. In the coming months we will be undertaking a worldwide recruitment process to get the technical expertise that we need for the dam work. Under our plan—

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer and Leader of the Opposition will cease their quarrelling across the chamber.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—100,000 jobs will be created. That means opportunities for young people living in the Mackay region. It will transform the region.

What do those opposite have to say about building potentially the world's largest pumped hydro dam? It appears that those opposite may not be in support because a person called David Littleproud confirmed the National's opposition to the dam. The Nats have broken ranks. The division is heard, loud and clear. The Nats have broken ranks and said that they oppose the dam. What do the member for Broadwater and the member for Kawana think about the plan? Are they supportive of hydro or not?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am glad that we have a packed gallery today because people can see how rude the opposition is in this House. I am glad that the gallery is full so that people can witness—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Members, the level of interjection is far too high. Member for Bundaberg, I can see you frequently arguing across the chamber. I ask you to cease that behaviour. Member for Kawana, you are interjecting constantly. I will start to warn people and I will continue to warn people.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member for Broadwater stood in this House and said that young people aspire to see action on climate change, but the Nationals are opposed to the pumped hydro dam. There we go: they say one thing while the left hand is doing something else. We have a plan that will transform our economy. We will absolutely make sure that the plan is introduced. The people of this state will have a say on that plan—

(Time expired)

Housing Supply

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Minister for Housing. On Saturday the minister said that 'success is making sure we deliver on what we promised'. Over 12 months ago the government promised 34 units at Chermside through the Housing Investment Fund by September this year. With the first sod still not turned, will these 34 units be delivered by September as promised or, by the minister's own standard, will this be another housing failure?

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Members, I have made it quite clear that I do not want interjections between questions being asked and answered. Member for Pine Rivers, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for Everton for the question, the former housing minister under the LNP, who wants to talk about delivering on targets. I do not know what targets they had. They may have been targets to go backwards.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms SCANLON: In relation to the project he is referring to in Chermside, which is being invested in by the Housing Investment Fund, because we actually have a Housing Investment Fund—we do not block investment funds like the Liberal National Party and the Greens political party—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms SCANLON: We are actually investing in social and affordable housing, working with community housing providers. I hear the member talking about community housing providers. There has never been more money available for—

Ms FARMER: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am sitting beside the housing minister and I cannot hear what she is saying. I seek your guidance on how we can allow the minister to speak.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you. I will manage the behaviour of members in the chamber.

Ms SCANLON: I can advise that, when it comes to that particular property, construction will commence mid this year—construction that is only happening because our government is actually investing. Do we know what we could do more with—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! Pause the clock. Member for Everton and member for Mudgeeraba, the minister is being directly responsive to the question asked. I ask you both to cease your interjections.

Ms SCANLON: We could do more if we had the Housing Australia Future Fund—a \$10 billion fund that those opposite are blocking, despite the fact that the Community Housing Industry Association, National Shelter, Homelessness Australia and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Association are calling on the Greens and the Liberal National Party to get out of the way and vote for investment in social and affordable housing—

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Toowoomba South.

Ms SCANLON:—and to stop attacking community housing organisations, and tenants for that matter as well.

Mr Mander interjected.

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

Ms SCANLON: We are committed to making sure we roll out investment as quickly as possible through the Housing Investment Fund. We are very proud to have that fund, a \$2 billion fund that we actually doubled as a result of the Housing Summit. We have made a very clear commitment to make sure that we hit our target—

Mr Janetzki interjected.

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

Ms SCANLON: We have heard nothing about what the opposition's plan is—what their targets are—other than their history of just cutting. Of course, it was not just cutting social housing; it was cutting and sacking organisations like QBuild that actually do the repair—

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

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The House will come to order before I take the point of order.

Mr POWELL: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b). The question was about a specific property in Chermside. People in Queensland need homes now, not reference to 10-year-old policy.

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Thank you for your point of order. I remind all members that I do not need any assistance in taking points of order. The minister is being relevant to the question asked.

Ms SCANLON: Of course, I have addressed the question around when the project, which we are investing in, will commence. I know that members opposite do not like me talking about the Newman government—I would not either if I were them—but we do not have any policy from them so it is the only thing I can refer to. We will make sure that we deliver the social and affordable housing Queenslanders need. I look forward to being at the commencement of that project very soon.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before I call the next questioner, I will take some advice. Members to my left, I have given clear guidance in relation to the points of order in relation to relevance. Many of the interjections that were made following that were not appreciated. Members are well aware of the standing orders. The minister was responsive to the question.

Business

Ms KING: My question is of the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure. Will the Deputy Premier advise the House how the Palaszczuk government is investing in Queensland businesses, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any other approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Pumicestone for her question. All members on this side of the House know that the No. 1 priority of Labor governments is always creating jobs—good, secure, local jobs. As the Treasurer outlined in his ministerial statement, the Palaszczuk government's economic plan is working. It is creating jobs. It is driving down unemployment right across the state—from the highs caused by those opposite with their cuts when they were in government to the record lows that we now have thanks to the Palaszczuk government's economic plan. A key element of that economic plan is supporting jobs in the defence industries right across this state. We are determined to use Queensland's strategic advantages—our geography, our natural resources, our manufacturing knowledge—to develop advanced defence manufacturing and the good local jobs that come with that.

The defence industry fund will help Queensland-based businesses to grow in the booming defence sector and create more jobs for Queenslanders. We are also working with the Albanese government to ensure more of those defence jobs are here. We are investing in supply chains and local manufacturers right now: businesses such as JRS manufacturing in Toowoomba, which provides critical steel to the aerospace industry; Valiant Space, which is providing non-toxic in-space propulsion systems for satellites; Black Sky Aerospace, Australia's only sovereign manufacturer of solid rocket fuels, motors, launch vehicles and common tactical boosters; Raider Targetry, which is using advanced robotics for the defence sector, manufacturing moving targets that can be quickly deployed onto training fields; in Maryborough Allweld Manufacturing, which is an Indigenous business, well supported by the member for Maryborough, delivering manufacturing and project management support to the defence sector; and Acute Laser, which is a specialist laser-cutting and design business, using that cutting-edge technology again to support the defence sector.

All of these businesses, supported by the Palaszczuk government, are delivering a range of services to the defence industry and creating good, local, secure jobs. That is what the Palaszczuk government is all about—working with Queensland businesses to take advantage of the opportunities that lie ahead for our state to create great jobs for Queenslanders into the future.

Youth Justice

Mr NICHOLLS: My question is to the Minister for Youth Justice. In 2016 the Palaszczuk government legislated the principle of detention as a last resort for youth criminals. Will the minister now listen to Queenslanders, admit this was a mistake and adopt yet another LNP policy by removing detention as a last resort for young offenders?

Ms FARMER: I thank the member for his question. Certainly the Palaszczuk Labor government does have in place an option for the courts of detention as a last resort, which is part of the UN Convention on Rights of the Child and is in place nationally and internationally.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Clayfield!

Ms FARMER: It is important that we give the courts a range of options to deal with serious offenders because one of the foundations of the Palaszczuk government's plan on youth justice is community safety. We know that once offenders have been in detention it is almost 100 per cent likely that they will reoffend. That is just one of the options that the courts have and must take into account.

Having said that, we can see that in Queensland our laws are working. We have actually seen an increase in the number of serious repeat offenders who have been given detention and the periods of detention are now longer. When we look at the numbers, Queensland has the highest number of young people in detention in Australia, except for in Northern Australia.

One of the other options available to the courts is our breach of bail laws.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Clayfield!

Ms FARMER: They were part of a raft of new laws that were put in place under the Strengthening Community Safety Act. The LNP supported that act.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Please resume your seat, Minister. Member for Clayfield, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms FARMER: Although it is very early days, members may recall that earlier this week I read out some of the statistics that we are already seeing as a result of those new laws. In terms of breach of bail, 299 young people have been charged with that offence in under two months. That compares to the 27 months that the Clayton's breach of bail offence was in place when 185 young people were convicted of that offence. In under two months more than 100 young people have been charged with that offence.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms FARMER: You want to talk to the community about what works. Do you want our laws that are having an effect or do you want those laws—

(Time expired)

Regional Queensland, Investment

Mr WALKER: My question is of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer tell the House how the Palaszczuk government ensures that Queenslanders get their fair share for the resources they own, and is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Mundingburra for his question. The answer is simple. The answer to the member's question is one word—royalties. That is how Queenslanders get a fair share from the resources that belong to them. Royalties are not a tax, as those members opposite like to describe them. They are a payment to the owner of a mineral resource for the extraction of that resource. Once the resource is extracted it can never be extracted again. It cannot be grown again. It cannot be developed again. When that resource is extracted on behalf of the people of Queensland they deserve a fair share of the value of that resource.

We only have one chance to get the policy setting right because when the resource is gone it is gone. That is why in last year's budget I introduced new progressive coal royalty tiers for Queensland so Queenslanders could get a fair share of what they own. Those royalties are delivering for Queensland. Coal companies continue to make big profits. Mining investment in Queensland and in the coal industry is strong. The number of people working in the mining industry and working in coal has risen since those royalties were introduced.

That is not good enough for the LNP. Right throughout the LNP, the only digging that they want to see when it comes to royalties is the great big black hole they are creating in the budget of Queensland because they will not support progressive coal royalties in this state. It is true for the current Leader of the Opposition and it is true for Peter Dutton.

Not content with describing revenue measures like royalties as chains and whips, last week Peter Dutton sang the praises of an economic philosophy more discredited than when the member for Nanango and the member for Everton introduced the fake Bradfield Scheme. Peter Dutton went on to talk about the benefits of Reaganomics. Peter Dutton said—wait for it—'Just like Reagan, will be wind back intervention.' There we have it from the LNP—all those members opposite—the myth of trickle-down economics. We have their absolute commitment to inequality in society and progressive royalties gone from this state. That is what Peter Dutton wants—a Queensland MP. That is what the Leader of the Opposition wants—a Queensland LNP MP. That is what the LNP wants in this state.

When the auto babble is switched off, that is what we get from the Leader of the Opposition—alternating between whingeing and silence, but no truth. We know the truth. Week after week they complain about revenue. They did not vote for progressive coal royalties. They want to sit down with the coal lobby to repeal them. That is the position. What is the position of the LNP and the current Leader of the Opposition? It is progressive coal royalties gone, a big black hole in our budget that can only be filled three ways—by cutting, sacking and selling.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Before I call the next questioner, member for Logan and member for Pumicestone, cease your quarrelling across the chamber.

Child Safety, Youth Crime

Ms CAMM: My question is to the Minister for Child Safety. Given the Premier's comments about parents needing to take responsibility for the actions of their criminal children, will the minister accept it is the state that bears responsibility for the criminal actions of children while under state care?

Mr CRAWFORD: I thank the member for her question. Certainly a lot of what the member is referring to sits within the youth justice portfolio, which is now the responsibility of a different minister. In broad terms, the department of child safety has around 130,000 referrals every single year. Out of the 130,000, around a third turn into some sort of referral or protection. We have around 10,000 to 11,000 young people who are in the care of kinship carers or family as well. We have around 1,600 children who are in residential care. That is the child safety landscape. It is a very robust system.

A small number of children—barely 3.7 per cent—subject to a child protection order are also under a youth justice order. We sometimes hear noise about the number of children who are involved in the child protection system and also the youth justice system, but the number is very low. We also hear a lot of noise about the number of children in residential care who are involved in the youth justice system. I can report that that number is also quite low. There are 77 children out of the 1,600 in residential care who are also engaged in the youth justice space.

I hear the member's question, but the reality is that the department of child safety manages the wellbeing and safety of, as I said before, around 10,000 to 11,000 children and a very small number of those children are also connected with the youth justice space.

Workplace Health and Safety

Mr KING: My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government continues to keep Queensland workers and workplaces safe and is the minister aware of any other approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Kurwongbah for the question. As an ex-sparky, now a politician and a fine member, he knows how valuable it is to keep our workers, particularly our electrical workers, safe. We are so proud that our Energy and Jobs Plan will look after every one of those electrical workers as we transition to 70 per cent renewable by 2032. We want them to work safe because they sell their labour, not their health, and we want them to arrive home safely after a hard day's work.

The Palaszczuk government has a consistent record of keeping workers safe. Last Saturday marked the second anniversary of legislation introduced by this government to provide presumptive workers compensation for our first responders diagnosed with PTSD. Our first responders play an important role in protecting and serving the community but they are often exposed to traumatic and life-threatening incidents. This significant reform supports our police officers, ambos, firies, SES volunteers and other key frontline services in keeping them safe.

On 1 May this year, our nation-leading Silica Construction Code of Practice—the first in the nation—came into force. It sets minimal enforceable standards to eliminate or minimise exposure to silica dust. We have accepted all 31 recommendations from an independent review into workplace health and safety. As I mentioned in my ministerial statement, we are currently consulting on new electrical safety laws which will bring about significant changes, recognising new technologies and the safety procedures required for those technologies.

What do we see from those opposite? I have been asked about alternative approaches. Mr Acting Speaker, you cannot believe it but when those opposite were in government they actually cut the Electrical Safety Office. It was completely decimated. The destruction that happened in the three years of the Campbell Newman government, with the Leader of the Opposition around the cabinet table, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition around the cabinet table, and the member for Clayfield, the then treasurer, around the cabinet table! Can members believe that they completely cut the Electrical Safety Office?

I pay tribute to ex-commissioner Greg Skyring, who did an amazing job. We reinstated the Electrical Safety Office and the current commissioner, Keith McKenzie, is doing an outstanding job. They cut workers compensation benefits to these workers. They cut common law entitlements to these workers. When it comes to the health and safety and benefits for workers, all those opposite do is cut, cut, cut.

(Time expired)

Health, Data Reporting

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister commit to not changing the way ambulance ramping, ambulance lost time, elective surgery and specialist outpatient waiting lists are calculated and reported?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. There are no plans to change how these measures are reported. As I said yesterday, we will be releasing all of that data quarterly. I am absolutely committed to getting better performance in our health system. We know the pressures that our hospitals are under. They are under immense pressure because everyone wants to move to Queensland. We need to make sure that we have the workforce to support our really hardworking frontline staff. That is why I am absolutely focused on workforce. That is why we have these fantastic incentives in place. If you can come to Queensland from interstate and overseas, if you are here in the south-east, \$20,000 is on the table. If you go to regional Queensland to any of our wonderful regional towns—

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

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Manager of Opposition Business, what is your point of order?

Mr POWELL: My point of order is on relevance 118(b). It appears the minister has moved beyond the question. The question was specifically about how these waiting lists are calculated and reported. She has not answered that question.

Government members: Yes, she has!

Mr POWELL: No. She said 'reported'. She did not address how they are calculated.

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Members, when I rise to my feet it is an indication that everyone needs to return to their seats and remain silent. I will take some advice in relation to that. Thank you for the point of order. There is no point of order. The role of the Speaker is to ensure that the minister is responsive to the question, not that the question is answered in the way that the questioner may want it answered. The opportunity exists for questioners on my left to ask further and follow-up questions if the response received is not to their satisfaction.

Ms FENTIMAN: The opposition clearly are talking about performance data. As I have been very clear from day one, I want to see better performance data and that means better performance from our emergency departments. The way to do that is to focus on infrastructure and beds but also workforce.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the Opposition!

Ms FENTIMAN: That was the point I was making before the member for Glass House stood up again to interrupt me. Workforce is absolutely critical. Our hardworking frontline staff literally save lives every day.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Leader of the Opposition, the minister is being responsive to the question asked. I warn you under the standing orders.

Ms FENTIMAN: On that, particularly when it comes to the pressures of our Ambulance Service, when it comes to workforce, I am very pleased to report to the House that we have already employed more than 1,200 additional ambulance workers since we were elected—and guess how many more this term? 735. If you focus on infrastructure and more beds in the system and you focus on workforce, that is how you drive better performance across our health system. That is what I am focused on every single day because those frontline workers are not duds. They are the ones who look after us when we most need it. That is why we are going to look after them. That is absolutely why we are putting everything in place to attract the best and brightest from interstate and overseas to come and join us and be part of this wonderful health system that we have here in Queensland.

As I said yesterday, and I think it is worth repeating—in fact, I will say it every day I get an opportunity to be on my feet in this House—we do not sack frontline workers; we back them. We do not think they are duds in regional Queensland; in fact, we think they are some of the hardest working frontline workers.

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

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Manager of Opposition Business, what is your point of order?

Mr POWELL: My point of order is on relevance 118(b). The question was whether the minister would categorically rule out changing the way the data is calculated and reported. The minister has moved beyond that again.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Manager of Opposition Business, I have already ruled on a very similar point of order.

Ms FARMER: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Manager of Opposition Business is continually interrupting our ministers when they are answering questions.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! I have made it clear that I will take points of order in silence. Member for Toowoomba North, you are warned under the standing orders. The Manager of Opposition Business is within his rights to raise points of order. I will be the judge as to whether they are frivolous. This is not a frivolous point of order. Minister for Health, do you have anything further to add?

Ms FENTIMAN: I do, Mr Acting Speaker.

Ms Bates: Rule it out: yes or no?

Ms FENTIMAN: I take that interjection from the member for Mudgeeraba. The first two sentences I said was that there are no plans to change performance data. I again will take the opportunity to say that we want better performance and the way to do that is by having more beds, more hospitals and satellite hospitals, focusing on workforce attraction and backing frontline workers, not sacking them and not calling them duds.

(Time expired)

Electricity Prices

Mr SULLIVAN: My question is of the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement. Can the minister please advise the House about the Australian Energy Regulator's energy price determination and how the Palaszczuk government's Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan is taking real action on easing the cost of living and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for Stafford for the question. I look forward to answering that question, but before I do I would like to make an observation that I would like to place on the *Record of Proceedings*. I am glad that the gallery has been full this morning because do you hear that, Mr Acting Speaker? It is silence. When the men on this side of the House are responding to questions they are able to do so in relative silence. When the women on this side of the House respond, whether it is the Premier, the health minister or the youth justice minister, they continually yell, interrupt—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Minister, I will bring you back to the question asked.

Mr de BRENNI: Hundreds of people in this gallery witnessed it today. They were all witnesses to it. Official power prices are out today. The Australian Energy Regulator released its default market offer—

Mr Head interjected.

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

Mr de BRENNI: The official determination is out today. I have been reviewing all of the numbers in relation to this and there is one number that really stands out: 43 per cent. We can all remember where that number comes from—43 per cent. That was the hip pocket hit those opposite dealt to Queenslanders on their power bills. The member for Clayfield, the member for Broadwater and Campbell Newman delivered a 43 per cent hip pocket hit to Queensland households. What did they do about it? How did they help families? Did they help small business? They did nothing to help Queensland families and nothing to help small business.

It is now official: because of our plan, because of our commitment to public ownership, because we are on the side of Queensland households and small business, the most vulnerable households in this state will see an effective nine per cent reduction in their electricity bills. Under those opposite—43 per cent. They did nothing about it except take action to fatten up those electricity companies to get them ready for sale, because that is what they stand for.

The AER determination released today shows that our plan is working. It has delivered the biggest reduction in bills on the east coast—\$816 less than forecast—because of the actions taken by this government and the Albanese government. Our plan is clear. In fact, on this side of the House we have an energy plan. They have no plan. We will deliver cost-of-living rebates. We know that all they would do is cut, sack and sell.

Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Premier. I note reports that the Premier has said that her government needs to do better. When the Premier moved some of her ministers around did the Premier consider shuffling herself out of her cabinet, as Queenslanders all know the fish rots from the head?

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There are imputations in that question and unparliamentary language. It should immediately be ruled out of order.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Minister for Education, I was on my feet. You are warned under the standing orders.

Acting Speaker's Ruling, Question out of Order

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I will take some advice, and I will take it in silence. The question was unparliamentary. It is ruled out of order.

Voice to Parliament; Path to Treaty

Ms LUI: My question is of the Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts. Will the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is advancing voice, treaty and truth in Queensland?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Cook for the question and acknowledge her for her advocacy, along with the member for Bundamba, and the hard work of the then minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, Craig Crawford. At the Cairns regional sitting earlier this month we saw this parliament make history when our historic Path to Treaty legislation was passed. This legislation provides the critical foundation for the important work ahead of us. I have already met with the Interim Truth and Treaty Body to discuss the next steps on our path to treaty in Queensland as we begin work on the terms of reference for the very important inquiry and the critical appointment of members to the inquiry and the Treaty Institute Council, who will help ready all parties for treaty-making into the future.

Since the beginning of our path to treaty there has been great consideration given to the membership of key groups that have helped guide our work in this space. The current Interim Truth and Treaty Body, for instance, is co-chaired by Cheryl Buchanan and Sallyanne Atkinson. From the very beginning on our Path to Treaty journey we established an Eminent Panel that included Jackie Huggins, Dame Quentin Bryce, Josephine Bourne and the incredible Kerry O'Brien. Kerry O'Brien is a strong supporter of the Voice and treaty. He has just co-authored a book with regard to the Voice to Parliament, so it was of great interest when I recently saw a flyer that said Kerry O'Brien will be sitting down with the opposition leader next week on the Gold Coast to discuss, of all things, reshaping the centre right in Queensland.

When this parliament passed the historic treaty legislation, I was astounded by the fact that the LNP voted with the government and passed the bill. In fact, during the debate the Leader of the Opposition said that the Path to Treaty offers 'a fork in the road'. He said—

Down one well-travelled path lies a discussion had for political purposes. It talks a big game but achieves little for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—a path where political battlelines are drawn but ultimately ends with a decade wasted and no progress made. Down the other path is a treaty.

That is what the Leader of the Opposition said. You can imagine the absolute dismay of many at media reports just days after these words were spoken by the Leader of the Opposition that the LNP party structure and its federal colleagues are apparently enraged and calling for the legislation to be repealed. Further, there are reports that the Leader of the Opposition's own team members have been assuring their federal counterparts, their federal LNP mates, that treaty negotiations will be killed off by the LNP if they were ever to take office. The Leader of the Opposition has one week to stand up against the far right of his party. We will see what he says to Kerry O'Brien.

Ingham Hospital, CT Scanner

Mr DAMETTO: My question is to the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. For doctors to diagnose and treat stroke and traumatic injuries a computer tomography scanner is an essential piece of medical equipment, yet the Ingham Hospital continues to go without. Will the minister commit to funding a CT scanner for the Ingham Hospital in this year's budget and provide equitable health services to Hinchinbrook?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for the question. I know how committed he is to his community and delivering 24-hour access to a CT scanner at the Ingham Hospital. We know that a CT scanner is available to the Ingham community through a private provider. Health emergencies often happen outside of business hours, and that is why it is really important we have one available in the public system for 24-hour access. I am committed to ensuring that Queenslanders can access the health services they need, when they need them, in their communities.

I am pleased to advise that the Townsville Hospital and Health Service is working to find a solution for the Ingham community. A proposal is currently under consideration, and I will give my commitment to the member for Hinchinbrook and the Townsville HHS to move this matter forward and work with you to deliver a solution for the Ingham community.

Public Transport

Mr POWER: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services. Only two years ago senior opposition MP, the member for Burleigh, was reported in the Gold Coast media as saying that public transport would be obsolete in five to 10 years. Can the minister outline where government policy differs in this approach? Can the minister update the House on the government's commitment to building faster and better public transport services for our growing Gold Coast, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for the question. We do not think public transport will be obsolete in this government, because we build it. Cross River Rail and three Gold Coast stations are being delivered by this government. Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3 is being built now, after stage 2 was such a success and a key to the Commonwealth Games and after stage 1 happened under the current Premier when she was the transport minister.

Let me compare that to the record of those opposite. They cut Cross River Rail. They cut the M1 funding. They did nothing about light rail. Do you know what? They would do it again because the member for Chatsworth has himself revealed very recently that there are billions in cuts and savings already made. He might call it pruning, but it is just another word for cuts. They are not our words; they are the words of the LNP. They have got billions already decided, and he has said that already twice. People ought to ask him and the Leader of the Opposition where those cuts are. Where are those cuts going to be? They have already decided it, and they are their own words.

In terms of light rail on the Gold Coast, there have been 69 million plus trips already, and it is building and growing. It is a success story in the sixth largest city in the country and the second largest city in this state. What we are doing now is we are building stage 3 to Burleigh and we are doing the early planning for stage 4. As part of that early planning, we have already done a number of waves of consultation. We even extended one of the consultations because the member for Burleigh requested we did and we agreed to it. We do consultation and we will continue to do it.

What we saw last week was a political stunt from the member for Burleigh and the federal member for McPherson, Karen Andrews. They conducted a public meeting on light rail routes and I am advised that they did not tell the public meeting about their direct financial interests in the proposed route by the government or the route being proposed by the member for Burleigh.

Mr HART: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at the minister's comments and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr BAILEY: I withdraw, but it is a fact—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: Sorry, I fully withdraw, Mr Acting Speaker. It is a simple fact that the member for Burleigh owns a brewery on a route that he is proposing the light rail goes on, and that is a disgrace. He should be sharing that with the public when he runs a public meeting.

Mr HART: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the minister's comments to be personally offensive and untrue, and I ask that he withdraw.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh, there are mechanisms to deal with misleading the parliament. Minister, the member has found your comments to be personally offensive and I ask you to withdraw.

Mr BAILEY: I withdraw. Facts are facts, and I have just covered some facts that are on the public record and that ought to be scrutinised. The Leader of the Opposition allows the member for Burleigh to do these sorts of things without declaring what his personal financial interests are. He is advocating for a light rail route where he has financial interests, and there is no action from the Leader of the Opposition whatsoever in relation to a member of his own team. No wonder they are stacking the branches in Burleigh. The LNP is getting a branch stack from Councillor Vorster to get rid of the member for Burleigh because they know what his style is. We will continue to consult the public and build better public transport infrastructure.

(Time expired)

Residential Tenancies

Dr MacMAHON: My question is to the Premier. This week a renter contacted me. They are receiving a 50 per cent rent increase. This is a prohibitive increase that will price them out of their home. Is the reason this government will not limit the amount rents can go up by because the Premier is a landlord herself?

Acting Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I am going to take some advice before I call the Premier. Member, that question only contained an imputation. I am ruling that question out of order.

Mr SMITH: Mr Acting Speaker—

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Acting Speaker—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I call the member for Bundaberg.

Foster and Kinship Carers

Mr SMITH: My question is to the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services. Can the minister please advise the House what support the Palaszczuk government provides to foster and kinship carers to provide a stable living environment for some of our state's most vulnerable children?

Mr CRAWFORD: I thank the member for Bundaberg. Not only was he quick on his feet to ask the question, he was pretty quick on the phone when I took over the portfolio. It was only a matter of minutes before the member for Bundaberg was saying, 'Do you reckon you can come to Bundaberg? We want to have a morning tea with some child safety workers' and everything like that. He is a great local member.

It is my honour to take responsibility of the child safety portfolio and continue the important work that we have done in the seniors and disability services portfolios. All children in Queensland have a right to be safe and loved and feel connected to family, culture and community. That is why the safety, wellbeing and interests of all Queensland children are our top priority. All of us want to see children in safe and secure homes. This is the very essence of what defines our humanity and society.

As the new child safety minister, in the next three weeks I will be visiting some of our frontline staff in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Ipswich, Toowoomba, Roma and Charleville. Today I am meeting with the head of Queensland Foster and Kinship Care group, Mr Bryan Smith. I want to hear firsthand the experience of foster and kinship carers who look after some of the most vulnerable children in our communities. Foster and kinship carers are the backbone of the child safety system and we value them enormously.

In the 12 months to 31 December last year, almost 10,000 children in out-of-home care were placed with more than 6,000 foster and kinship carer families. Our government invests more than \$356 million a year in foster and kinship care services. That includes \$149 million to 29 service providers across the state. In addition to that, another \$190 million in direct allowances is paid to carers and \$17 million in reimbursements is paid to assist with care costs.

I go back only a couple of terms and we can see what happened in the child safety budget under those opposite. We saw a \$200 million cut and a \$73 million ongoing per annum cut. Under the LNP we saw staffing that was needed to support our most vulnerable children and families slashed by about 400 people. I can assure Queenslanders that the Palaszczuk government will continue to invest significantly to strengthen our child protection system. The Palaszczuk government is proud to support carers. We are proud to support families, children and young people in their times of need. We are especially proud to support all of our foster and kinship carers across the state.


Star Entertainment Group

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Attorney-General. When last in the portfolio, the Attorney-General accepted gifts from Star involving a fundraising dinner. Now the Attorney-General's department is deciding if Star is a fit and proper company to run casinos in Queensland. What steps has the Attorney taken to deal with this perceived conflict of interest?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The time for question time has expired. Members, the Speaker has previously indicated a style of managing question time, matters of public interest, adjournment debates and private members' statements in terms of the order of speakers and I do not intend to vary that.

JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.37 am): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The message from Her Excellency the Governor recommends the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

JUSTICE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

I, DR JEANNETTE ROSITA YOUNG AC PSM, Governor, recommend to the Legislative Assembly a Bill intituled—


A Bill for an Act to amend the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, the Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973, the Attorney-General Act 1999, the Civil Liability Act 2003, the Civil Proceedings Act 2011, the Cremations Act 2003, the Criminal Code, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1978, the District Court of Queensland Act 1967, the Electoral Act 1992, the Funeral Benefit Business Act 1982, the Human Rights Act 2019, the Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991, the Justices Regulation 2014, the Legal Profession Act 2007, the Legal Profession Regulation 2017, the Limitation of Actions Act 1974, the Magistrates Act 1991, the Magistrates Courts Act 1921, the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, the Oaths Act 1867, the Oaths Regulation 2022, the Ombudsman Act 2001, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002, the Public Guardian Act 2014, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009, the Referendums Act 1997, the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, the Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991, the Trust Accounts Act 1973, the Uniform Civil Procedure (Fees) Regulation 2019, the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009, the Youth Justice Act 1992 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes, and to repeal the Court Funds Act 1973

GOVERNOR

Date: 24 May 2023

Tabled paper: Message, dated 24 May 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 [\[712\]](#).

Introduction

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.38 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Acts Interpretation Act 1954, the Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973, the Attorney-General Act 1999, the Civil Liability Act 2003, the Civil Proceedings Act 2011, the Cremations Act 2003, the Criminal Code, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1978, the District Court of Queensland Act 1967, the Electoral Act 1992, the Funeral Benefit Business Act 1982, the Human Rights Act 2019, the Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991, the Justices Regulation 2014, the Legal Profession Act 2007, the Legal Profession Regulation 2017, the Limitation of Actions Act 1974, the Magistrates Act 1991, the Magistrates Courts Act 1921, the Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994, the Oaths Act 1867,

the Oaths Regulation 2022, the Ombudsman Act 2001, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the Personal Injuries Proceedings Act 2002, the Public Guardian Act 2014, the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009, the Referendums Act 1997, the Statutory Instruments Act 1992, the Supreme Court of Queensland Act 1991, the Trust Accounts Act 1973, the Uniform Civil Procedure (Fees) Regulation 2019, the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009, the Youth Justice Act 1992 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes, and to repeal the Court Funds Act 1973. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 [713].

Tabled paper: Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes [714].

Tabled paper: Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [715].

It gives me great pleasure today to introduce the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 which contains a number of important reforms to improve Queensland's justice system. The bill proposes miscellaneous amendments to over 30 pieces of legislation across a diverse range of subject matter. The overarching focus of the bill is to clarify, strengthen and update legislation concerning the administration of justice, including legislation which relates to the operation of courts and tribunals, the regulation of the legal profession, the conduct of civil proceedings and electoral matters. The bill also implements several justice related initiatives. During this speech, I will highlight some of the more significant amendments included in the bill.

One of the key measures in this bill is delivering on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to consider reforms to better recognise the deaths of unborn children as a result of criminal conduct. The loss of an unborn child is devastating, and to lose an unborn child as a result of another person's criminal conduct is profoundly distressing for the parents, their families and the wider community. Tragically, several families in Queensland have suffered this horrendous loss. In some cases, the criminal conduct has also resulted in the death of an expectant mother and others. I would like to acknowledge all of the families and others who have advocated for reform to better recognise the death of an unborn child as a result of criminal conduct and particularly make special mention to Sarah and Peter Milosevic who are here in the gallery today. I recognise their courage and their advocacy for reforms.

Amendments in the bill will strengthen the recognition of the loss of an unborn child as a result of criminal conduct and improve the support available to families. The amendments do not displace recognition of the harm caused to the expectant mother as the primary victim of the criminal conduct, but they ensure independent recognition of the unique harm caused when the life of an unborn child is ended as a result of criminal conduct. Importantly, the amendments also do not affect a woman's ability to obtain a lawful termination of pregnancy and do not displace the born-alive rule which deems legal personhood to apply when a child is born in a living state independently of its mother. The born-alive rule has existed for centuries, not just in Australia but across other Commonwealth jurisdictions, including England, Canada and New Zealand. The rule ensures that an unborn child does not have a legal personhood that can compete with the rights of the mother. The amendments in the bill provide a way to maintain this fundamental aspect of the law while creating better recognition of the death of an unborn child as a result of criminal conduct.

The bill will allow recognition of the death of an unborn child as a result of criminal conduct in an indictment. An indictment is the formal written document stating the offence a person is charged with and relevant details relating to the charge. Currently, if an offence committed in relation to a pregnant woman allegedly results in the destruction of the life of an unborn child, it is unclear whether the name of the unborn child may be included in the indictment as doing so may lead to arguments the indictment is prejudicial, defective or duplicitous. Consequently, the name of the unborn child is not included and is therefore not read to the court. The bill amends the Criminal Code to provide that the name or a description of an unborn child may be stated in an indictment for an offence committed in relation to a pregnant woman that allegedly resulted in destroying the unborn child's life. The amendments allow for independent recognition of an unborn child in the indictment, however it will not be mandatory as it may not be appropriate in all the circumstances for the name or a description of an unborn child to be included on the indictment, especially if the family does not want this information included.

The bill will also recognise, through specific legislative provision, the death of an unborn child as an aggravating factor in sentencing for relevant serious offences. Under the sentencing principles, the court considers the individual circumstances of each case to determine the appropriate sentence,

including weighing aggravating and mitigating factors. While the court may currently consider the death of an unborn child as a result of criminal conduct as an aggravating factor in sentencing, the bill makes amendments to increase the consistency and transparency of this consideration for relevant serious offences.

The bill amends the Penalties and Sentences Act and the Youth Justice Act to provide that in determining the sentence for a relevant serious offence committed in relation to a pregnant woman that resulted in destroying the life of an unborn child, the court must treat the destruction of the unborn child's life as an aggravating factor unless it considers it is not reasonable because of the exceptional circumstances of the case.

The relevant serious offences are manslaughter, grievous bodily harm, wounding, assault occasioning bodily harm, dangerous operation of a vehicle causing death or grievous bodily harm, and careless driving. The amendments also provide independent recognition of the unique harm caused by the death of an unborn child for the pregnant woman and immediate family, separate from the harm caused to the pregnant woman by the criminal conduct. Currently, under the Penalties and Sentences Act, following conviction for an offence and prior to sentencing, a court may receive and consider a victim impact statement from the pregnant woman against whom a relevant crime was committed as well as family members of a pregnant woman who has died or suffered harm because of the crime.

Victim impact statements play an important role in sentencing hearings, providing a voice to the victim of a crime and their family and offering a personal perspective for courts that may assist in determination of the sentence. Victim impact statements may include details of physical injuries suffered as a direct result of the offence, as well as emotional impacts, harm to relationships and economic loss.

The bill amends the Victims of Crime Assistance Act to expand the definition of a victim for the purpose of who may make a victim impact statement and who has rights under the Charter of Victims' Rights. It will allow for those who would have been a family member of the unborn child had they been born alive, including parents and siblings, to give a victim impact statement to explain to the court the impact the destruction of the life of the unborn child has had on them. This is in addition to any entitlement they may have to give a victim impact statement about the harm caused by the death or injury of the pregnant woman. It also ensures those who would have been a family member of the unborn child, had they been born alive, have rights under the victims' charter of rights. Furthermore, the support available to families will also be improved under the bill by enabling financial assistance for expenses for the funeral of an unborn child. Under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act, the person responsible for the funeral for a person who has died as a direct result of an act of violence can apply for up to \$8,000 for funeral costs.

The bill amends the Victims of Crime Assistance Act to extend eligibility for funeral expense assistance to the person responsible for the cost of a funeral of an unborn child that dies as a direct result of an act of violence committed against a pregnant woman. This amendment provides an important acknowledgement of the grief families experience in these tragic situations and ensures that if families wish to hold a funeral for the unborn child, they can do so without being financially burdened.

The amendments in the bill strike the right balance by recognising and implementing changes that better acknowledge the death of an unborn child as a result of criminal conduct without abrogating the born-alive rule or conflicting with the rights of the pregnant woman. The Palaszczuk government is committed to improving the way the justice system supports victims, and these amendments progress an important aspect of this work.

The bill also includes amendments to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1978 which remove the prohibition on identification of an adult defendant charged with a prescribed sexual offence prior to finalisation of committal proceedings. These amendments are made in response to the government's commitment to implement recommendation 83 of the second report of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. The task force, led by the Hon. Margaret McMurdo AO, concluded that there was no justification for the law to treat defendants who are charged with a prescribed sexual offence differently to those who are charged with any other criminal offence. Under the current law, only defendants charged with rape, attempted rape, assault with intent to rape or sexual assault have their identity protected before committal. Other accused, even alleged murderers, defendants accused of indecently assaulting a child and accused drug traffickers, do not have this protection.

The amendments in the bill mean that there will no longer be a distinction between those prescribed sexual offences and other offences. The amendments will mean that a defendant charged with rape, attempted rape, assault with intent to rape or sexual assault will be able to be identified before

committal. This distinction in the current law between these prescribed sexual offences and all other offences is based, in part, on a rape myth. It is based on the idea that the complainant for one of these sexual offences is somehow less reliable than a complainant for any other offence and that a magistrate must scrutinise the complaint before a defendant can be identified. These amendments ensure that the criminal justice system does not continue to perpetuate this outdated rape myth and will ensure that complainants for prescribed sexual offences are treated with the same dignity as complainants for all other offences.

The amendments also align Queensland with almost all other jurisdictions in Australia which permit identification of a defendant during committal proceedings. The amendments also promote open justice, which is fundamental to the administration of justice. The task force heard that victims are reluctant to report sexual offences to police and that conviction rates for these offences are alarmingly low. The task force said that increased media reporting of sexual offences in a trauma informed way can result in more victims coming forward to report sexual offences. The task force said that, if handled sensitively, accurate public reporting may also contribute to positive community discussions about gender-based violence, challenge stereotypes and reduce the level of secrecy and stigma involved. Removing barriers to reporting is essential if we are to hold perpetrators to account. We must lift the veil of secrecy and shame for victims of sexual offences.

The amendments also provide that where there are grounds to do so, the court can make a non-publication order. The court can only make a non-publication order where it is necessary on three grounds: to prevent prejudice to the proper administration of justice; to prevent undue hardship or distress to a witness or complainant; or to protect the safety of any person. The possibility of reputational damage to a defendant will not be a ground upon which a non-publication order can be made.

An application for a non-publication order can be brought by the defendant, the victim or the prosecution. The court has to take into account a broad range of circumstances in considering whether to make the non-publication order. Regardless of who makes the application, the court will be required to consider the view of the victim about identifying the defendant. This is in keeping with the recommendation made by the task force and ensures victims are given a voice when these applications are heard.

To ensure open justice is promoted, the amendments also provide a right of appearance to accredited media entities or any other person who the court considers has sufficient interest in the question of whether the non-publication order should be made. The media has an important role to play in open justice. They serve the public and ensure people know what is happening in the courts. These amendments help them to play that role.

Defendants charged with a prescribed sexual offence will be able to be identified, when the amendments commence, irrespective of when they were charged. That approach provides for the greatest clarity and is most consistent with the underlying policy intent of the amendments to promote open justice and consistency with other offences.

Finally, the amendments also provide for a right of review before a Magistrates Court and make it an offence if a person or a corporation contravenes a non-publication order. Importantly, these amendments do not vary existing laws which prohibit identification of a victim of a sexual offence without their consent, or identification of a child. Where identifying a defendant is likely to lead to the complainant being identified, this would still be prohibited. Victim-survivors and those who support them have spoken, and this government has heard their voices.

The bill also delivers the Palaszczuk government commitments to allow a law practice to destroy or dispose of routine client documents in certain circumstances, and to increase the costs disclosure threshold for section 311 of the Legal Profession Act 2007 to \$3,000. The bill amends the Legal Profession Act to allow a law practice, including a community legal centre, to destroy any client documents held by a law practice if: seven years has elapsed since the completion of the matter; the law practice has been unable to obtain instructions from the client, despite making reasonable efforts to do so; and it is reasonable, having regard to the nature and content of the document, to destroy the document. The amendments also extend to receivership files held by the Queensland Law Society as if it were a law practice.

Safeguards provided for in the amendments mitigate the risk that the amendments could be interpreted as authorising the destruction of such documents to the detriment of the client or others by providing for disciplinary consequences for a breach of the provision. The amendments address the

increasing risk to client privacy and confidentiality arising from the prolonged retention of client documents, both physical and electronic, that are no longer of legal utility and recognise the substantial storage costs for law practices and the Queensland Law Society in relation to such documents.

The bill amends the costs disclosure obligations of a law practice under the Legal Profession Act, including an increase to the current costs disclosure threshold under section 311 from \$1,500 to \$3,000. Further amendments provide that an abbreviated costs disclosure obligation will apply if the total legal costs in a matter, excluding disbursements, are not likely to exceed \$3,000; and no cost disclosure is required if the total legal costs in a matter, excluding disbursements, are not likely to exceed \$750. The amendments will reduce the regulatory burden for law practices, while requiring an abbreviated costs disclosure promotes costs transparency for consumers of legal services.

Furthermore, the bill includes amendments to the Electoral Act 1992 which were requested by the Electoral Commission of Queensland and aim to improve voter enfranchisement and administrative efficiency ahead of the 2024 state general election. Firstly, the bill provides that a ballot paper secured in a reply paid envelope supplied by the ECQ that also contains a completed declaration on a declaration envelope may be counted regardless of whether the postal vote is inside the declaration envelope. A corresponding amendment is also made to the Referendums Act 1997. This reform is consistent with the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 and is aimed at saving votes without compromising electoral integrity.

To align with the position for federal elections and to reduce the potential for voter confusion, the bill also amends the definition of 'special postal voter' to include electors who are patients in a hospital that is not a polling place, and electors who are ill or infirm and unable to travel to a polling place or those caring for the ill or infirm. As a result of this change, these electors will be sent ballot papers in the mail. However, this change will not prevent these electors casting their ballot in another way should they wish to do so.

The Electoral Act will also be amended to provide that an audit of the electronically assisted voting—telephone voting—system will only be required for a by-election where the commissioner considers that there has been a significant change in the information technology since the last audit. Further, consistent with arrangements at the Commonwealth level and in New South Wales and to reflect increasing public and stakeholder participation in the redistribution process, the 60-day time frame associated with the Queensland Redistribution Commission's finalising of an electoral redistribution will be replaced with a requirement that the redistribution is finalised 'as soon as practicable'.

Finally, a cut-off time for the close of electoral rolls on the relevant day provided in the writ for a state election or referendum will be specified as 6 pm in both the Electoral Act and the Referendums Act. The nomination of a set time for the closing of the electoral rolls is intended to provide certainty about timing for final enrolments for both voters and the ECQ and would provide the ECQ with additional time to finalise the electoral roll. The bill also includes amendments to the Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act 1991 to enhance appointment, disqualification and complaints processes for Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations. The amendments will create greater flexibility in relation to appointment and disqualification, while improving accountability and standards of conduct for appointed JPs and Cdecs.

Firstly, the bill makes a number of changes relating to the qualification for office as a JP or Cdec. Key changes include that to be qualified as a JP or Cdec, a person must reside or require appointment for work in Queensland. The chief executive must also be satisfied that a person is suitable for appointment having regard to a range of matters including the person's character and standing in the community; whether the person has ever been convicted of an offence and if so, the circumstances of the offence; and anything else that is relevant to the person's suitability to hold office.

The bill also makes changes to the current disqualification provisions in the act which prevent suitable members of the community from being appointed due to minor offences that were committed many years ago. The bill provides that a person is not qualified for appointment as a JP or Cdec if the person: is an insolvent under administration; has a disqualifying conviction; or has had their appointment as a JP or Cdec revoked within the last five years. The bill provides that a disqualifying conviction is: a conviction, including a spent conviction for an indictable offence; an offence involving dishonesty or a breach of confidentiality; an offence against the act; or an offence for which a sentence of imprisonment was imposed even if the sentence was suspended. However, the chief executive may grant an exemption in relation to a disqualifying conviction if satisfied that it would be appropriate,

having regard to the offences committed by the person and the circumstances of the offending and because of special circumstances, it would be in the public interest to appoint the person as a JP or a Cdec—for example where there is a particular need in the community for the appointment.

The bill gives legislative effect to a code of conduct for JPs and Cdecs. The amendments provide that the chief executive may make a code of conduct for JPs and Cdecs, which must be approved by regulation, tabled in the Legislative Assembly and published on the whole-of-government website. A contravention of the code of conduct may result in the suspension of a JP or Cdec appointment, and serious or repeated contraventions may result in the JP or Cdecs appointment being revoked. The bill provides for at the chief executive to suspend the appointment of a JP or Cdec and to appoint an investigator to investigate the conduct of a JP or Cdec with the investigation report to be provided to the minister for the purpose of deciding whether to recommend to the Governor in Council that the JP and Cdec be removed from office.

Currently criminal history checks are conducted on all persons who are seeking appointment as a JP or Cdec at the initial application stage only. To maintain the integrity of the office of JP or Cdec, the bill also provides for the continuous criminal history monitoring of JPs or Cdecs post appointment by the Queensland Police Service. The bill also provides a reasonable excuse defence for persons who assume to act in the office of JP or Cdec without holding such office. The amendments provide that it is a defence for a person to prove that at the time they assume to act in the office, they did not know, and could not reasonably be expected to have known that they did not hold the office, for example, because they were unaware that the appointment had been suspended or revoked.

Finally, the bill provides protection for members of the community who utilise the services of a JP or Cdec who is no longer authorised to provide those services because their appointment has lapsed, or been suspended or revoked. The amendments provide that anything done by a person in their purported capacity as a JP or Cdec is not invalid only because at the time the thing was done, the person was not validly appointed, or the person's appointment had lapsed, was suspended or had otherwise ended.

The bill also includes a number of amendments to the Oaths Act to address implementation issues from the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2021, which modernised the way that oaths, affidavits and statutory declarations can be made using technology and allowed persons making an affidavit or statutory declaration to direct another person called a 'substitute signatory' to sign for them in certain circumstances. Currently, a witness for an affidavit or statutory declaration must include their place of employment on the document. This can inadvertently disclose the location of a domestic and family violence victim. The bill removes the requirement for JPs and Cdecs to include their place of employment, except for certain JPs and Cdecs whose eligibility to be a special witness is tied to their employment. The bill allows other witnesses options to provide their place of employment, employment address, home address, telephone number or email. The bill also provides a clear and consistent framework for the use of substitute signatories for affidavits and statutory declarations—however made—by clarifying that a substitute signatory can be used even when an affidavit or statutory declaration is witnessed in person or signed on paper.

The bill also makes a number of other amendments to the Oaths Act to provide legislative clarity and to address a number of minor technical and drafting issues. The bill also contains a number of amendments to improve the efficiency of Queensland's court and tribunal processes. This includes replacing the Court Funds Act 1973 with a new modernised court funds legislative framework under the Civil Proceedings Act 2011. The new framework will update and improve processes relating to money paid and securities deposited into court under a law or court order. Amendments to the Appeal Cost Fund Act 1973 modernise the act generally and improve the efficiency of the current fee and administrative arrangements.

The bill amends the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009 to provide greater consistency and flexibility in the operations of QCAT. The amendments will allow Land Court members to be appointed as supplementary members of QCAT and will streamline and improve various other appointment processes under the act. In addition, the bill otherwise amends a range of justice portfolio statutes to streamline administrative and appointment processes, clarify various provisions and make amendments of a technical or drafting nature.

The Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 makes important amendments to justice portfolio legislation across a diverse range of subject matter which includes protecting women, mothers, victims and survivors. It will assist with the administration of justice in Queensland. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (12.06 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Legal Affairs and Safety Committee


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

TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 24 May (see p. 1650), on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (12.06 pm), continuing: It gives me pleasure to continue my contribution from where I left off last night. I was recounting the failures of the Bligh government in the health system and how the LNP came in and fixed it. I would now like to turn my contribution to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023. I think we can all agree in this chamber that the effects of smoking are really well known and that any laws that promote healthier living, particularly the health of our children, are simply common sense. However, this bill covers some ground that I would particularly like to comment on and that is the issue of the sale of illegal tobacco products—it could be called chop-chop—and how it is affecting the community.

The Nanango electorate is one of the many regions in Queensland in which you will find these chop-chop shops selling illegal tobacco products. Last year, several local businesses in Kingaroy contacted me regarding their concerns about the chop-chop shops that have popped up and are selling illegal tobacco and illegal e-cigarettes that are clearly containing nicotine and goodness knows what else.

One business owner wrote, 'We are discount tobacconists. Cigarettes represent a fair part of our income. We cannot believe that an illegal tobacconists could open up blatantly in Kingaroy affecting other legitimate retailers.' Another retailer met with me to explain her frustration at the situation. In her submission she said that 'illicit tobacconists had set up in every small town in Queensland in the last couple of years and are selling nicotine vapes under the nose in the full knowledge of Queensland Health and police. These stores are selling chop-chop and nicotine vapes to anyone who wants to buy them, including children in school uniforms.'

This is indeed extremely concerning. At present, there is no scheme for licensing the wholesale and retail supply of smoking products in Queensland. The bill addresses this by introducing a licensing scheme and a licence register. It also aims to help small retailers in rural and remote areas who cannot obtain smoking products from wholesalers, authorising a retail licensee to onsell small amounts of smoking products to these retailers.


As other members of the LNP opposition have stated, we are not opposing this bill. However, we do—and I note that the member for Mudgeeraba, the shadow health spokesperson, spoke about this very eloquently in her contribution—have concerns about the government's ability to manage and enforce these proposed laws. It is the same frustration that is shared by the legitimate tobacconists who will no doubt welcome these laws but, given past poor experiences, will rightfully question how they will be enforced. I shared some of these concerns in my recent submission to the current inquiry into reducing rates of e-cigarettes in Queensland. In a regional town like Kingaroy with a population of around 10,000 people, access to e-cigarettes is commonplace and the town has seen three specialist vape stores open in Kingaroy alone in the last 12 months. It is alleged that, while some of these stores have been reported and fined, the current laws and fines are simply not a deterrent as income from the sales far outweighs the penalty. They just do not care. The stores in my area provide an ATM machine at the door and then only accept cash. They willingly serve the schoolchildren in these areas and they are in school uniform.

I note that West Moreton Health, which services the Somerset region of the Nanango electorate, has also made a submission to the committee which highlighted that more funding would be required for the new public health unit to allow it to fulfil its commitment under this new legislation. It anticipates that it would require an additional two full-time staff to deal with it, so therefore I look forward to hearing that the government is going to support its own health board in that submission. The Labor government must outline today how it intends to increase the resources which will be needed under this legislation.

I also raise this issue as the legislation does not deal with the regulation of e-cigarettes or vapes. Given the rising concerns regarding these products, the government must be clear and transparent with Queenslanders about this and I will continue to call out the dramatic increase in the use of vapes, especially by our young people in our schools. I appreciate the toll that this is placing on teachers and staff as they are doing everything they can to restrict this activity that is supposed to be banned in our schools, yet I understand that teachers are being instructed to do a softly softly approach to the banning of e-cigarettes in schools and I am very upset about that, as are many local teachers. I know that there has been—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Yes, and by my principals as well. I know there has been an instructional video from Education Queensland that leads teachers and principals to this softly softly approach in relation to e-cigarettes. It is disgusting. I acknowledge the extra workload the monitoring of this behaviour requires. It is obvious that young people are either oblivious or unaware of the health impacts of vaping. Without better enforcement and regulation, these products and the use of vapes will only become more popular. The government must do more.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (12.12 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023. Before I make comment on the bill, I want to thank the Health and Environment Committee, including the committee chair, the member for Thuringowa, for its diligence in reviewing this legislation. Labor governments in Queensland and Australia have a strong recent history—and going way back in fact—in curtailing smoking, and this bill seeks to continue that great work. I want to commend the work of the former health minister and the current health minister for their diligence and their commitment to bring about this legislation that will no doubt encourage better health lifestyles for the people of Queensland.

I was privileged to be a senator for Queensland when the federal government, led by then prime minister Kevin Rudd, took the initiative to introduce cigarette plain-packaging reforms during my time in the Senate. I am sure that we are all familiar with the graphic health warnings and the drab, feculent brown modern cigarette packaging that was brought about to curtail the number of smokers at that time. It may be unpleasant, but the ugly uniformity serves a purpose. I would wager that, because of those brave reforms like plain packaging that have involved standing up to the powerful tobacco companies, there are now more reformed smokers in Queensland than there are current smokers, and I am one of those—a reformed smoker dating back to the turn of the century. Queensland is a far healthier state for those reforms.

If I reflect back on my time, I grew up in a household where my mother smoked, my father smoked and all of my siblings, so I was destined to become a smoker myself. Nevertheless, over a period of time you realise that that is never the course of continued practice and you curtail your lifestyle. These days I work out at the gym and have a healthier lifestyle and enjoy jumping on my Harley Davidson on occasion to enjoy the wind and travel around the beautiful state of Queensland—on a rare occasion. That is what you supplement your unhealthy habits with in order to enjoy a better lifestyle.

I also want to commend the Albanese government for its plan to ban recreational vaping. This ensures that those who want to use e-cigarettes to try and quit smoking may still do so with a prescription while taking stronger meaningful action to curb the use of vapes by young people. This work is certainly not done. As the former minister for health and ambulance services said in this House earlier this year, the annual cost of smoking in Queensland is estimated to be over \$27 billion. We are also seeing the rapid rise of electronic cigarettes, or vapes as they are called, and the alarming trend of young people taking up this fad, which can better be described as a health hazard.

I note from the committee's report that there was strong support for the proposed changes in this bill by the majority of submitters. This bill proposes a new licensing scheme for the wholesale and retail sale of smoking products, facilitating more effective enforcement of the act and aligning Queensland with other Australian jurisdictions. Among the objectives of this change, I note that tracking the number of tobacco outlets and preventing the sale of smoking products to minors are among them. I also note

that this bill will give retailers and wholesalers a full 12 months to obtain a licence before the offence of unlicensed supply takes effect on 1 September 2024. This will give small businesses time to ensure that they are following the rules, many of which will be in rural and regional Queensland. As the Minister for Rural Communities, I commend this commonsense time frame for this implementation to take place in those regions. I also note that the bill makes a commonsense licence exception for pharmacists who are selling prescription e-cigarette products as aids for Queenslanders who are trying to quit smoking. This bill ensures strong action to curtail smoking rates without punishing Queensland's small businesses.

This bill also proposes changes to the rules around the advertising, display and promotion of smoking products. We can all remember—those with some age—the advertisements in the past. There was the Marlboro Man and Paul Hogan saying, 'Anyhow, have a Winfield'. There was all of those advertising incentives to try to get people to take up smoking or continue the habit. In fact, I remember a time in Bandung in Indonesia when they were trying to encourage people to take up smoking by using promo ladies on the platforms of the train stations, so there have been all sorts of enticements put in place to try to encourage people to smoke. This is a prime example of a strong initiative of a Labor government trying to stop people from taking up and continuing this habit. These are absolutely critical amendments to the current act and it was not all that long ago that smoking was prolific in the community. I can still picture cigarette smoke blowing out of bars, pubs and clubs across Queensland which was very much a product of rampant cigarette advertising and availability which, by and large, were targeted at children and young people. It is vital for the health of young Queenslanders that we cut this off at the pass when it comes to vaping.

This bill also seeks to prohibit the supply of smoking products to children by parents or guardians or by other children. Kids should not get their hands on smoking products, including vapes. I do not think much more needs to be said. It is a principle through which smoking rates have been minimised in Australia for decades and it is a principle that we should now extend further by blocking another avenue for kids to get their hands on harmful smoking products.

I note this includes the eventual prohibition on children handling smoking products even if they work in a tobacco retailer. I note that time will be given, for businesses until September 2024 and for small businesses until 2025, to adopt these changes. The bill also seeks to make life tougher for those who acquire and sell illicit tobacco. As the committee heard from Pam Wright of the Tobacco Station Group, illegal traders are a serious problem for Queensland businesses that follow the rules. She told the committee—

We have been very successful but our profit margin is now really hurting because of this illicit trade.

...


Intimidation with these guys—

that is, the illicit tobacco traders—

is happening all the time. I have been subject to it on several occasions.

I support the continued work of the government to pursue and enforce the penalties against those who are doing the wrong thing and causing grief for legitimate Queensland enterprises.

The Palaszczuk Labor government takes seriously its obligations to protect the health of Queenslanders. As the landscape changes and new issues arise, we commit to tackling them with thoughtful and purposeful legislation such as the bill before the House today. This is an excellent move that we are making and, once again, we are creating history in this place. I note the opposition's support for the passing of the bill. It is a prime example of how, through collaboration, we can ensure good legislation prevails and passes through this House to protect the health interests of all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (12.21 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023. As indicated earlier by the shadow minister, the LNP will not be opposing this legislation. These amendments will establish a licensing scheme for the wholesale and retail sale of smoking products, the introduction of new penalties for the failure to comply with the licensing scheme and new offences, including prohibiting the supply of smoking products by children and prohibiting the supply of smoking products to children by parents and guardians. I think that is particularly important because a lot of these habits form in the home.

The illicit tobacco trade sells many products and it takes rightful income away from legitimate family and small businesses throughout the country. This happens because the Labor government has been soft on enforcing existing laws. I call on the government to strengthen its enforcement activities on illicit tobacco sales. I am advised that illegal products come in the form of: domestic illicit whites, that is, packs of cigarettes sold in plain packaging and recognisable by printing errors or by being sold at well below the price of legal tobacco products; counterfeit tobacco products that have been manufactured without the permission or trademark rights of the holder; chop-chop, and we have heard a fair bit about that, which is loose roughly cut tobacco in plastic bags or prefilled tobacco tubes sold in boxes of 50 to 200 cigarettes; contraband, which is a genuine product produced for another country and smuggled to its destination, recognised by being sold in branded packaging; and nicotine e-cigarettes, which are smuggled electronic vaporisers containing nicotine liquid.

As the Attorney-General said when she introduced the bill, these are smoking products that do not comply with the Commonwealth requirements for plain packaging and health warnings and that circumvent excises and duties. She also said that these products are often illegally imported or manufactured in unsafe and uncontrolled conditions. They are also unlikely to meet Australian safety standards in relation to their ingredients and concentrations and may contain dangerous toxins.


Illicit tobacco trade happens in regional areas; it is not just a problem in metropolitan areas. We have heard that from the member for Nanango and the member for Buderim yesterday. It is happening in my electorate and this government is not doing enough to enforce the existing laws. It is a problem for both the state and the federal governments. I am advised that an estimated \$3.5 billion per annum is forgone as illicit tobacco traders evade taxes and duties. That \$3.5 billion would easily seal a two-lane road from Brisbane to Cairns. That shows how much revenue both state and federal governments are missing out on because enforcement is not happening. To put it in perspective, a huge amount of funding is being foregone by governments due to the illicit tobacco trade's avoidance of taxes and duties.

The amendments in this bill will enable Queensland Health to monitor compliance with the Commonwealth requirements for smoking products and improve intelligence sharing with other state, territory and Commonwealth law enforcement agencies. I come from an area that shares borders with both New South Wales and South Australia so I know how important it is that cooperation exists across those borders and also with the Commonwealth when dealing with illicit traders. I hope that the legislation and the amendments it contains improve that cooperation because enforcement is very difficult without it. I hope that that cooperation leads to the prosecution of those involved in the illicit tobacco trade. I call on the state Labor government to enforce the laws to their fullest extent and pursue those who are conducting illegal activities.

Illicit tobacco sales are hurting legitimate family and small businesses in towns in my electorate. Those people have come to me but are very fearful about doing that because they feel they will be persecuted. Legitimate family and small business owners tell me that they are sick to death of the lack of action. They have been complaining and complaining to authorities and they are very disappointed that the Labor government is always very slow to act. It seems that the illegal businesses pop up overnight but they are not shut down immediately. I have to wonder about the priorities of this Labor government when a person can get a \$1,000 fine for using a mobile phone whilst driving but the government cannot shut down illegal tobacco traders who operate in broad daylight. In many cases, those traders are located in the main streets of regional communities. You can walk across the road from my electorate office and find those illegal sales happening. If we can find it, why cannot the government do something about the illicit tobacco trade? The government needs to get serious about listening to the concerns of stakeholder groups and it needs to get serious about shutting down illegal chop-chop shops and illicit tobacco sellers in Queensland.

The bill amends a number of other areas to modernise and clarify the requirements for the advertising, display and promotion of smoking products, including their application to online trading. It also expands smoke-free public places to include community spaces for children, including car parks adjacent to schools. It enhances offences to protect children from the dangers of smoking, including prohibiting children from being in a designated outdoor smoking area. I am not sure how that will work because I know people often smoke in the Woolworths car park across from my office. It will be interesting to see how they manage that. The bill will improve protections at liquor licensed premises by including tighter requirements for smoking areas and moving tobacco product vending machines into areas that cannot be accessed by patrons. Smoking in national parks will also be prohibited. I wonder how the government will do that because there are many thousands of acres of national parks and some of them are quite remote. I wonder how the compliance on that will be done.

I call on the state Labor government to enforce the laws on illicit tobacco sales and provide the resources to the department to follow through with prosecutions because that trade is seriously hurting family and small businesses in regional areas. Many of those business owners feel that they cannot speak out. Many complain bitterly to the authorities but do not see anything happening. I really want these amendments, once implemented, to actually have an impact and achieve an outcome. We do not want to see grandstanding about changed laws and election promises; we want to see outcomes. We want to stop those people who are doing the wrong thing and who are hurting our family and small businesses across the regions. We want the illicit tobacco trade dealt with and dealt with quickly by this government.

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (12.28 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution in support of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023. I start by thanking the Health and Environment Committee chair, the member for Thuringowa. We spent many years together on the health committee. We all know how passionate he is about health. I thank the other members of the Health and Environment Committee for their examination of the bill. I also thank the organisations and individuals who made written submissions on the bill and appeared at the public hearings.

I note that the committee made three recommendations, including that the bill be passed. An objective of the bill is to strengthen, modernise and futureproof the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act. This is something that I very strongly support. Despite decades of research and community discussion about the effects of smoking, it remains a significant public health concern. Smoking is still, as many in this House have said, the No. 1 risk factor contributing to preventable death and disease in our state with the annual cost of smoking, including hospital and medical expenses, being estimated at some \$27.4 billion. While it is encouraging that over the past 25 years the rate of smoking among adults living in Queensland has more than halved, in recent years we have seen tobacco companies engaging in aggressive new marketing of smoking products to young people, including the promotion of new and so-called safer smoking products such as e-cigarettes. We have also seen new and questionable business practices emerge designed to circumvent the protections in the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act and we have seen an increasing trade in illicit tobacco.

I have spoken in this House a number of times over the years about how close to my heart this matter is—that is smoking in our community. I watched my grandmother, who never smoked a day in her life, die an incredibly painful death due to the passive smoking of my grandfather. I also lost both of my parents at far too young an age from non-preventable forms of cancer. I have always struggled and will never be able to understand why anyone would willingly choose such a potential death or the many health concerns that come with the habit. Of course, I am sympathetic to addiction. I understand tobacco is incredibly addictive. I have seen what it does to others' health and, as I said, the painful repercussions of it have been extraordinary in my life and my family's life.

In my previous role as chair of the health, communities, disability services, domestic and family violence prevention committee which conducted an inquiry into tobacco licensing arrangements in Queensland, the committee made a number of recommendations that I have been very passionate about. We have continued important reform in this area, including implementing a positive wholesale and retail tobacco licensing scheme while giving weight to appropriate licensing fees and avoiding unnecessary regulatory red tape. There was always an attempt to balance those things but, in 2020, our government made two very significant election commitments: firstly, to strengthen the retail supply, advertising and promotion provisions in the act and to take direct action on illicit tobacco; and, secondly, to increase smoke-free public places. We have always reformed in this space because we understand the health benefits of doing so. We understand the important benefits to the health system and the load that smoking, unavoidable illness and death has on the system. We also understand the importance of protecting children in public places and vulnerable young people.

For me, seeing this legislation introduce and expand those smoke-free public spaces, including community spaces for children, is really important. As a mother of two young boys I go out of my way to keep my boys in smoke-free places. One is an asthmatic. Recently we took my children to the Red Hot Chilli Peppers where a number of individuals who were vaping at that point—

An honourable member: Cool kids.


Ms LINARD: They are cool kids, thank you. I take that interjection. They loved it, and it was a great night. However, they were smoked on the whole time. As a parent, I find that deeply offensive. While I appreciate that some may say, 'The science is out', the science is very to clear me. Smoking has a significant impact on health. In terms of the conversation that we had with the Marlborough man

and the amazing advertising in the seventies where smoking itself became a reflection of being connected to others and being social, I do not want to see that same mantra creep in with young people in the community thinking that it is something it is not. It is absolutely something affecting health. I was so glad to see an inquiry under the member for Thuringowa and the committee that will have an honest conversation about an issue that is prolific across community. We are having that frank conversation because we need to. Let's actually bring the science to light. Let's make sure that young people know and understand—I appreciate that it was an adult smoking on my children at that festival—the cost to community and that we take some strong action.

I appreciate that the federal government has made some strong statements in this regard, too, about the importation of these products and their illegal sale, but I am also heartened that the next generation of Queenslanders is clearly aware of the dangers of smoking. At my recent Nudgee electorate Youth Advisory Council meeting, we had a really frank conversation about vaping. They ranged from school children up to adults. They were really frank about how it is marketed to them. There is still work to do there, but it is essential that governments continue to work to protect the community. I believe this bill does that. I believe we have always had a record of reform in this space. I look forward to the outcomes of the health committee's inquiry into e-cigarettes and vaping. I thank them again for these important amendments. I am very proud to be a member of a government that continues to take steps to protect the community from the dangers of smoking and unnecessary deaths. I commend the bill to the House.

An honourable member: Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Going by the speaking list, I call the member for Burdekin in deference to the Acting Speaker's announcement today that he intends to continue to go by the speaking list.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (12.35 pm): Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I rise to make a brief contribution to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023. Certainly, a number of speakers in the chamber during the course of this debate have outlined the impact and effects of tobacco products on the health of Queenslanders. Certainly, I am not immune to that. I have seen those impacts right across this state—from young people to the elderly—and it is certainly something that we need to address. Just as we have seen this throughout Queensland, my Burdekin electorate has seen its fair share of issues surrounding irresponsibility in regard to tobacco and other products.

I personally have been contacted by constituents with concerns regarding illicit tobacco sales and the sale of vapes to children. What particularly alarms me is that the fight against the sale of vapes to children in my electorate has actually been led by school leaders. They have actually contacted me and expressed their alarm and concern about the increasing incidents of vaping in schools. I know from talking to the principals at all my schools throughout the electorate that it is the single-biggest issue in those schools at the present time. When you think about the numbers of students being suspended and expelled because of vaping and the impact that then will have on their education, this is a serious issue.


Regardless of whether there have been allegations of chop-chop or illegal sales of vapes, what the people who have contacted me want is simple—they want the rules enforced and they want the rules to apply to everyone. What we have seen to date are allegations surrounding illegal sales ending up in the too-hard basket. For example, I recently had a complaint made to my office about a retail outlet selling chop-chop which was referred to police, Queensland Health and the Australian Tax Office. Whilst all three agencies have advised that they have or will investigate the allegation, there is a considerable passage of time due to confusion, resourcing and the need for those agencies to collaborate on any investigation going forward.

That passage of time is not without consequences. For example, if chop-chop is being sold by one business and another business is doing the right thing, the compliant business will lose customers, especially during a cost-of-living crisis. In smaller communities the result of that is lost jobs and possibly business closures. All the while the person doing the wrong thing is pocketing a huge profit. As we have seen in other centres, they move in and out of these towns rapidly. They are very mobile and very sophisticated; certainly, they are becoming increasingly so. When we look at the lengths to which some of these dodgy operators are going to to move and sell illicit tobacco products, it is extraordinary. There are significant profits to be made for these people, and that needs to be taken into consideration.

Just like the shadow minister for health said yesterday in her contribution, a major part of whether this bill achieves the desired outcomes or not is dependent solely on resourcing. The importance of that resourcing was highlighted by the committee's recommendation that the government do so. During the

committee inquiry, a director of the Townsville Public Health Unit said that its team is completely overwhelmed. It was also highlighted that the cost of implementing these changes is 'way beyond what we have resources for'.

The people of the Burdekin electorate, like all Queenslanders, want the same rules for everyone and want those rules enforced. They will not tolerate this government playing games when it comes to staffing and other resources. Let me be very clear: the implementation of this bill must see additional staff and resources appointed to compliance—additional staff not staff transferred from clinical services and not shared staff; additional staff with the appropriate resources and training to deal with this particular issue.

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (12.39 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate and speak in support of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023. As many speakers in this debate have acknowledged, this bill is about health, safety and, to be frank, fairness—fairness of opportunity for those businesses that are engaged in the legal sale of tobacco products.

This bill builds on the Palaszczuk government's 2020 election commitment to strengthen tobacco laws and increase smoke-free places across Queensland. It is about reducing the risks and harm associated with smoking, second-hand smoke and the illicit tobacco trade. It is about establishing a licensing scheme. It is about ensuring there are effective deterrents against the unlawful supply of smoking products. It is about ensuring there are strong penalties for such breaches. It is about empowering Queensland Health to monitor compliance. It is about modernising and clarifying requirements around advertising and promotion of smoking products. It is about expanding smoke-free public spaces, including community spaces for children. It is also about enhancing offences that protect children from the dangers of smoking.

Essentially this is a bill that aims to improve the health of the public by reducing exposure to tobacco and other smoking related products. In practice, that will mean restricting the supply of smoking products to children, limiting their advertising and promotion, reducing public exposure to second-hand smoke and establishing a framework for compliance monitoring and enforcement activities.

Despite progress over the years, the effects of smoking products are a significant public health concern in Queensland. No other single risk factor contributes as greatly to the burden of preventable health and disease. Smoking also contributes to health inequality in many communities across the state.

One of the most important reforms contained in this bill is the licensing reforms which are specifically focused on eliminating, to the best extent possible, the opportunity for the sale of illicit tobacco. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, this is ultimately a question about fairness in business. The sustainability of businesses that want to legitimately engage in lawful activity is being threatened by those engaging in the provision of illegal tobacco products—tobacco products which may be imported illegally and do not attract the necessary tax treatment or may be sold in a way which does not contain the legally required warnings and descriptions on plain packaging or may be sold to people they should not be sold to like those under the age of 18. It is an important step.

I am very pleased to see that this has the support of industry and retail groups like the Australian Association of Convenience Stores, the Master Grocers Australia Independent Retailers and the Australian Retailers Association. It just goes to prove the point that when it comes to regulation, regulation done right supports good business. We often hear the mantra of the red tape of regulation getting in the way of business activity, but here we have industry and business specifically asking for regulation to improve safety regulation, to support legal and lawful activities and to ensure that those who are not operating within the legal framework and not prioritising the health and safety of others are restricted to the extent possible from participating in those activities.


Under the bill, it will now be an offence to supply illicit tobacco or for retailers to even store illicit tobacco at their shop unless they are part of the licensing regime. These offences will be backed with high penalties and enhanced enforcement powers. These combined measures will allow us to confront the illicit tobacco problem head on to further protect the health of Queenslanders and the interests of legitimate retailers and businesses in this state. As no excise tax is currently paid on imported illicit tobacco, it may be sold cheaply. This is obviously one of the key concerns of those law-abiding businesses. Not only does it cheat those law-abiding businesses and individuals who pay their taxes, but deprives the public health system of revenue used to fund health services for patients with smoking related illnesses and to promote public health initiatives to discourage and help people quit smoking.

A further point on that is the pricepoint that will often start the conversation between individuals and their families about whether continuing the habit of smoking tobacco is in the best interests of their finances. We know it is not in the best interests of their health. There is plenty of science and evidence to support that. When people cheat the system when selling illicit tobacco without paying the necessary taxes and without the necessary pricepoints there is a whole series of significant consequences for the system beyond just the avoidance of tax.

By cracking down on illicit tobacco, the bill will remove these dangerous and cheap smoking products from the market. I am sure other members have acknowledged that, on recent estimates, nicotine addiction costs the Queensland community more than \$27 billion annually. That is a massive impost on the community. We have listened to industry and health experts and we will introduce a licensing scheme for the wholesale and retail supply of smoking products. There are also a number of provisions contained in the bill around monitoring and enforcing compliance with the relevant act and enabling the necessary enforcement activities of the authorities.

This is an important conversation for the community to continue to have. The conversations that we have had over the past decades have resulted in the reduction in the number of people who are smoking and using tobacco products, but we need to continually work towards that being zero because of the evidence and the health impacts. The proposals and initiatives contained in this bill will certainly not only enhance the work around reducing the number of people who are smoking and using tobacco products but also protect those in the community who have made the decision not to smoke or use tobacco products and allow them to enjoy the environments they wish to visit in a way that is smoke-free and prioritises their health.

I take this opportunity to commend the relevant departments on engaging on this. As many members have highlighted, this has been an important reform journey but also a long reform journey because of the need for a regulatory impact statement and conversations with industry about how the licensing scheme and framework might work. I am pleased to see this reform and I am pleased to see it has widespread support not only in this House but also across the community and industry. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (12.48 pm): It is a pleasure to speak on the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023 today. Before I get to that, I would like to pay respect to Peter and Sarah Milosevic, who were here in the House and were very pleased to hear the introduction of the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, and not before time. I would like to place on record their appreciation and thanks to the former attorney-general, Shannon Fentiman, for her work on this bill. Unfortunately, they spoke to the government back in 2017 and it fell on deaf ears. Since that time, 15 children and families in the same circumstances in which Peter and Sarah found themselves have lost their lives. Thank you very much. This will see justice for Sophie.

I now turn to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill. As many others in the House have said, our communities across regional Queensland are really feeling the pinch—I am sure it is the case in other states as well—with shops selling illegal chop-chop tearing apart the economic fabric of our community. I am not a smoker. I did smoke socially years ago. As we have heard, there are \$29 billion of reasons for implementing changes to the smoking regime.

Chop-chop shops across the state are selling cheap product to vulnerable people. From my experience in my communities in Gatton and Laidley, many times that product finds its way into the hands of children. When a government regulates smoking products, as they do, and receive significant taxation, albeit through the federal government, there needs to be significant controls put in place to manage that regulation. As the committee heard through stakeholder engagement, a lot of the control and enforcement of regulations has not occurred. The health department has come to Gatton a couple of times and knocked on the door of a couple of these places. They did write a ticket on one occasion, but when there is a risk of getting a \$375 ticket versus the reward that they are reaping from selling such cheap product to the community then they are back doing it again the next afternoon, if they can get the product.

I would also like to place on record my sincere thanks to Detective Sergeant Brett Richards and his team of the Gatton CIB. After many discussions with IGA and other tobacco retailers in the Lockyer community, Detective Sergeant Richards used his initiative and the Criminal Code of Queensland to charge a number of these offenders—on more than one occasion—for receiving tainted property. If they have illegal chop-chop in their shops then that is an illegally acquired substance. Detective Sergeant Richards has used the law to charge them with the significant offence of receiving tainted property. They have been through the courts and received significant penalties for that. I am sure that if it continues then they will face incarceration.

Whilst I admire Detective Sergeant Richards' initiative and the prosecution of those offenders, this bill will provide another tool in the fight against illicit substances and the use of illicit substances. I have, with Detective Sergeant Richards, asked the Queensland Police Service to look at the initiative that Detective Sergeant Richards showed in the Lockyer communities and to replicate that right across the state. There are conversations happening around that. That will assist police in more communities to be able to take action against these offenders.

Turning to the specifics of this bill, I welcome the balance that the committee has tried to reach in the report and in the bill before the House. The committee stressed—and I want to stress the importance of this as well—that unless the health department and other agencies are resourced properly, as my shadow minister for health articulated yesterday, then it is a waste of time putting these extra controls in place. I ask the government to provide the additional staff needed, particularly in my area of West Moreton. We require an extra two people to be able to assist with the controls provided by this legislation.

I have mentioned IGA and other tobacco retailers in the community. It might astound members of the House to know that we are not talking about \$1,000 or \$2,000 a week in lost revenue. We are talking about \$20,000 or \$30,000 a week in lost revenue—and that is just in my smaller communities. The loss of that money means that jobs are going to be lost. In fact, jobs have been lost in a couple of our shops in town. That is significant for a small community. One or two jobs are very important.

To see the lack of enforcement action on clearly unlawful activity—to see that unlawful activity continuing unabated—and to see genuine businesses who have the protection of the law and the system that is in place undermined in the economy due to the failure of enforcement and the failure of closing these businesses down, it is a really difficult setting for any business to be in. I stress again the importance for the government to make sure that proper resourcing is provided.

I also recognise the challenges that there will be in educating people across the state about these new laws. Businesses and stakeholders have said how difficult it is going to be in regard to additional signage and controlling those safe places where families can go where they will not be subject to secondary smoking and they can be free of smoke of their own choice. I welcome those additional smoke-free environments across the state. That is a great thing, but there needs to be consultation with some of those businesses. Even though we all support the control around those non-smoking areas, it comes at a very large expense when it affects private businesses, hotels and clubs. They may need to set aside additional areas or bring in additional security on some occasions to monitor those spaces to make sure that people are doing the right thing.

The bill, as we have talked about, is mainly focused on the control of illicit substances and other aspects such as additional penalties for breaching those laws. I do need to place on record that this bill does not actually deal with the issue of vapes in the community. We welcome the committee's work in that area. Many people across the state think vapes are a safe form of smoking. That is certainly not the case, as the committee has already heard. I welcome that the committee has published the facts about the chemicals that are contained in some of those products. They are very dangerous. They might not taste like much or they might smell fruity—and they are obviously designed to appeal to a younger audience—but they certainly contain some very dangerous chemicals, as traditional cigarettes do.

It is a pleasure for me to stand and speak about some of the challenges that we face in our community with these things and some of the good work that has been happening, and I also welcome the additional changes with these laws. I stress again that we need to see additional resources and personnel put in place in our West Moreton community. An additional two officers are going to be required to assist with the enforcement of these new laws. I make a plea to the new health minister to see that additional resourcing allocated right across the state. It is a serious issue. It is a huge cost to Queenslanders—\$29 billion. Any efforts that we can make to change the culture and the habits of people for the better will be very welcome.


Debate, on motion of Mr McDonald, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 12.58 pm to 2.00 pm.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Before I call the Leader of the Opposition, the Acting Speaker has approved for the member for Thuringowa to wear a colourful jacket during his private member's statement today.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): On behalf of the opposition, I would like to acknowledge the police officers injured in the line of duty yesterday.


This week was the reset, the refresh, the reheat. It crashed and burned: ministers not across their briefs; laughing at solutions; same faces, same talking points; same chaos of this government. This week in parliament we have seen: the minister who weakened youth crime laws eight years ago back as Attorney-General; the same minister who denied issues in the DNA lab now oversees fixing them; a renewed commitment to hide a CCC report about taxpayers funding Jackie Trad's legal bills; no commitment to getting ambulance ramping back down to the 15 per cent this government inherited or dealing with the elective surgery waiting list; hospitals stretched so far that hotels are being used for patients with a broken pelvis as the result of an accident; hundreds of state government owned homes left vacant during a housing crisis, many for over a year; and a government which on one hand says that parents should be responsible for the actions of their kids but takes no responsibility for the actions of kids in state care.

In the middle of it all is a Premier who goes missing when she is needed. Where is the Premier on the solutions we have put forward to the health crisis, the youth crime crisis, the housing crisis? Today, in a full-blown cost-of-living crisis, she could not even acknowledge the pain of rising electricity prices. The Queensland Competition Authority found that power went up 27 per cent in the final months of 2022. The most recent data showed power rose 32.5 per cent in Queensland for the March quarter, and today we learned they will go up another 21.5 per cent from July.

At a time when Queenslanders are struggling to keep the lights on, the government says they should be grateful. The ministers' contributions shows how out of touch they are. They promised prices would go down. Dozens and dozens of times they have gone up. Today, two years to the day since the explosion at Callide, there is still no map ahead on how it will be brought back online. The government said it would not impact prices; the Auditor-General called it out. Now every time Queenslanders open that bill they will know the pain that is being felt because the government cannot plan and deliver services. Electricity must be affordable, reliable and sustainable. This week we have seen the same chaos, the same crisis and the same excuses from a government seeking 14 years in office at the time of the next election.

(Time expired)

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.03 pm): May marks Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month in Queensland, an annual initiative to raise community awareness for domestic and family violence and coercive control and the support services available. Domestic and family violence is a disease that plagues our communities and breaks families apart. I represent families affected by domestic and family violence in one of the most vast electorates in Queensland, and all too often I see families that have to face the hard decision of whether to leave their communities and support networks behind. Consequently, children are pulled out of school. The evidence suggests there is a high proportion of women affected by domestic and family violence, and this is not right on so many levels. This is the sad reality that happens in our communities every day.


For women from my electorate, the difficult decision to leave their home and their support network behind means they become socially isolated. The decision to uproot their family for safety is daunting enough. As I have learned, this transition is never an easy one, especially when there are teenage boys involved. There are policies around housing teenage boys with mothers in shelters, and I am asked so many times, 'Where do they go?' Too often I find that the hard decision falls on women to escape domestic and family violence, and if they have children then it is mother and children. We know this is not right and we should always do more. That is why I am proud to represent the Palaszczuk government, implementing strong laws in this House to ensure our women and children are kept safe.

Every woman and child deserves the right to feel safe in their home, and it is up to all of us do to all that we can to stand up against domestic and family violence. We need to keep the conversations going in our homes, workplaces and social networks. We need to educate each other about the effects of domestic and family violence. There is power in the collective, and we should all work together to reimagine a society where women and children are kept safe at home and in the community.

I want to give a shout-out to the many community organisations in the Cook electorate that go above and beyond to keep vulnerable families safe from violence, including: Mura Kosker in the Torres Strait, Aleita Twist and her team; Weipa Community Care, Josephine Tait and her team; Pompur Paanthu, Ganthi Kuppusamy and her team; Cooktown Community Care, Gungarde Community Centre; Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council; Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council; Lockhart Women's Shelter; Lena Passi Women's Shelter; and AFL Cape York House. There are too many to name, but I want to say a big thank you to all of those community organisations. You do so much for our communities. You are keeping our families safe in communities, and I commend you for all the great work you are doing.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Before calling the next speaker I would just like to recognise the Flagstone State School students in the gallery from the member for Lockyer's electorate.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.06 pm): Tomorrow night I am attending the Talara Primary College trivia night. It is an annual event that I love going to. We have to go as professions, so they asked me what our theme was. As it turns out, my office and my team are going as a carnival because we are going as 'Cirque de Chaos'. I am dressing up as Premier Palaszczuk, 'the Ringmaster'. Appropriately, my office staff are going as clowns, which represents the ministers. When we chose that theme a few weeks ago, little did we know it would resonate so much in terms of the Palaszczuk Labor government's credibility this week. We are going as 'Cirque de Chaos', better known as the Palaszczuk Labor government.

It was unfortunate that my question did not get to the Premier this morning, but the fish rots from the head. We have seen the Premier try to do a side-shoe shuffle with the reset, the reshuffle, 'Look over here at my new team.' There is one constant in all of this. It is not the Minister for Health, Minister Fentiman; it is not Attorney-General D'Ath; it is not the Minister for Housing, Minister Scanlon; it is not the new/old Minister for Youth Justice, Minister Farmer. What is the constant in all of this chaos and crisis? It is the Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk. That is the constant in all of this. It begs the question if, when the Premier was reshuffling and changing the faces in her cabinet last week, she looked in the mirror and asked herself, 'Am I the problem with the government? Maybe I am the problem with the Palaszczuk government.' Because Premier Palaszczuk is quite involved in the Palaszczuk government, surely the Premier asked herself, 'Should I consider myself the problem in the Palaszczuk government?' Whether she has asked herself the question or not, one thing is guaranteed: the backbench and the ministers have asked that question. They are asking themselves the question: 'Is Anastacia Palaszczuk the right person to lead us to the 2024 election?' You could see them openly talking about that question around the chamber and the precinct this week.


Yesterday the new health minister tried, and spectacularly failed, to show she was across her brief. Didn't she have a personality change today! The angry, agro health minister was pulled right back today. The new housing minister cannot even recycle poppers and now cannot talk about the government's policies in the housing portfolio. What a failure she is after only four days on the job. There is chaos and crisis in this government that we have not seen before. The person who needs to ask herself the question 'Who is the problem?' is Anastacia Palaszczuk herself.

(Time expired)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Kawana, I am advised you used an unparliamentary term during your speech. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Redlands Satellite Hospital; Cairns Regional Sitings of Parliament; National Volunteer Week

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (2.09 pm): There is so much work going on out in the Redlands, but I particularly want to talk about our satellite hospital. As I have said in here time and time again, Darren, Josh and the team at Hutchinson Builders have done a fantastic job. That is nearly at practical completion. We have been able to announce the services mix that will come out of the satellite hospital. It will include a minor injury and illness clinic that will see the satellite hospital open seven days a week with access from 8 am and last patients being taken at 10 pm. This will take a huge amount of pressure off our emergency department. The clinic will provide walk-in urgent care for common injuries and illnesses, like strains and sprains—which is great for those footy matches on the weekend—broken noses, minor head injuries, infections, burns, toothache, earache, you name it.

In addition, it will also importantly have renal dialysis, chemotherapy and medical imaging that will include ultrasound, X-ray and pathology. This is a fantastic service for my island community. It is bringing health care closer to home. It is what our Palaszczuk government does every single day of the week—deliver better healthcare services for Queensland. I am proud of this project. I am proud of where we have located it. I am so glad I was able to advocate to have it located down near the marina so it could be accessed by the island community and our growing southern Redlands end. It will also provide consultancy services in neurology, cardiology, older persons care, wound care and musculoskeletal services. As I said, it will make a huge difference to health care and take pressure off our Redland Hospital.


Following on from the Cairns sitting week, with my good friend the member for Cook—a big esso, sissy—I had the incredible opportunity to experience very different islands up there. There are 200 islands across the Torres Strait that are extraordinarily diverse and sit in a very different space to my Southern Moreton Bay Islands. I am looking forward to experiencing that with the member for Cook so she can see what islands off South-East Queensland look like. Saibai Island was fascinating. It is the most northern island off the coast of Australia. I give a huge shout-out to principal Michael Richards and the students at that school. What beautiful leaders they will be in the future. That was a lovely visit to the local councillors and the healthcare staff. Thank you for sharing your time and your experiences with me.

Last week saw the conclusion of Volunteer Week and I do not think there is anybody in this chamber who does not love the work of our volunteers—whether they are on the front line of our Rural Fire Service, our SES, our Volunteer Marine Rescue, our P&Cs, our sports clubs or our domestic violence organisations. There are so many across the Redlands. It was great to host them on Sunday. Happy National Volunteer Week.

(Time expired)

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Before I call the next speaker, I acknowledge and welcome the Clifford Park Special School from Toowoomba South in the House today.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (2.13 pm): The next time parliament sits will be for the budget—the Palaszczuk government's ninth. For the next three weeks, we will witness an avalanche of announcements—some will have already been announced, some will be unfunded blackholes and some will reveal misguided priorities. The opposition is setting three tests.


Firstly, can the Premier provide solutions for the underlying service delivery failures that are driving down Queensland living standards? Queensland is ground zero for the national cost-of-living crisis. Queenslanders need relief now and long-term service delivery reform to secure living standards in the future. The statewide crime crisis is driving up home and car insurance premiums. The Palaszczuk government promised 150 times that power would be cheaper; it is not, as our state owned energy assets have been improperly maintained. An inability to deliver housing lots to the market, infrastructure and social housing is worsening availability and affordability. Fixing these problems through good budgets that target service needs and economic opportunities will safeguard the living standards of Queenslanders.

Secondly, will the budget fund projects today and not push them into the never-never, with accountability commitments to deliver these projects on time and on budget? The Housing Investment Fund has not delivered a house. The hospitals and health plan has not delivered a new bed, ward or hospitals—and hotel beds do not count. Self-proclaimed record health and policing budgets have delivered the worst ramping in the country, blowouts in waiting lists and fewer actual police than this time two years ago.

Thirdly, we need the Premier to deliver a budget with a clear economic strategy. We have seen tax promises given 26 times abandoned, regulatory certainty destroyed and key investors and trade relationships damaged. It is a measure of the chaos and crisis of the Palaszczuk government that not even their federal Labor comrades trust them with spending money: Olympic contributions are capped, key water projects have been scrapped and Bruce Highway funding has been delayed until beyond the next federal election. There is \$15 billion in state building projects on the Albanese and Chalmers chopping block, and the Premier and Treasurer have not said a thing.

We need leadership from the Premier so that the whole of government is empowered to tackle the challenges and seize the opportunities in front of us. Never has Queensland been in this much debt. Never have we seen the wasteful spending of the magnitude that we see today. Never have Queenslanders paid more tax nor the Queensland government collected such rivers of revenue gold. But as each year of the Palaszczuk government passes, Queenslanders have less and less to show for it.

Voice to Parliament

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (2.16 pm): Last sitting week in Cairns this House passed the Path to Treaty Bill to right some historical wrongs so we may move forward together as a state. That is just the start. More needs to be done. We need everyone to support the upcoming referendum—the Voice to Parliament. I would like to remind those opposite of the classic Australian anthem *You're the Voice*, which was also recently performed in the language of Mitch Tambo. The key lyrics that should resonate are—

You're the voice, try and understand it

Make a noise and make it clear

...

We're not gonna sit in silence

We're not gonna live with fear


Yet we have the LNP opposite sitting in silence. The Queensland LNP will not tell Queenslanders what they believe on the Voice—a simple answer, yet they sit in silence. Will they support a Voice in federal parliament for Indigenous Queenslanders or will they oppose it? At this stage we know seven of those opposite will oppose it. This is the LNP that is a policy vacuum, that puts slogans before sincerity and sound bites before support.

Ultimately, they defer to Peter Dutton for decisions rather than stand defiant. It seems strange that the Leader of the Opposition thinks he is the David in the political David versus Goliath battle, but at least the biblical David had stones. Those opposite are on the wrong side of history. To be subservient to the policy poverty of Peter Dutton is to be supporting a man who boycotted the apology to the stolen generations, a man who said—

I failed to grasp at the time the symbolic significance to the stolen generations of the apology.

Tomorrow I will be at Teralba Park on Sorry Day reading the apology—a proud statement that Labor governments have supported year in, year out. The LNP still fails to grasp the significance of the Voice, yet the people of Queensland know that we on this side of the House, among others, will support the Voice. We will walk the walk and attempt to right the wrongs of the past. I will be campaigning in my electorate and I know many others, if not all, on this side will be doing that to support the Voice. I will make a noise. I will make it clear and so should every member of this House. For this referendum to succeed later this year, we need all Queenslanders to be the voice. We as Queenslanders should be campaigning to vote yes day in, day out, every day of the week across the whole breadth of Queensland. We must make sure this referendum gets up and we must make sure we support our oldest continuous culture of more than 65,000 years, our First Nations people.

Forensic and Scientific Services; Star Entertainment Group, Casino Licence


 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (2.19 pm): I rise to speak about reports that staff have had contracts terminated at the state's forensic laboratory. This was an inquiry the LNP opposition fought tooth and nail for. It was an inquiry that for months and months the Palaszczuk Labor government impeded. Palaszczuk government ministers Yvette D'Ath and Shannon Fentiman are yet to be held accountable for the DNA lab failings they oversaw and, unlike victims, have not paid any price for their refusal to take responsibility for this mess. Queenslanders want justice. Queenslanders deserve justice. Queenslanders want Palaszczuk ministers D'Ath and Fentiman to be held accountable for the DNA failures that happened on their watch.

Regarding Star Entertainment Group, the LNP is calling on Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath to be removed from deciding the future of the Star Entertainment Group's casino licence in Queensland. Attorney-General D'Ath's past dealings with the Star Entertainment Group cast doubt over her impartiality and whether she should make this multimillion dollar decision.

The facts and time line are clear. November 2015, Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath ignored formal department advice and signed off on increased poker machine numbers for Star, as part of the Queen's Wharf contract. Prior to the 2017 election, Star hosted an event for Yvette D'Ath to help raise political donations to the Labor Party. November 2019, Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath decided Star should be the monopoly casino operator on the Gold Coast. June 2020, Attorney-General Shannon Fentiman approved terms of reference for the Star inquiry, deliberately excluding examination of Minister D'Ath's actions as Attorney-General and interactions between the Palaszczuk government, Labor lobbyists, unions and Star. May 2023, Minister Yvette D'Ath returns as Attorney-General and will now decide whether Star should keep its casino licence.

Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath has politically benefited from fundraising events from Star while she was in charge of regulating casinos. Attorney-General Yvette D'Ath cannot be trusted to determine Star's suitability to hold a casino licence in Queensland. There can be absolutely no risk or appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest if appropriate actions are taken. These issues should be beyond doubt. That is why the Premier must ensure Yvette D'Ath plays no role in determining Star's suitability to hold a casino licence. Otherwise it will be more chaos, more crisis and a lack of integrity of this government.

Great Barrier Reef Arena

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (2.22 pm): Time for some good news. Last Saturday was a huge day of celebration in Mackay. Over 7,000 people gathered at Harrup Park Cricket Club for two big events—Legends of the Lawn and the official opening of the Great Barrier Reef Arena. Deputy Premier Steven Miles and Minister Stirling Hinchliffe, and also federal minister Tony Burke, joined the Harrup Park Mackay community, led by manager Adrian Young and also board chair Terry Doolan and his board members and life members of the club. Also, the member for Whitsunday and the member for Everton came along to join in the celebrations.

The \$25 million arena is a state-of-the-art professional sporting facility with media and broadcasting capabilities, professional standard team facilities, and fantastic public spaces. The vision for the club was always to build community space, and they have achieved that. Our good friend the late Tim Mulherin drove this project as a board member, and it is fitting that the largest public space has been named the Tim Mulherin Green. It is fitted out with a lovely walkway and memorial. The green has already been pressed into use with an eat street at our local cricket finals. When something fantastic happens in Mackay, our local legend, Graeme Connors, writes and performs songs. Make sure you check out the Great Barrier Reef Arena anthem; it is a cracker.

The building of state-of-the-art structures in my region keep rolling out. There are more and more of them. The tender for the new Moranbah \$45 million hospital is awarded to Hutchinson Builders, and shovels are ready to roll out a 12-bed inpatient ward, expanded emergency department, a helipad, medical imaging, laundry—

Ms Bates interjected.

Mrs GILBERT: Listen up! I just said it has been awarded.


Ms Bates interjected.

Mrs GILBERT: Put your ears on! Laundry and kitchen facilities, and everything needed for a quality hospital. Mayor Anne Baker is a champion of this project and she is so pleased that there are coal royalties being poured back into her community.

The new Minister for Health, Minister Fentiman, joined me in Mackay last Friday so she could also announce the tender for the \$250 million Mackay Base Hospital expansion. This expansion has been brought forward by at least 10 years from its original plans. BESIX Watpac will deliver the additional 128 beds—

(Time expired)

Nash, Ms I

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.25 pm): On 2 May, Izabella 'Izzy' Nash lost her life following a factory fire at Slacks Creek. Her colleague, Lia Drew, was also seriously injured in this fire. I want to pass on my condolences to Izzy's partner and family on behalf of the opposition and wish Lia well in her recovery. This is the most serious tragedy to strike the fire service since Gold Coast firefighters Noel Watson and Herbie Fennell were killed battling a blaze in 1994.

On Monday this week, the leader and I attended a memorial service for Izzy, a service attended by firefighters from across Queensland and Australia, including commissioners from across the country, except the Commissioner of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, Mr Greg Leach. There is no more critical incident within emergency services than the loss of a life, and our firefighters across Queensland were rocked at the news that Izzy Nash had lost her life in the line of duty. This is a time when leadership is critical. This is a time when employees look to their leadership team for support, guidance and hope. It was with disbelief that we found out this week that QFES Commissioner Greg Leach did not attend the memorial service for Izzy Nash, and his absence has sent shock waves through the service.


Where was Mr Leach? We now know that he was on leave and out of the country. Yes, we are all entitled to time off, but when you are the commissioner, when you are the leader of an emergency services organisation in this state, you have an obligation to your staff, and firefighters across Queensland have a right to ask why, following the death of Izzy Nash and serious injuries to her colleague Lia Drew, did he not immediately return to Queensland to offer support and guidance to his firefighters in their time of need. It defies belief that some three weeks after Izzy's death, the commissioner could not find it within himself to attend her memorial service this week.

Our firefighters have a right to be angry. They have a right to demand answers, and the minister owes each and every one of them an explanation as to his role in this debacle and the fact that the QFES commissioner has been MIA when this state needed him most. This minister needs to explain why he agreed to the granting of this leave, why he did not drag the commissioner back to Queensland upon becoming aware of Izzy Nash's death, and why he continues to run for the hills whenever the tough questions need to be answered. As a Queensland firefighter said, 'We as a family rely on our leaders to offer a face to our organisation, to demonstrate the support we have for each other and to shield us from the white noise that comes with this sort of event.' This is about leadership and the minister has failed QFES and he has failed Queensland.

Mr RYAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at what the member has said and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr LAST: I withdraw.

Jobs, Skills and Training

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.28 pm): Last week I had the great pleasure of helping to officially open the multicultural jobs forum in Greater Springfield, an initiative of our Springfield Regional Jobs Committee and Multicultural Australia. This forum was all about bringing together local and regional businesses and industry, looking for workers with willing jobseekers who are at times underrepresented in our workforce, those from our multicultural communities.

Jobs, skills and training for our culturally and linguistically diverse communities is an area that is very close to my heart. It could stem from seeing my own father's experience—someone highly skilled and regarded in his field but who could never fully advance as a result of language barriers. I also know that this is an often shared and frustrating experience when you would get into a taxi and start a conversation with the driver only to discover that they had been an engineer or teacher or doctor in their home country, but their skills were not being recognised here in Australia. However, this was before a global pandemic, the pause in international migration and the unprecedented workforce demand that we are now seeing.


Right now we have a problem. Thanks to our very strong economy in Queensland we are seeing more jobs created than there are people to fill them. Our unemployment rate is sitting at 3.8 per cent, which continues to be historically low. At last year's Queensland Workforce Summit we came together to look at a range of strategies needed to tackle the current workforce shortages and to plan for future industry needs in our state. I was asked to chair one of the key sessions of the summit which focused on how we increase the participation of Queenslanders currently underrepresented in our workforce, and we know who they are: First Nations people, people with a disability, women returning to the workforce as well as our migrants and refugees.

The Diverse Queensland Workforce program was introduced in 2021 with \$8.5 million available to assist around 2,500 migrants, refugees and international students under 10 different projects. This program targets work-ready migrants or refugees, including temporary visa holders with the necessary work permits, and international students aged 18 years or over who are unemployed or underemployed. Since launching that program, 83 per cent of participants have gone on to secure ongoing employment. As of 3 March this year more than 700 people have been helped across Queensland. We have also

established a multicultural affairs settlement team to support migrants and refugees living in communities across Queensland to enter the local labour market. Only recently, the Queensland government, in partnership with Engineers Australia and Consult Australia launched the *Attracting and retaining engineers from migrant backgrounds: a guide for employers*. Maybe we can get those highly skilled engineers who are driving taxis actually working in their field of expertise and where they are most needed.

This is just a short snapshot of some of the strategies our Palaszczuk government is using to get more people from CALD communities employed. I was so pleased to hear fantastic feedback from the Multicultural Jobs Forum, with jobseekers and employers reporting that official interviews were being locked in. It was great to see the connections being made; the experiences, skills and knowledge being shared; and the amazing opportunities for employment in our region.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.31 pm): There is a new health minister—same old story, same old mess and same old excuses. It has been a strange week. Every time the Minister for Health rose to talk about the health system I could hear the member for Waterford's voice; even though it was her talking, all I heard was the member for Redcliffe's words. That is right: a different voice but the same excuses. The excuses have already started. Nothing has changed. The hubris, the arrogance and the self-importance—those opposite reek of it. There is not a skerrick of humility in sight, but that is the Palaszczuk government.

Most of all, it is the hypocrisy of those opposite which is the most obscene affront to Queenslanders. That was on full display yesterday when the opposition revealed that sick and injured patients from the Gold Coast are being sent to Sea World to receive hospital care. The minister, by her own admission, did not even know. It was done in secret, done on the quiet with no announcement. The health minister and those opposite did not want Queenslanders to know. They are ashamed of it. They are ashamed of it and I will tell this House why. There are two reasons: one, they are mortally embarrassed, as they creep closer to a decade in government, that they have not even built enough beds for our hospital system on the Gold Coast; and, two, those opposite are wounded because they are doing everything they themselves apparently despise. The minister's rank hypocrisy has been laid bare just days into the job. Yes, this is the minister who decries any hint of collaboration with the private sector and the same minister who decries the actions of a government 10 years gone. However, she is doing the exact same thing she apparently deploras. The hide, the absolute hide!

The health minister and Premier Palaszczuk want to walk both sides of the street. No, Queenslanders will not let that happen. They have been found out. To see them trying to twist and squirm their way out of this situation was as pathetic as it was comical. They are so desperate now that they no longer know what they stand for. They are so mired in chaos and crisis that they will try to say one thing publicly and secretly do another under the cloak of secrecy.


Queenslanders have grown tired of that type of deceitful behaviour. They are awake to it and they are calling it for what it is. To see those opposite yesterday, particularly the health minister and the education minister, treat the situation as a joke does not wash. It is not a joke. No-one except the Palaszczuk government is laughing. Queenslanders do not think the Queensland Health crisis is a joke, doctors and nurses desperate to find a bed for their patients in overcrowded hospitals do not think it is a joke and patients who are confused about why they are staying in a hotel instead of a hospital do not think it is joke. The only joke around here is the Palaszczuk government and it is just chaos and crisis.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Member for McConnel and member for Toowoomba South, I ask you to cease your arguments.

Lytton Electorate; Winnam Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.34 pm): During the dark days of the Campbell Newman government my bayside was stripped of so many services—services that had supported all of my community from the very young through to the elderly. They splintered and fractured every corner of my beautiful community.

Since 2015 I have worked hard each and every day to rebuild the terrible damage done by those opposite and to deliver and bring our community back together again. Baysiders have not forgotten what those opposite did to our community, particularly to our health services and the old hospital, for example. They closed the emergency department, closed the 24-hour service, removed X-ray as well as a whole range of other services that were so important to baysiders. I stood up for my community, and the Palaszczuk government delivered the wonderful Gundu Pa, which is a 24-hour primary care clinic. It is a new health facility that includes a new BreastScreen clinic and it has added a range of health services, rehabilitation and palliative care beds. The health services that it delivers—including movement clinics, physiotherapy, mental health services—are all services that our community needs close to home.


On that subject, I have been working with Aunty Becky with Winnam Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation with respect to the old site. I was beyond thrilled recently to discover that WATSIC have taken ownership of this site, so something fantastic has come from what was an absolute travesty for the bayside. WATSIC will build a culturally appropriate residential aged-care facility on the site and the facility will offer over 30 aged-care beds including palliative care beds.

I would like to thank the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer, the former health minister, Yvette D'Ath, and the federal health department for their genuine commitment to this project. I congratulate WATSIC board members for their vision and the continued desire to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for their community and particularly their chair, the amazing Aunty Becky Thomson. I feel incredibly fortunate to work with Aunty and I am in awe of her and, of course, Aunty Meryl Dippol and her team.

Modern Queensland communities expect their elected representatives and leaders to share the community's values and reflect the community's expectations and standards. They also expect them to share the community's aspirations and to also inspire the community to know and understand their community and to listen to their community, just like Aunty Becky did.

I have and will always stand up for what is right and fair. I am determined that baysiders have a voice in this place and further afield. I am not afraid to be true to myself and the needs and values of all baysiders, nor am I afraid to call out what is wrong, nor am I scared to make sure that baysiders get the very best they can. I commit to baysiders to be authentic and fierce for all baysiders. Sometimes, unfortunately, external forces preclude me from delivering what I know baysiders have called for. However, this does not deter me. It has not in the past and it will not in the future. It simply makes me even more determined to achieve the very best for the bayside.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (2.37 pm): The Premier has trumpeted her refreshed cabinet, but seriously, who in their right mind thought that reshuffling the deck was going to result in any meaningful shift to address the successive failures of this tired third-term Palaszczuk Labor government? Rather than bring in fresh faces, the Premier took the path of least resistance, tasking failed ministers like the member for Redcliffe and the member for Bulimba with tackling critical problems like the youth crime crisis—two ministers who in their previous ministerial roles presided over the systemic weakening of youth justice laws in Queensland.


Both the member for Redcliffe and the member for Bulimba did not just preside over the weakening of the laws; they boasted about how much of a positive difference removing breach of bail and detention as a last resort would have. How did that work out? The facts show there was a reduction in youth offending every single year of the former LNP government. What happened when the Palaszczuk Labor government came to power? In 2015-16 offending was up 400; the next year, 600; the next year, 1,600; and in 2018-19 it was up by 3½ thousand offences. That is the member for Bulimba's record: skyrocketing youth crime because of weak youth justice laws that she presided over.

The only solution those opposite have that is working is the LNP's policy of breach of bail. Labor copied the LNP's breach of bail legislation word for word and now, after proudly saying for eight years that it would not work, after opposing the very same legislation they now champion as their own, the member for Bulimba comes in here today and says that 299 young people have been charged in two months. That just highlights the magnitude of the problem.

Imagine how many young offenders would have been off the streets if the member for Bulimba had supported that policy in 2019. Back in 2019 she proudly championed that she was 'removing legislative barriers that may contribute to kids being held on remand or being refused bail'. Now, just like then, the member for Bulimba is ignoring the calls of Queensland communities for stronger action on youth criminals. Queenslanders want to see youth criminals held to account when they break the

law; they want to see young offenders held in custody to protect the community. Queenslanders want detention as a last resort removed from the Youth Justice Act. The only argument that the member for Bulimba can mount is that it is against a UN convention. Never mind that the breach-of-bail provisions that they support contravene the same convention; never mind that it is what Queensland communities want and need. Queenslanders deserve better than the same chaos and crisis from failed ministers like the member for Bulimba and the member for Redcliffe. Queenslanders deserve a government that is strong on crime and will keep our community safe.


Townsville University Hospital

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.40 pm): I rise today to speak about the impressive investments and improvements being made in our health services at the Townsville University Hospital. We continually hear negative comments from members opposite, who refer to our health staff across the state as 'duds'. This is a team of Queensland professionals who led the country when it came to managing the COVID-19 pandemic that swept the world. I thank all of the health professionals here in Queensland and all of the support staff who provide world-class service across this great state, especially in Townsville. I have visited the Townsville University Hospital on many occasions—and I encourage the member for Burdekin to do so as well; he has never visited. Some visits have been to support Brighter Lives, an excellent organisation doing excellent work in support of Townsville University Hospital. One of the most recent visits to Brighter Lives was to celebrate the funding for a new six-seater transporter for our highly respected volunteers who help transport patients around the medical facility.

The Palaszczuk Labor state government has continually invested in the Townsville University Hospital. Over the past 2½ years, as the member for Mundingburra, I have attended many official openings of the new facilities with the former health minister, Yvette D'Ath. I thank Minister D'Ath for her support of the people of North Queensland and the Townsville University Hospital through the continual improvements to meet community needs and expectations. New facilities like the paediatric cardiac unit; the paediatric emergency department; a purpose-built pharmacy to prepare specialised sterile pharmaceuticals such as cytotoxic drugs that typically kill fast-replicating cells like cancer; and the recently opened stroke unit, which has some of the best surgeons in the world and is the first of its kind in Australia outside of a major city, are world-class services for regional Queensland. We as a government have so much to be proud of. We are saving and changing lives.

The latest addition to the Townsville University Hospital is the recently officially opened Acute Admissions Unit. I represented Minister Yvette D'Ath at this opening. This means another 33 beds for the largest tertiary hospital in Northern Australia. The official opening was conducted by the federal assistant minister, Hon. Emma McBride, Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention and Assistant Minister for Rural and Regional Health. This demonstrates that we now have a federal government we can work with. The Townsville University Hospital is a hospital with an excellent team of professionals, and I thank them for their service.

Electricity Prices

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (2.43 pm): I cannot say that I am surprised by today's headlines that Queenslanders will pay more for their energy bills once again. This is in direct contrast to statements made by Labor's energy minister, who has said on more than 130 recent occasions that energy prices are going down. It was repeated again this morning. The Premier and her ministers are out of touch if they think Queensland families are paying less for electricity than they used to. I challenge the minister to find me any working Queensland family with a cheaper electricity bill now than a couple of years ago.


It is as clear as day that the energy minister is more interested in political spin than he is in acknowledging or, better still, addressing Queenslanders' cost-of-living crisis. This spin is typical of the Labor Party, and Queenslanders will not forget federal Labor's commitment to reduce electricity prices by \$275—a commitment the new Prime Minister quickly walked back from. Queenslanders will not forget that the Premier signed up to federal Labor's gas price cap, which has undermined any investment in domestic gas in this state.

The government has been publicly called out for not adequately maintaining its energy assets. It is something that even the unions have put on record. The Queensland Competition Authority and the Auditor-General have confirmed that the explosion at Callide C was a factor in driving up electricity prices. This completely contradicted what the minister promised at estimates when he said that the explosion at Callide would have 'no net impact on consumers' electricity prices' after the generator

broke down. Today marks two years since the first Callide explosion, and Queenslanders still do not know when the offline generators will be restored. They also do not know how Genuity's collapse as the equity partner is affecting the restoration of the offline generators and the provision of stable and affordable electricity. I have asked the Premier, the Treasurer and the energy minister multiple times in this House to explain whether the state will be purchasing the remaining 50 per cent. Disappointingly, but not surprisingly, the Premier and her ministers have remained silent.

While the Premier and Labor's energy minister remain caught up in their own chaos and crisis, Queensland families will continue to pay the price with higher power bills. The government's only solution is subsidies, but this is failing to solve the fundamental problem, that energy prices are skyrocketing under this government's watch. The Labor Party is taking money out of everyone else's hip pocket and putting it back into only some people's back pocket. The minister owes it to Queenslanders to be honest and up-front, rather than the current rhetoric of weasel words and false promises. Subsidies have to be paid by somebody. Somebody is paying the price.

Hervey Bay Electorate; Tracey, Mr J

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (2.46 pm): I wish to update the House on the progress of a couple of projects being delivered in the Hervey Bay electorate. I was recently advised that our new health facilities—the \$36 million mental health unit and the \$40 million expansion of the hospital—are progressing well, even with some supply line issues. The new 22-bed mental health acute inpatient unit is nearing completion alongside the hospital's emergency department building. When complete, this facility will provide support to those most in need with mental health issues when they present to the Hervey Bay hospital, with its location enhancing the management of patients who present with these conditions.


With the Hervey Bay Hospital expansion, preliminary work has been progressing and is moving to the next phase of the project. The expansion will bring an additional 35 beds, with 25 new inpatient and 10 ICU beds when complete. These works will not only improve and upgrade our hospital but also continue to provide good jobs and inject money into our local economy. This is a great win for my community. I am proud to be a part of a Palaszczuk Labor government that is delivering new health infrastructure and services to the Hervey Bay community.

I want to place on record my condolences to the family of one of my region's great community members, Mr John Tracey. John passed away on 5 May at the age of 86 after a lifetime of community service. John was a man of faith. He was a teacher, a school principal and a lifelong volunteer at many community organisations including the Hervey Bay State Emergency Service. In recognition of that commitment, the Hervey Bay community honoured John with an Australia Day Local Citizen of the Year Award. John was also a comrade, with his membership spanning many decades. This saw him honoured with life membership of our great Australian Labor Party—a personal milestone that he was enormously proud of.

John was one of those who we called locally called 'the originals'. He was there at the start of the Hervey Bay branch in the 1980s with the former member for Hervey Bay, Bill Nunn. John served the party in numerous positions and was with us through every state and federal election. He last handed out how-to-vote cards at polling booths in my 2022 campaign. I knew John for a period of around 20 years. When I arrived in Hervey Bay, John was one of the first individuals to put his hand out to welcome me to the Hervey Bay family. He was quick to provide advice on the lay of the land in the branch and in the region. John and I went on to fight many battles together and, as John would say, 'took on the Tories head-on', but he always did it with respect and as a total gentleman.

John was a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Above all, John was just a decent bloke who did his best in the time he was with us and gave so much to his community. To John's loving wife, Lesley, and to his children Robert, Cathy, Michael, Chris, Helen and Peter, I send my condolences for your loss. I will miss you, John, and I thank you for your service and your sage advice. The world is poorer without you. Vale, John Tracey. It is your time to rest now, mate.

Housing


 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (2.49 pm): Today during question time we see that in the housing space we have a different minister but the same old speaking notes: the same lines coming out from this minister, the minister before her, the minister before her, the one that came back and was reheated—the same lines. Let us look at some of the lines that were given today. One was that the Palaszczuk government has record investment in housing. How does that reconcile with the Productivity

Commission, which says that the Palaszczuk government has the lowest spend per capita in the nation with regard to social housing? How does it reconcile when we have a housing fund, which those opposite keep bragging about, which has \$2 billion in it but we do not have any houses? It is like having a hospital but not having any beds! Why do those opposite not put \$3 billion or \$4 billion into it? It will not make any difference. It makes no difference at all. They can have a fund, but if they do not have houses the fund means absolutely nothing.

What is the other thing that those opposite throw out all of the time? They talk about the construction of houses. They talk about how many houses they are building or built. What they fail to tell everybody is how many houses they have sold. They are deceitful when they keep talking about the construction of these houses because they lead people to believe that the housing stock has been increased by that amount. What do the facts say? The facts say that over the last seven or eight years the housing stock has increased by 1.5 per cent to two per cent whereas the number of people on the housing waitlist has blown out by 70 per cent. I was speaking to one of the social service groups just yesterday and it recognises it. It knows the deceit of the government and the fact that it continues to hide behind tricky words and not on its own results.

Today it was revealed during question time after a question on notice the number of social housing properties in this state that have been vacant for more than 30 days. Over 434 houses have been vacant for more than 30 days when there are around 50,000 people on the social housing waiting list. Some of those houses have been vacant for 400 days. Another house was vacant for 600 days. Another house was vacant for 800 days. One house that burnt down has not been rebuilt in 940 days—nearly three years. This is a government that talks the talk but does not deliver. We will keep the minister accountable to her own promise, and that is success is delivering on the government's promises. On that standard, it is failing miserably.

Leader of the Opposition, Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road Upgrade

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.52 pm): It was a shame that last night the LNP did not consider my contribution to the debate as relevant. The Manager of Opposition Business rose multiple times to stop me talking about crime in my electorate, so today I am calling on the Leader of the Opposition to man up and apologise for telling mistruths about me on not one but now two occasions. First the Leader of the Opposition said that I was making up stories for Facebook about the LNP's attempts to halt our \$80 million Yeppoon-Rockhampton road upgrade, but he did not even know his shadow minister for local government had written a letter to the minister wanting the engineering design for this critical road upgrade, which I have personally fought for, scrapped. When asked about it this morning by ABC Radio, the LNP replied and said that it is all a non-event. Then just last week the Leader of the Opposition sent out a—

Ms LEAHY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence to the statement made by the member and ask that she withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): I will take some advice. I did not hear the member for Keppel reference you yourself, member, which is required for you to take personal offence. Were you referenced?

Ms LEAHY: She referenced a letter that I wrote, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not the same as taking personal offence to something in the House.

Mr HART: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. At the start of the member's speech she said that it was a shame the LNP did not find her comments appropriate to the debate, but it was actually the Acting Speaker who found that and sat her down. I think the member's comments are a reflection on the chair and I ask you to rule on that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Ms LAUGA: The shadow minister for local government wrote a letter to the Minister for Main Roads trying to halt this project and now seemingly finds it offensive that she wrote a letter. Just last week the Leader of the Opposition sent out a press release—and I table a copy of the statement—to Central Queensland media outlets accusing me of not using the word 'crime' once during parliament in Cairns two weeks ago.

Tabled paper: Media release, undated, titled 'Parliament records expose central Queensland MPs: Central Queensland Labor MPs went silent on crime during Regional Parliament' [\[716\]](#).

I am pleased to rise today and correct the record, because clearly the Leader of the Opposition and his media unit do not know how to check the record. They do not even know how to read *Hansard*. The LNP clearly does not even know how to read *Hansard* because in parliament in Cairns I spoke about crime, prisons, community safety, correctional officers, rehabilitation and punishment, and I table a copy of my speech for the information of the House.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 11 May 2023, from the *Record of Proceedings*, Queensland Parliament, of a speech by the member for Keppel, Ms Brittany Lauga MP [717].


The Leader of the Opposition has been in this place for a while now. He should know how to check *Hansard*. It is a pretty basic thing to do. If he does not even know how to search and read *Hansard*, then I am genuinely concerned for the opposition. I mean, imagine if Pat Cummins—

Mr Ryan: They've got dozens of staff.

Ms LAUGA: They do have dozens of staff. Imagine if Pat Cummins did not know how to read a team sheet. Imagine if Peter Dutton did not know where Yeppoon was. Oh, hang on: that actually did happen! My mistake.

In all seriousness, the Leader of the Opposition needs to apologise for these false allegations and seek some mentoring and support from the Parliamentary Service to assist him in *Hansard* comprehension. Some 40 per cent of the LNP's shadow cabinet were ministers in the Newman government. The Leader of the Opposition was himself a minister in the Newman government. I would have thought that he would have learnt how to check *Hansard* back when he was a minister. We know just how bad those opposite were in government. They oversaw failed youth justice boot camps, they made cuts to youth justice conferencing, they orchestrated the sacking of the CMC in the middle of the night and they attacked the judiciary. We are cracking down on serious recidivist offenders and we are investing significantly in early intervention programs that we know work, and that is why the Palaszczuk government is investing more than \$100 million in additional funding.

Redland Hospital; Former Minister for Health and Ambulance Services


 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (2.57 pm): I rise to speak to the chaos and crisis around the Redland Hospital created by the former health minister. Redland Hospital is a basket case and grounds alone for her dismissal: worst ever ambulance ramping at 73 per cent, almost three in four patients, remaining dangerously high; second worst for the 24-hour emergency department waits for a bed; failure to deliver the hospital expansion stage 1 consisting of the ICU and new beds by 2022 as promised; and the mothballing of the hospital expansion stage 2, according to the AMAQ. The health minister got her just desserts, but with the new minister the question is: is it frying pan into the fire? Sadly, we may be going from bad to worse.

The *Hansard* record from the first two days of parliament this week reveal the new health minister, Minister Fentiman, and the Premier together have not mentioned the phrase 'Redland Hospital' once. They have talked about their hospital plan and named hospitals, many of them in South-East Queensland, but not once did either of them mention the words 'Redland Hospital'. The new health minister took a question about health in the Redlands and she did not—maybe could not—utter the words 'Redland Hospital', even about the Redlands. Is it because the words 'Redland Hospital' are now synonymous with Labor chaos and crisis? Like Labor's allergic reaction to the term 'youth crime', it now seems to have developed an allergy to 'Redland Hospital'. Is Labor so ashamed of its record? That is what happens, Minister, when the government deprioritises the clinical needs of the real hospital for a glorified medical centre and overpriced car park.

What can the new minister do? She can: one, break her vow of silence and mention the words 'Redland Hospital' before the end of parliament today; two, today, decide to announce in the budget the stage 2 expansion of the real hospital, the funds that her government promised and the LNP federal government already partly provided and do not just reheat the stage 1 funding announcement—Redlanders will be watching; and three, attend the Redlands health crisis town hall meeting that is scheduled for this Monday with David Crisafulli and I as well as the fantastic LNP candidate for the Redlands, Rebecca Young. She can bring the local Labor members of parliament to listen to locals. For once they can listen to the experiences of locals. I invite all members to come along as well as local community members. The meeting will be held at 10.30 am at Victoria Point Sharks Sporting Club.

Labor's chaos and crisis is clear for all to see at Redland Hospital. The outed health minister got what she deserved and the new health minister needs to show how she will fix the chaos that the government has created.

Childhood Brain Cancer, The Cure Starts Now

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.00 pm): Someone has to do it and every now and then, in parliament, I do not mind bravely wearing a bright colourful suit for a very good cause. This year, my 'dare to wear' challenge is the precursor to The Cure Starts Now truck convoy that is happening on Sunday in Townsville. This is a call to all in this House to help raise money to fund research for children's brain cancer. I give a shout-out to Triple M's Steve 'Pricey' Price. My pink floral outfit is being repaired and Pricey said, 'I'll give you \$1,000 if you wear this suit into the parliament.' There is our first \$1,000. This disease affects children in all of our electorates so I ask all members to, please, think about making a donation to The Cure Starts Now.

The Cure Starts Now Foundation was formed by Townsville dad Ren Pedersen after losing his seven-year-old daughter, Amy, in 2009. The Cure Starts Now Foundation is nationally known for providing direct financial support for research into this cancer, which is called DIPG, Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma. It is a cancer that is rare and fast growing. It is a tumour that forms in the cells of the brain stem and it is incredibly hard to treat. It has a terrible prognosis. The cancer occurs in children and it is terminal.

Ren reached out to a local in my community, Todd Martin, through his connection to Camp Quality when Amy was diagnosed. When Camp Quality closed its Townsville office, Ren asked Todd to help in restarting the annual truck convey, which is now in its seventh year. The convoy is well supported by the Townsville community. People come out in their thousands to support the event.

A government member: And a good local member.

Mr HARPER: Thank you, mate. I will be putting the Harper truck in the convoy. I thank Todd whose work is to be commended. Outside of his working career, Todd provides all aspects of the event including administration, sponsorship, governance, media, logistics and operations.

Over 140 trucks and bikes, including my Harper community truck, will partake in Sunday's convey, which travels 20 kilometres through Townsville streets and up Riverway Drive, concluding at the dam where we will announce the amounts raised. In 2017, the first amount raised was \$24,000; last year, our Townsville community raised \$138,000. We have already raised up to \$30,000 and by the end of this speech—thank you, Premier—we will have another \$2,500. Before acknowledging all of the participating members—and I will have to take a breath before I do that—I give a shout-out to the Queensland police and staff from Transport and Main Roads who will manage the road corridor during the convey.


On top of the \$1,000 from Pricey, the Premier's generous donation and that of community members, branch members and my staff, I acknowledge the contributions of the members for Miller, Waterford, Redlands, Mackay, Caloundra, Morayfield, Maryborough, Toohey, Pine Rivers, Bundaberg, Bundamba, Rockhampton, Bulimba, Macalister, Bancroft, Mansfield, Cook, Stafford, Pumicestone, Mount Ommaney, Ipswich West, Townsville—which was a very generous donation—Capalaba, Algester, Springwood, Gaven, Keppel and yourself, Mr Deputy Speaker and member for Stretton. This is a great cause and I thank you all. We have just hit \$5,000 and the cure starts now.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to take Note

Resumed from 20 April (see p. 1167), on motion of Ms McMillan—

That the House take note of the Community Support and Services Committee Report No. 23, 57th Parliament, *Towards a healthier, safer, more just and compassionate Queensland: decriminalising the offences affecting those most vulnerable*, tabled on 31 October 2022.

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (3.03 pm): This particular inquiry exposed the committee to a lot of things that we would prefer not to see in our communities. We heard from many submitters who have ideas about reform. We had hoped to address more in the report about recommendations on issues subsequent to decriminalisation around health, housing and welfare service delivery. Ultimately, within the process we did not deal with the many underlying issues of poverty, homelessness and entrenched disenfranchisement. Through many of the committee's other recommendations we tried to recognise the reality of what we found on the ground. Public places should be free from begging, public intoxication and urination. Unfortunately, we did not really get to see the disproportionate responses to those offences and many foresee the continuation of the difficulties in dealing with these acts of crime, as they are now.

With significant serious issues confronting many of our communities, some submitters questioned why the government is simply following the other states and territories with legislative reforms that fail to strengthen legislation and that repeal laws that maintain and improve existing behavioural and community public space standards. It was very evident to us that unless we do a lot of work first then none of these reforms will be welcomed by members of our communities. We support many submitters who expressed concerns with the proposed repealing of these legislative provisions.

I highlight, in particular, the local government submitters and the police who overwhelmingly said they would prefer to see non-government organisations and government agencies tasked with the health and welfare of vulnerable persons being part of co-responder arrangements. The recommendation to repeal fails to acknowledge the lack of services and funding and the capacity of other agencies to respond to reports of public intoxication, which creates an environment where police do not have the power of law to ensure community safety and amenity.

Of major concern to the LNP members of the committee was the apparent impact on police banning notices in the safe night precincts from the proposed repeal of sections of the Summary Offences Act 2005. Police must establish that an individual is behaving in a disorderly, offensive, threatening or violent way and with associated behaviours, including urination or being intoxicated. That is why we could not support the changes proposed to the safe night precincts.


The committee received many submissions with references to the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, which was held in 1991. That shows how long these issues have been around in our communities. Other jurisdictions in Australia are experiencing the same issues. We cannot see that the decriminalisation of public intoxication in other jurisdictions has led to any improvements, particularly when there is not the key infrastructure needed to support those who need to be diverted.

During the inquiry submitters and individuals spoke about many issues, but there was one issue that highlighted the failures to adequately action recommendations 79 to 91 from the deaths in custody report relating to the diversion of First Nations people away from police custody. Throughout the inquiry, LNP members of the committee continued to prosecute the point that the evidence being presented regarding public intoxication was about lack of health and welfare capacity and is not so much a police issue.

What remains of great concern is the lack of evidence addressing alcohol abuse as a societal, health and medical problem. Of course, everywhere we went that was a consistent issue that we would prefer we did not have to deal with. Much more needs to be done to address the disparities in public health, social welfare and community safety amongst vulnerable Queenslanders, particularly our First Nations people. Key areas of concern, in particular, are north and west Queensland and the Gold Coast where immediate assistance is needed. We must acknowledge that 30 years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody we have failed to adequately deal with the increasing and serious societal problems in relation to intoxicated persons in our communities.

The inquiry proved the need for the immediate implementation of targeted 'sobering up centres' where intoxicated persons can be taken overnight and then dealt with in a more humane manner. Investment in appropriate diversionary centres is inadequate in many of our communities. Universally, every volunteer or employee the committee spoke with highlighted the serious and urgent need for more beds.

I must say that, despite the efforts of successive Commonwealth, state and local governments to address Indigenous disadvantage, progress has been mixed at best. In some areas, minor improvements have been cancelled and the situation is worsening, as we have seen particularly with Closing the Gap targets. Tangible and trusted evidence is lacking on the performance and effectiveness of many Indigenous programs. I say again, as I have said so many times, that we must get to the core of the funding. We must be auditing the organisations that take so much, promise so much and deliver so little. I think time is up for those organisations. They must be held to account. Everywhere I went, most of the organisations tried to justify their actions and could show few outcomes, yet they are working on behalf of the most vulnerable Queenslanders who just want governments to look after them, provide services and make sure that funding reaches those who need it most.

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (3.09 pm): In Queensland, public intoxication, begging and public urination are all considered public offences and are therefore subject to criminal charges. On 24 June 2022 the Legislative Assembly referred to the Community Support and Services Committee an inquiry into decriminalising public intoxication, begging and public urination offences and health and social welfare-based responses. During the inquiry the committee met with police, people supporting persons

experiencing homelessness, people assisting in safe night precincts and urban entertainment districts, people working in diversionary centres and detoxification centres as well as advocates for First Nations peoples, local council representatives and community members. The committee witnessed the great work of many people in programs and services throughout Queensland that make a real difference in people's lives, often working throughout the night and in challenging conditions.

As a member of the Community Support and Services Committee, I feel that this inquiry challenges our way of thinking and, if anything, challenges us to change the way in which we view certain societal problems. Evidence suggests that public intoxication, begging and urination affects the most marginalised, disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups in our society, so criminalising these public offences will clearly affect people with the greatest social and economic needs.


The issues that create problematic public intoxication, begging and urination are complex and multifaceted. Until we move our thinking beyond the actions of individuals associated with the three public offences and focus on the underlying root cause of the problem, we will not see a shift in social outcomes. Criminalising people for public intoxication, begging and urination is not an effective method to deter the behaviour. It is not going to solve the homelessness issue, drug and alcohol misuse, health and mental health issues or the ability to pay fines. We need to put in place strong measures that will address the problem from a holistic perspective, one that will address health and wellbeing.

When we talk about the most marginalised and disenfranchised groups in our society, we are talking about a percentage of our population who experience extreme poverty and social exclusion. Too often we find that opportunities for the most marginalised to develop socially or simply to have their voices heard become limited. Statistics show that there is an overwhelming rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being represented among those charged with public offences. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made up 4.6 per cent of Queensland's population in 2021 but represented more than 47 per cent of people charged with these offences in 2021-22. To put this into perspective, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are charged with these offences at almost 19 times the rate of the non-Indigenous population. The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people charged with public intoxication are aged between 30 and 49. In the non-Indigenous community there is less variation across age cohorts. People aged between 18 and 49 are charged with public intoxication at roughly similar numbers.

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, the time has come to put an end to the ongoing criminalisation and incarceration of people for being poor, homeless and in need, for substance misuse and addiction and for failing to access and utilise ablution facilities. There are major inconsistencies when it comes to criminalising public offences. For instance, in some parts of Queensland police responses to public offences such as urination vary from talking to the offender or, under certain circumstances, issuing an on-the-spot fine. In contrast, in Far North Queensland, if police do act upon the offence they charge more people with public urination than they issue with on-the-spot fines.

The health and welfare response clearly needs to be considered to strike a balance between community safety and people's enjoyment of public spaces and to ensure vulnerable people who are not acting aggressively or in a threatening manner are not charged with these minor offences committed because they suffer from chronic ill health, poverty or homelessness. They have no realistic prospect of paying their fines; nor should they be put at risk by being incarcerated. The QPS highlighted that, in 2020-21: 40 per cent of all people police charged for urinating in a public place identified as being Indigenous; 47 per cent of all people charged with public intoxication identified as being Indigenous; and 64 per cent of people charged with begging identified as being Indigenous. While begging occurs primarily in Brisbane, public intoxication is far more common on the Gold Coast and in North and Far North Queensland.

Queensland is the only Australian jurisdiction in which specific offences criminalise all three of the acts examined by this inquiry—public intoxication, begging and public urination. While other states and territories have removed specific offences criminalising some or all of these acts, most maintain more general public order offences that can criminalise such behaviour in certain circumstances. We can do better; we must do better. I commend the report to the House.

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (3.15 pm): The member for Maiwar, who sits on the Community Support and Services Committee, and I generally support the committee's report, especially the primary recommendation that parliament repeal the three offences of begging, public urination and being intoxicated in a public place. This support is subject to some caveats, outlined in the member for Maiwar's statement of reservation to the committee report.

Recommendation 2 of the report recommends repealing these offences 'subject to appropriate community-based diversion services being in place'. The Greens absolutely support the expansion of such services as well as detox and rehabilitation facilities. In my electorate of South Brisbane, Murri Watch runs diversionary and support programs to support incarcerated First Nations people and to provide alternatives to incarceration for First Nations people. Murri Watch's facilities in South Brisbane provide food, care and beds for people sleeping rough and intoxicated persons who would otherwise be incarcerated in a police watch house. Such services are universally oversubscribed, under-resourced or simply unavailable in some parts of the state, and these kinds of First Nations led and controlled services require an urgent and major funding boost. That said, the government should not delay taking steps to decriminalise the offences that are the focus of the report until appropriate services are in place.


The inquiry makes it clear that these offences do little to improve community safety and wellbeing and instead increase interactions between vulnerable people and the criminal justice system, leading to worse long-term outcomes. To delay reforms until a universal framework has been adopted across the state risks the reforms being delayed indefinitely. In the meantime, these offences punish people for the government's failure to adequately resource services to meet community needs. It is more than 30 years since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody explicitly recommended the decriminalisation of these offences. How much longer will we have to wait?

There was some concern during the inquiry that the removal of these offences may lead to an increase in police using the more serious offence of public nuisance. We share these concerns but do not consider this to be an inevitable outcome or a valid argument against decriminalisation. Rather, this concern would be best addressed by narrowing the public nuisance offence. Presently, a person can commit a public nuisance offence if they behave in a disorderly or offensive way. Caxton Legal Centre and the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health recommend narrowing the offence to apply only to behaviour that is threatening or violent. The Greens implore the government to take this sensible suggestion on board.

The committee's recommendation 7 recommends that police be authorised to transport an intoxicated person to a place of safety where there is no other appropriate transport option. However, this recommendation is made alongside related findings that police interactions with intoxicated people should be as minimal as possible, that police custody in holding cells presents a real risk to an intoxicated person and that protective custody should only be used as a last resort. I remain concerned about any proposal that would allow police to retain powers to detain people against their will. Any proposal for the police to transport someone to a place of safety should be on a voluntary basis and guarantee that this does not include any ongoing police detention, especially in watch houses. Given the history of deaths, racialised violence and child abuse in police custody, the police are often ill-suited to respond to matters of public health. The priority should instead be funding community services to assist intoxicated people in nonviolent matters.

Recommendation 13 of the report provides an important and frank recognition that law enforcement responses to alcohol and other drug addiction, especially incarceration, are more expensive and less effective than health responses and treatment options. The report refers to the Queensland Mental Health Commission's report *Achieving balance: the Queensland Alcohol and Other Drugs Plan 2022-2027* and its strategic priority of expanding diversion, which includes the priority action of increasing the availability of health responses and reducing criminal justice responses for people experiencing problematic alcohol and other drug use.

The reforms under discussion this week are a positive step in that direction. Public support for decriminalisation of personal drug possession and use and for the legalisation of low-risk drugs such as cannabis and MDMA continues to grow. The government would be well served to listen to the community and health experts and continue to go further down drug law reform pathways as a matter of priority.

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (3.19 pm): I rise to speak to the report of the Community Support and Services Committee on the inquiry into the decriminalisation of certain public offences. I would like to thank committee members and all those who participated in the inquiry process. These are difficult issues which affect the various communities across our great state in different ways so it was important that we looked at a wide range of views in order to strike the right balance.

This is a comprehensive report that reflects the opinions and concerns of various stakeholders, including community members, police and service providers. The report makes clear the recommendation is to repeal the offences of begging in a public place, being intoxicated in a public

place and urinating in a public place from the Summary Offences Act 2005. However, I firmly agree with the committee's recommendation that this repeal should be subject to the availability of appropriate community-based diversion services. I acknowledge that the repeal of these offences may raise concerns about community safety. Therefore, the report recommends police retain the relevant powers to address aggressive and violent behaviour.

To divert vulnerable individuals experiencing chronic ill health, poverty or homelessness away from a possible punitive response, the report recommends investing in programs to establish or maintain non-custodial facilities for the care and treatment of intoxicated persons, which is essential to delivering on recommendations 79 to 91 of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody handed down in 1991.

Through the inquiry the Queensland Police Service was directed to investigate tools used by police in other jurisdictions where these offences have been decriminalised. I believe that this would be a useful exercise to inform the best way forward for Queensland and present further opportunities for the QPS to develop its co-responder programs to better target more effective outcomes, as advised by the Public Advocate. The report also recommends providing cultural awareness training to all frontline workers responding to or providing services in connection to the offences under review and that those responding do so in a trauma informed way, reflective of any cultural sensitivities.


Where an individual is intoxicated but not acting in an aggressive or violent manner, the report encourages Queensland police to use discretion. Alternative powers should only be used when a person acts in an aggressive or violent manner. Police should also be authorised to transport an intoxicated person to a place of safety where there is no appropriate transport option. This is to ensure vulnerable individuals are taken care of and are not left at risk of harm.

Local governments should be encouraged to provide adequate public facilities across the state, with a particular focus on ensuring spiritual places of culture gatherings be provided with facilities such as shade, waste bins, seating, fresh drinking water and amenities. Community support organisations should be expanded to be available at times when Queensland's communities and individuals need them most to provide outreach services and health assessments on the ground.

Disadvantaged individuals often have complex and multiple support needs that require a flexible and integrated approach. Therefore, we need to develop multidisciplinary, culturally responsive and trauma informed support services alongside social housing and onsite supported accommodation.

This report also recognises diversionary centres can be an effective way to support individuals who are struggling with addiction and related issues so we need to ensure that they are appropriately located. Reframing the public conversation around abuse of alcohol to focus on health impacts and to encourage individuals to seek help moving away from a shame-based response would also be helpful in reducing instances of concern.

In conclusion, the committee's recommendations aim to strike a balance between community safety and the need to provide appropriate care and support to vulnerable individuals. We urge the Legislative Assembly to consider these recommendations carefully and take action where appropriate. I commend this report to the House.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (3.24 pm): I rise to speak to the report on the inquiry into removing laws on public drunkenness, public begging and public urination. I start by thanking committee members and committee staff for their work on this inquiry. The committee held hearings across the state, including in parts of North Queensland, the Gold Coast and elsewhere.

We looked at issues in areas like safe night precincts, general CBD shopping areas and we accompanied police officers on the beat. We visited homelessness agencies and diversionary centres. We spoke with a whole range of groups, including Indigenous groups. We heard that communities in general expect to be able to use public spaces free from public bad behaviour, free from public intoxication, free from public begging and free from public urination. Some advocacy and justice groups felt that there should only be a health response and not a justice response. Others, including many police, mayors and councillors, expressed their concern about removing the justice response altogether, especially for public drunkenness.

In terms of the police, the committee visited police stations, police beats and walked the streets with officers. However, there was very little participation of the police in public hearings and very little feedback from senior police in administration which begs the question why they, in my view, seemed

to largely stay out of the discussion. Some police at stations—OICs and other officers—and on the beat gave the committee helpful private briefings, and I thank them for those insights into what their job is like policing these aspects.


The picture from individual police officers became much clearer through discussions with individual officers outside the hearings and private briefings. Individual police officers were generally concerned about removing these provisions. Charges are still laid—particularly for public drunkenness—and police officers were clearly against relaxing these offences. This was especially the case where diversionary programs either do not exist at all, which was in many places, or are inadequate, which, in my view, was across a lot of the state.

Police warn that if some lesser offences are removed they may have to charge individuals with stronger offences, like public nuisance, that potentially carry stiffer penalties, and that was not their preferred option. Some police say that at times it is useful to be able to charge people with lighter offences to be able to manage difficult situations. This could involve keeping the individual safe or someone else safe or to avert greater harm or the escalation of a situation. Having those lighter powers was seen as helpful.

In terms of local government, mayors and councillors who attended the hearings were more open publicly about their concerns about relaxing the laws. They were concerned with potentially reducing police powers if it means that their council officers would have to play an increased role in public nuisance type issues. They were concerned about reducing the police presence on their streets. They thought government should provide more funding for diversionary programs well in advance of relaxing these police powers. That was the view that many mayors and councillors provided.

In terms of public begging, while it occurs commonly, rarely does it result in charges being laid. At its lowest level it is simply asking someone for money or something. Often this happens without it being a particular problem, though it can escalate. In terms of public urination, again, it happens quite often but rarely results in charges being laid unless it is a very indiscreet situation where there were no other alternatives. In terms of public drunkenness, it does continue to be a significant problem across Queensland.

We do need much more investment in effective diversionary programs before we go about relaxing the laws. This is certainly the view of local police in the Redlands who have spoken with me over a period of time. In terms of some of the issues to do with young people behaving badly—drunken activity and loutish and hooning behaviour—that we have been trying to deal with, they were concerned that these laws might be relaxed without alternative resources in advance. Much more needs to be done should these laws ever be relaxed.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (3.29 pm): I would like to begin my contribution on this committee report by acknowledging and congratulating the work of the Community Support and Services Committee in looking into the issues that are the subject of this report. I particularly acknowledge the leadership and hard work of the chair of the committee, the member for Mansfield.

Given that Queensland is the final jurisdiction to consider the decriminalisation of certain offences in the Summary Offences Act, which is the subject of this report, it is a conversation and an inquiry that we should be having. The issue needs to be looked at and there does need to be a very reasonable, considered, balanced inquiry that is based on evidence. Congratulations to the committee because I think that the report that is now before the Assembly reflects exactly that approach.


It is a comprehensive report. The committee met with police and people supporting persons experiencing homelessness. They consulted with people who are involved in our safe night precincts and entertainment districts in metropolitan areas and with people working in diversionary centres and detox centres, as well as advocates from the First Nations community, local council representatives and of course the broader community.

As has been reflected in other members' contributions, this report has stated that a balance needs to be struck between a health and welfare response and community safety and the community's ability to have enjoyment of public spaces. We also need to make sure—and this is the nub of the issue for me—that vulnerable people are not going to be subjected to institutionalised or negative outcomes that come with an institution that includes laws that can send them on a downward spiral.

I think one of the most compelling examples of exactly that—and it is contained in this report—is the research that shows the very strong correlation between people who are in custody for intoxication. I would hasten to add that this report looks at peaceful intoxication, if I can put it that way, and the higher risk that the person will die in custody because they are there due to intoxication. That is

overwhelmingly, based on the evidence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is very clear that, as well as saving lives, there are overall benefits to society by diverting people away from the criminal justice system towards a pathway of recovery, diversion and greater wellbeing.

I am particularly happy to see recommendation 8 in the report. I support all 16 recommendations and what they are trying to achieve. Recommendation 8 deals with encouraging local governments to ensure the provision of adequate public facilities across the state and that cultural gatherings be provided with public facilities including shade, waste bins, seating, fresh drinking water and amenities. The report also points out that local governments have a role to play when it comes to the regulation around the criminalisation of some of these offences. It is very important that other levels of government also step up and have this conversation and consider what is in this report. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (3.34 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Community Support and Services Committee report into the decriminalisation of certain summary offences. In speaking to this bill, I draw upon my previous experience in working with the Summary Offences Act and the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act, which preceded it. It is only right that we now take the time to consider the relevance of some offences within the Summary Offences Act, which was assented to in 2005. Certainly, the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act, widely known as the Vag act, had reached its limit of relevance, with offences such as being a vagrant in a public place finally being repealed. It was actually an offence to appear not to be able to support yourself financially. If you had less than \$10 in your pocket, you could have found yourself locked up.

I note that for this inquiry the work of the committee focused on the offences of urination in public, begging in a public place and being intoxicated in a public place. I cannot say that I ever personally commenced proceedings against someone for begging in a public place but, having worked at some of the Gold Coast's entertainment precincts, I know that the other two offences were certainly prevalent. I will spend my time this afternoon talking about the offence of being intoxicated in a public place. Having spent many years working in the Surfers Paradise precinct policing large events like schoolies, new years and the old Indy and Supercar events, this was policing bread and butter, but to suggest that locking people up was the primary response would be incorrect.


When an intoxicated person is let out onto the streets by a licensed proprietor, the best place for them to be is home and supervised. Many an early morning was spent ushering intoxicated people and their friends into waiting taxis with the requisite duty of care to make sure they had the means to get home. Police intervention usually only ensued when the intoxicated person insisted that they remain in public whilst being a potential danger to themselves and others was evident. Notices to appear were usually the next step in addressing this behaviour. It should be noted that being intoxicated in a public place and consuming alcohol in a public place are two different offences.

The last step would be to arrest someone for public intoxication. This would only occur when there were no alternatives to deal with the intoxicated person. The usual procedure would be to arrest the person, transport them to a place of safety and then unarrest them into the care of another person. Transportation to the watch house to 'sleep it off' would only occur if no person could be identified to care and monitor the intoxicated person. When working in the Oxley district, if the intoxicated person identified as Indigenous and there was no place or person identified that could take responsibility, they were taken to Murri Watch at Woolloongabba.

I acknowledge that the data on people being charged with these public order offences is predominantly and disproportionately our First Nations people. I would comment that police would generally make an effort to find a supervised place of safety for someone who is intoxicated and that when successful there was generally no record of that. However, our First Nations people are overwhelmingly unlikely to have that support network around them; hence, provisions where they are taken into custody and charged and this is when data is captured. There is also the X factor in all cases—that is, how the intoxicated person interacts with police and how the situation unfolds—which is usually a big determinant on the outcomes of that incident.

Diversion for public intoxication has always been the preferred method. Both as an arresting officer and previously having been a watch house supervisor, I know that police do not want to be the point of call for caring for intoxicated persons. Watch house keepers would ask an exhaustive list of questions to check that the officer had inquired about any other diversion and custody options to make sure that all other options other than the watch house had been exhausted.

However, I do note that the recommendation in the report in terms of decriminalising this offence does take specific care to mention that there needs to be sufficient diversionary places throughout the entire state prior to any step to decriminalise this offence. As with other members who have commented on this bill and expressed some concern—and certainly the concerns of police—this is usually couched around the fact that there was nowhere else to take them. If we have a policy in which diversion centres are established around the state, this will address those concerns. I therefore commend the recommendation that this offence be repealed and that appropriate community-based diversion services be provided for those people.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (3.39 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Community Support and Services Committee report No. 32, *Towards a healthier, safer, more just and compassionate Queensland: decriminalising the offences affecting the most vulnerable*—an inquiry into the decriminalisation of certain public offences and health and welfare responses—tabled on 31 October 2022. As stated in the committee’s report—

The terms of reference for the inquiry are as follows:

- a. changes to legislation and operational policing responses to decriminalise the public intoxication and begging offences in the Summary Offences Act 2005
- b. the compatibility of proposed legislative amendments, and health and social welfare-based service delivery responses to public intoxication and begging, with rights protected under the Human Rights Act 2019
- c. the costs and benefits of responses to public intoxication and begging in other Australian jurisdictions
- d. the health and social welfare-based responses to public intoxication and begging necessary to support legislative amendments, having regard to existing responses, such as diversion services
- e. the impacts of decriminalising public intoxication and begging in rural and remote communities
- f. the design of health and social welfare-based responses that are culturally safe and appropriate and informed by First Nations people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and legal services and also representative bodies for seniors and people with a disability
- g. the appropriateness of other police powers and offences to ensure community safety and public order arising from public intoxication and begging, particularly in the context of events where there may be significant alcohol consumption
- h. how existing public messaging on the harm of alcohol and other drugs, including alcohol-related violence, can continue to be reinforced following the decriminalisation of public intoxication, and
- i. the appropriateness of repealing the ‘Urinating in a public place’ offence under the Summary Offences Act 2005.

The committee made 16 recommendations in response to this inquiry into decriminalising the offences affecting those most vulnerable. The inquiry heard a range of multifaceted matters which were all within the scope of the terms of reference. As was to be expected, the committee heard there are a range of factors that can influence whether an individual becomes vulnerable, and this can often occur as a result of a complex combination of poverty, ill health, homelessness or past trauma.

There is a disproportionate impact on individuals when they become vulnerable. Sadly, there was shown to be an over-representation of First Nations peoples among those who were subsequently charged with public intoxication, begging, public urination offences or similar offences. Existing offences relating to intoxication, begging and urination were shown to share a common characteristic: they criminalise that behaviour only when it occurs in a public place.

Queensland police statistical data indicated a substantial geographical variation in offence frequency. While begging occurs primarily in Brisbane, public intoxication is far more common on the Gold Coast and in North and Far North Queensland. On the Gold Coast it is overwhelmingly non-Indigenous people who are charged with public intoxication, while in North and Far North Queensland it is overwhelmingly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are charged with this offence. Police Service data further shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are significantly over-represented among those charged with public intoxication, begging and public urination. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples made up 4.6 per cent of the Queensland population in 2021 but more than 47 per cent of people charged with these offences in 2021-22. This means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were charged with these offences at almost 19 times the rate of the non-Indigenous population.


The majority of submissions received supported the decriminalisation of public intoxication and begging. They held the general view that criminalising these behaviours had a disproportionate impact on vulnerable members of the community and was not effective in deterring the behaviour. I commend the report to the House.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (3.44 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee Report No. 32, 57th Parliament, *Examination of Auditor-General reports on the local government sector*, tabled on 28 November 2022.

The report we are talking about today is an important one, as are all of the reports that come from our committee, but this is one of the annual or regular examinations by the Auditor-General of the local government sector. We made one recommendation: that local governments be required to establish an independent audit and risk management committee. I will just go through some of our reasoning and the thinking behind why we made this recommendation.


We have seen similar recommendations about this very issue from reports that have come from the Auditor-General over the years. It is a constant refrain that we hear coming through. We have listened to that, examined that, reported on that and pursued that as a committee. The report says that local governments need an audit and risk management committee for the large councils and an audit function for all other councils. The question that has been examined in similar reports over the years is how well the local government sector has been doing. I think we can say, to paraphrase, that it has done well. It has improved over the years, but there is room for improvement.

I want to commend all of the councils out there. We have 77 around the state. I know it is a big ask for many of them to fulfil these audit functions and report back on their financial soundness year after year. I think they have made a great effort and they are improving all the time from where they came from some years ago. The report points out that, of those 77, 15 have no audit committee and six councils do not have an internal audit function. What is concerning is that it is clear from these reports that some councils need to have better internal control environments. It is not just about getting your annual financials in on time each year; what is needed is strong internal governance. That means better procurement practices, better contract management and better asset management.

What is particularly of concern—and we have seen this over the years—is protecting information systems in councils to stop hacking, which has happened on an irregular basis. Certainly cybersecurity is a great focus for all governments throughout Australia in this day and age, and local governments are not immune to that. We are encouraging local governments to make sure they identify where cybersecurity risks are and take measures to prevent cybersecurity attacks. One of the best ways to do that is to get an independent audit committee and independent risk management committee to specify for the council where they can do better and increase their capacity.

Many of us on this committee have been in local government. We have reflected on what we have learned from our time on audit risk management committees within the sector. In my early days at Caboolture Shire Council I learned so much from the people outside council who were on our audit committees. I found that they brought fresh eyes to our internal processes and revealed ways we could improve and meet standards that other organisations were always meeting. My experience with these committees is that they are really useful.

One of the things we have suggested to councils is that in a small council their ROC, their regional organisation of councils, could help create such a committee which could move across several councils. I think that would be a way of making sure there is not this cost impact on these councils while at the same time giving a very good reading of what they need to do. Once again, I congratulate all of the councils for the improvements they have made and I also congratulate the department for chasing this up.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (3.50 pm): As deputy chair of the committee, I am pleased to rise to speak about the Auditor-General reports into local government and the local government sector. We all know what a great job local governments do across the state—all 77 of them. The Auditor-General has done another sterling job, and I congratulate Mr Worrall and his team on identifying some further improvements that can happen across local government. This report is a culmination of the review of five different reports from 2020 to 2022. We have been watching this space for some time and we have seen improvements in local government, which have been great to see.

One observation I have made through this process is that there are many inconsistencies across different local governments. Different local governments consider different risks to be of higher importance and lesser importance. Sometimes that is not because it is a higher risk; it is just the perception of it or that they are not too confident about managing it. We have seen other examples of local governments or regional cooperation where they have been able to deal with the same risk in a


really efficient way and put in the right controls to make sure the risk is minimised for the local government areas without costing the local government individually a lot of money. I think the LGAQ and this Auditor-General's report will continue to share that information across all of the different local government areas.

As the chair said, four committee members have local government experience but I can also say that, although my colleague the member for Burleigh does not have local government experience, his experience as an engineer in the aerospace industries is very valuable in terms of his understanding of business and looking at things with fresh eyes. The member for Burleigh's contributions are always very astute and welcome when it comes to these matters.

We identified three main areas of audit function or audit and risk committee that we feel should be in place across the state—that being procurement, asset management and particularly IT and cybersecurity. As I mentioned before, some of the local governments deal with these things very well. I had experience with the Lockyer Valley Regional Council, and I was honoured that the people of the Gatton community first and then the Lockyer community gave me the opportunity to represent them as a councillor on the Lockyer council. When we established the audit and risk committee in Lockyer, it was a cumbersome process and we grappled to understand that. We were fortunate to have a really talented independent accountant locally who had experience in that area and assisted us through that process with the LGAQ.

One thing that was clear in my previous world is that what gets measured gets done. In our case, we had three councillors out of seven on that audit and risk committee. If the councillors themselves are having those conversations with professional people, it is actually a capacity-building exercise to learn from those things. We were fortunate to have experts locally, but across the state there are many regional areas where experts are not available. It is okay to say we could use IT, Teams meetings and things like that for some of the regional areas, but in many of the regional areas the bandwidth is not sufficient to have competent meetings all of the time. Some of those areas do need improvement, but that is an opportunity that we need to look at.

I also recognise the cost of the implementation of some of these things. A couple of councils have come together and formed their own audit functions and audit and risk committees together, and that is a great improvement. As I said at the start, the 77 local governments do great things across the state in providing wonderful services to our community and great leadership in the community, but I have to close by saying that we must always be very careful about things we put on local government so we do not stifle the opportunity for good community leaders to want to participate as councillors and mayors of local governments. It is a complex issue, but with the right assistance it can be very enjoyable and they can be great leaders for the community.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (3.55 pm): I rise to speak in support of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee report titled *Examination of Auditor-General reports on the local government sector*, being report No. 32 of the 57th Queensland parliament, tabled in November 2022. With this report, the committee considered five Auditor-General and Queensland Audit Office reports dating from 2017 to 2021. The committee not only considered these reports; it has also maintained a watching brief on recommendations and recurring themes within these reports and it is these issues which this report primarily addresses. The committee found that there is an opportunity to strengthen governance in local governments through more effective and mandated independent audit and risk management committees. As well, the committee found internal control deficiencies remain prevalent within the sector, including information systems.

All councils in Queensland are required by law to establish an effective internal audit function. Large councils must also establish an external audit committee. For several years the Auditor-General has recommended that legislative requirements on councils be strengthened to require that all councils establish an external audit committee and that the chair of this committee be independent of management and the council. Despite this, there are 15 councils in Queensland without an external audit committee and six without an internal audit function. A further five councils with an audit committee did not meet or met only once, and six internal audit functions did not conduct any audit activity.

For several years the Auditor-General has identified significant deficiencies in councils' internal control environments. Commonly, these have been in the areas of information systems, risk management and procurement practices. The financial sustainability of the local government sector in Queensland has improved. However, it is still below pre-pandemic levels. Effective audit committees are an important component of good governance. The committee strongly supports the Auditor-General's recommendations that all councils, irrespective of their size, establish external audit committees.

Internal controls are the people, systems and processes that ensure an entity can achieve its objectives, prepare reliable financial reports and comply with applicable laws. Features of a strong control environment include a strong governance framework, secure information systems, robust policies and procedures, and regular management monitoring and internal audit reviews. A significant deficiency in internal control is a deficiency or a combination of deficiencies that require immediate remedial action. The Auditor-General advised that, when a significant deficiency is identified, councils should allocate enough resources to resolve it as a matter of priority. If remedial action is not undertaken in a timely manner, significant deficiencies may result in substantial financial or reputational loss to councils.


One example of these deficiencies is councils' information systems. For several years the Auditor-General has reported issues with councils' information systems. The Auditor-General makes clear that this increases the risk of cyber attacks, undetected errors and potential financial loss, including through fraud. In 2020, this was the most common internal control deficiency across the sector. In light of this, the Attorney-General recommended that all councils strengthen the security of their information systems. The Auditor-General identified a further 67 internal control deficiencies in addition to the 28 that remained unresolved from the previous year. The most common deficiencies related to incorrect system access levels for staff.

In closing, I note that the report from the committee made only one recommendation and that was that all 72 councils in Queensland are required to establish an independent audit and risk management committee.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hart, adjourned.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates and Referral of Auditor-General's Reports


 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.00 pm): I seek to advise the House of the determinations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly at its meeting today. The committee has resolved, pursuant to standing order 136, that the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee report on the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 28 July 2023. The committee has resolved, pursuant to standing order 194B, that the Auditor-General's report to parliament No. 12 of 2022-23 titled *Growing ecotourism in Queensland* be referred to the Economics and Governance Committee.

TOBACCO AND OTHER SMOKING PRODUCTS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1697, on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (4.01 pm): I rise to support the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill. The bill builds on the Palaszczuk government's 2020 election commitment to strengthen our tobacco laws and increase smoke-free places across Queensland. In the past 25 years, we have seen smoking rates drop, thanks to concerted efforts across all governments—federal and state—and all of the mechanisms that are put in place. They are very different to when I was young, growing up and going to school in the sixties and seventies. The level of smoking amongst adults was something in the range of 40 per cent to 50 per cent. Cigarette smoking has reduced significantly since then, but it did not happen overnight; it took a while.

I remember as a young child going down to the corner store and buying cigarettes for my father and grandfather, uninhibited. Of course, as every good young person would do, there were always a couple spare for you and your friends. I was never a smoker. I never really took it up. I never saw the concept of it. However, my father, God bless his soul, was a three-packet-a-day cigarette smoker. I remember a time when he was very ill and he had to have a hip replacement. He used to tell a story where the doctors said to him, 'Do you want to be down here or up there?', pointing to heaven. He said, 'I want to be down here.' The doctor said, 'Well, you have to give up cigarette smoking.' My father went cold turkey overnight and never touched them again. It was really amazing that he was able to do that.

The smoking rate has reduced. What we have seen is a response to emergency challenges in not only regulating tobacco and ensuring good public health but also we now have vaping coming in. What is happening out in the community happens in our schools, happens in our playgrounds and happens with our children. Schools are not immune to what happens out in the community.

This legislation applies to e-cigarettes, vaping and illegal tobacco stores—they call them chop-chop stores—and we are trying to crack down on those. The bill also means that we are able to respond to these things by including regulations, ensuring that we can respond to what is happening out in the community. The bill will introduce measures to ensure, as much as possible, that young people do not take up this habit which can easily become a dangerous addiction.

I really welcome the parliamentary inquiry into vaping and about what it is. I do not get it. I see a lot of it. I know some members of my family vape. I do not get it, but we want to know what is inside them and I really welcome that committee review.

We will expand smoke-free areas across Queensland, including by extending the children's sports ban to organised outdoor activities such as Girl Guides and Scouts. The bill also introduces smoke-free buffer zones around the perimeter of outdoor eating and drinking places and around designated outdoor smoking areas, or DOSAs. Aren't they interesting places to walk by sometimes? It will also be an offence for a licensee to allow a minor to remain in a DOSA, which I think is a great step forward.

Smoking is currently banned at all Queensland state and non-state schools. I welcome the additional banning of smoking in an area five metres beyond school boundaries, with such bans to include vaping and the smoking of e-cigarettes. I also welcome the addition of car parks next to schools to become smoke-free places, including vaping, as will outdoor markets except in those DOSAs, which you, if you are not smoking, stay away from as they are not very nice. I really do welcome the school car parks becoming smoke-free places.

There have been a number of incorrect comments in this debate from those on the other side of the House claiming that schools are not allowed to suspend students for vaping. To be crystal clear, that is not true. The decision to suspend a student rests with the school. Our teachers and principals are professionals and they will take into account all of the individual circumstances, as no two incidents are the same. They will also be guided by a student code of conduct which is developed in collaboration with the school community.

Let me be crystal clear again: it is not true that students who smoke or vape or smoke e-cigarettes cannot be suspended. That is absolutely a false allegation. What the department has said, and has always said, is that they do not support suspension as a first response to discipline—and that includes smoking and vaping—where another approach is available. The department is doing intensive work with schools to provide that support and has a suite of materials and initiatives. We have to support these schools in an educated framework.

For example, at Elanora State High School on the Gold Coast students identified as using vapes are provided with counselling and support through weekly sessions with a guidance officer, a school-based youth health nurse and the head of student wellbeing. The school also provides a two-week vaping education program, run at lunchtime, to educate students on the harmful effects of vaping and to provide practical strategies to assist them to stop.

I have asked my department to look at the issues of school disciplinary absences, or SDAs, more broadly. I have made no secret of the fact that I am concerned with the level of First Nations students and students with a disability being over-represented in our student disciplinary absence figures. There are also higher numbers than I would like to see in prep. Looking at free kindy for all will help all students to be more school-ready. Maximising learning days is vital. Educating students is vital. I applaud Elanora State High School in what they are doing in relation to this matter. This has been replicated right throughout Queensland. We are supporting them in that. That is why it is a key part of our Equity and Excellence strategy. However, there is an important balance to strike. Teachers, staff and other students deserve to work and learn in a safe environment. If another student is posing a risk to that, then appropriate action should be taken.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Ms GRACE: Can I say to the member for Coomera, instead of interjecting, if you have any evidence, I have—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Coomera, order!

Ms GRACE: I inform the member for Coomera that if he has any evidence, please write to me and we will fix it and work it out. Honestly, we should not be playing politics with this issue. We should not be continually interjecting unnecessarily in a very rude manner.

Mr Crandon: Pot calling the kettle black there, Grace.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, you are now warned under the standing orders.

Ms GRACE: It is absolutely disgraceful that this message is being perpetrated by the member for Coomera. There is no exception that staff should tolerate any kind of behaviour. I have made it crystal clear what the policy is. This is a real issue; there is no doubt about it. Are we concerned about vaping and e-cigarettes?


Mrs McMahon: Absolutely.

Ms GRACE: Absolutely. Is it out in the community? Can schools control this alone? Absolutely not. This kind of legislation is what we need: stopping the supply. Where are they coming from? They are coming over our borders. We have seen raids already and items being confiscated. We know that when students are found with them in schools they are confiscated. They can go into education programs. Obviously our teachers and principals are professionals. I would never suggest for one second that they do not apply good, balanced decision-making and how they control the discipline in relation to these issues.

Anyone who says anything to the contrary does not understand how schools work. I see the member for Mansfield in the chamber who knows only too well that no two situations are ever the same and schools are free to determine the length of the school disciplinary absence. As I said, there are never two issues that are the same.

Vaping and e-cigarettes are one of those issues that obviously we want to address. I do know one thing, and I will say it again: schools cannot do this alone. We need a concerted effort from all levels of government. We need proper information which the parliamentary committee is looking at. We need to make it unavailable to young people. We need to stop normalising vaping, e-cigarettes and cigarettes, and this bill goes towards stopping that normalisation, which is all part of the process of educating the community.

I have even heard some principals say that when some students are suspended they get a call from the parents saying, 'But it's only watermelon,' or, 'It's only strawberries.' That is not the case. These things are harmful. We will get to the bottom of it. We need to do more than just rely on schools to solve a community problem. I commend this bill to the House because it is a first step in the right direction.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (4.11 pm): I, too, rise to make a contribution on the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023. I applaud the intent of the bill, particularly around dealing with the scourge of illicit tobacco products, which has been a real problem in my community of Southern Downs. I have been approached by retailers, legitimate hardworking retailers, whose business depends upon a level playing field. The sale of tobacco products is already quite highly regulated and those who flout the law and supply tobacco illegally have an enormous advantage and that advantage disadvantages legitimate businesses.

Prior to the introduction of this bill the matter of illicit importation and tobacco sales and so forth was largely the province of the federal government because it concerned federal laws regarding excise and importation. It rested perhaps more properly in the realm of the Australian Federal Police to identify offenders and prosecute them. It was not entirely the federal government's responsibility. We know that the Queensland Department of Health did or does currently have some jurisdiction. I listened intently to the contribution made by my honourable friend the member for Lockyer when he talked about some of the illicit tobacco suppliers being presented with infringement notices and fines, which obviously did not serve as an appropriate deterrent under the law as it now stands simply because of the scale of the profits that can be made from selling untaxed tobacco.

In my electorate of Southern Downs there are two prominent illegal tobacco outlets. In spite of many complaints to many agencies with responsibility in this field, including the federal agencies, it appears that no enforcement action has been taken against them. That is a very irritating and depressing situation for legitimate retailers who see the illegal competition being tolerated by the authorities.

I listened to the member for Nanango's earlier contribution and I was astonished to hear—although thinking about it, that makes a lot of sense—that an illicit supplier in her electorate had an ATM inside the door so customers could withdraw cash and pay in cash. This does fit with the pattern

that I am aware of in my own electorate. I understand that if you wish to pay by electronic means a \$20 or \$50 surcharge is applied because these businesses obviously do not want to have their transactions occur in a legitimate space; they do not want to identify what is happening in their business. Obviously if the operation is sophisticated enough to have an ATM inside the front door, it is a very profitable business.

The member for Morayfield made a number of remarks, most of which I agreed with—and I am sure we agree with one another around the House on most aspects of the bill. He made the point that it is commonplace for people—and I presume he was referring to members on this side of the House—to complain about the creation of red tape and additional regulation. He was saying that this bill that the industry has been asking for is red tape. I think that misses the point. I think the real point here is that industry has been begging for enforcement. Without wanting to quibble about the past, I think there should be no misunderstanding about business yearning for extra regulation. What business wants is a fair playing field and a reasonable regulatory environment.

Mr McDonald: Hear, hear!

Mr LISTER: I thank the member for Lockyer. They want a government that taxes sparingly, that regulates sparingly and that provides the infrastructure, the state resources and the law and security that allows business to prosper.

I had occasion to write to the federal police commissioner—and I copied in the Hon. Mark Dreyfus, the federal Attorney-General—with my concerns about unlawful tobacco sales. I table that letter for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 22 November 2022, from the member for Southern Downs, Mr James Lister MP, to the Australian Federal Police Commissioner, Mr Reece Kershaw, in relation to enforcement action for unlawful tobacco sales [718].

I outlined the breadth of concerns I have about the sale of illicit tobacco, which were more than just the obvious forgone excise and so forth. I will go through the concerns I spoke about. Small businesses are impacted, and we have heard many stories of local businesses that are losing a great deal of money. I spoke with Frank Spano—I believe he was one of the submitters to the bill—who operates two IGA supermarkets in my electorate of Southern Downs, one in Stanthorpe and one in Warwick. He said he was losing many hundreds of thousands of dollars in revenue per year to the sale of cigarettes by these illegal outlets. Very concerningly, he said that it worked out to be approximately \$170,000 of forgone wages for staff who would otherwise have been working in the service and the sale of those legitimate tobacco products, so there is a real impact on the community there.


We know that if these businesses are not concerned about trading openly in front of the whole world where everyone knows they are located they certainly would not be concerned about something more sinister such as supplying children with tobacco products. If they are flying under the radar on excise, I think you could bet penny to a pound that kids who go in with dollars in their hand would be provided with the tobacco products, and obviously that is repugnant. Then there is biosecurity; these products are brought in without the oversight of the proper biosecurity regime that the federal government operates. In an electorate like Southern Downs that is a very important thing. We do not know what kinds of diseases, pathogens and so forth could be coming in with these products because they are completely unregulated. The stakes are extremely high in that particular field.

I object particularly to the obvious involvement of organised crime. Let's face it, these outlets where the scale of profits is so great obviously have connections to the underworld in order to secure these tobacco products and are operating as organised crime. I think history would tell us that organised crime never operates away from drugs, violence and other unlawful businesses such as unlawful prostitution, gambling, liquor sales and so forth. I think it is important that these businesses be shut down and that there be resolute and unrelenting action to prevent them from reopening.

The last thing I might say is that when good law-abiding people and the operators of businesses that are undertaking lawful tobacco sales see their competitors trading openly for months or years with little or no intervention from authorities they can be forgiven for drawing the inference that there must be corruption involved. That inference, that understandable inference, undermines confidence in the law and in government and that is always the beginning of a very slippery slope.

I welcome the additional legislative ability for the Queensland government to enforce the tobacco laws and stamp out the trading in illicit tobacco. However, I join many of my colleagues in the LNP opposition in saying that this ought to be resourced properly. Whilst I have heard the member for Lockyer say that public health officials had engaged in some enforcement action, that is the only example I have heard of.

In fact, in my electorate, word on the street is that it was a low priority for Health—that they have competing priorities and this is one of the lower ones. There is also the possibility that fear of the dangers of confronting illegal operators discourages public servants from participating. I would like to see the state government genuinely resource the Department of Health officers who have the power to enforce the law regarding tobacco products. What is at stake here is forgone revenue, the cost to the community of extending tobacco use and the succour that these businesses give to organised crime. These costs are very significant indeed, and it is worth the department investing what it should in order to provide the workforce necessary to stamp out the sale of illegal tobacco.

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (4.20 pm): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker Lui. It is a great honour to be able to call you that here today. I rise to support the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023. This important legislation makes significant reforms to support several elements of our continued efforts to reduce smoking, change behaviour and protect Queenslanders from exposure to second-hand smoke. One of the most important elements of this legislation is the establishment of a licensing scheme for smoking products in both wholesale and retail settings. This will provide Queensland Health with the tools they need to better regulate, delivering several benefits: market equality for legitimate businesses; better identification, including the personalities and/or entities of those involved in these operations; as well as the locations, the community or suburban density of these locations; and a better understanding or oversight of the extensive variety of products involved.

On the ground in my community, there is certainly some local insight on these issues. I have spoken to school educators and students; I have spoken to local health staff. This is a real issue that has moved very rapidly. The dramatic increase in vaping is obviously a deliberate strategy from tobacco companies to target young people and get them hooked. Child focused flavours—from every fruity flavour under the sun to bubblegum and ice cream—are clearly targeted at young people. Tobacco is present in products, even when those products are advertised as 'nicotine free'. Dodgy operators sell products that include unsafe chemicals as well as products containing illicit tobacco.

We see products, clearly and deliberately designed to target school students, that have the obvious purpose of hiding vaping products—vapes designed to look like USBs or highlighter pens—so that school students can more easily hide them in their school bag or locker or carry them in their pockets. We have even seen cases of students who, after gaining access to these dodgy providers, have tried to onsell vapes to other school students on school property. It is a serious growing trend for our young people that we need to tackle. We need a multipronged approach to prevent the further targeting of our young people as well as to support young people and adults who have already fallen victim to this sort of behaviour.

This bill aims to make it healthier for all people to attend public events such as outdoor markets. It provides clearer and stronger buffer protections at venues like licensed venues in relation to the better location and regulation of designated smoking areas and buffer zones. This makes sense. In terms of outdoor events, why should a parent taking young kids to a local outdoor market be subjected to second-hand smoke either inside the markets themselves or while entering and leaving with their children? Why should it be the responsibility of that parent to try to intervene to stop or suggest the inappropriateness of that behaviour? This legislation provides clear and enforceable parameters for such an event. The reforms extend protection against second-hand smoke to family orientated events or activities focused on young people such as Scouts and Girl Guides.


This bill makes changes for licensed venues in relation to the location of tobacco product, including tobacco product vending machines—again recognising the risk, particularly to reformed smokers, of having tobacco products in people's faces. In terms of school car parks, many of us who work closely with local schools would know that most parents would see the school car park as part and parcel of the school property, even if it is council property. Certainly, it is part of day-to-day school operations for parents and students. I support that reform.

In this debate, I think it is important to recognise that we have come a long way. As other speakers have reflected, our smoking rates over generations have reduced significantly. I am old enough to remember when restaurants and licensed venues allowed smoking inside. As a non-smoker you could not help but be exposed to second-hand smoke, with clothes and hair taking on damaging second-hand smoke. As a teenager still in school I worked in hospitality. Staff worked across both the smoking and the so-called non-smoking areas of the restaurant. Of course, the smoking and non-smoking sections of the restaurant were effectively delineated by a pot plant. They shared the same air; they shared the same staff. Obviously as a state we have made significant changes since then.

I reflect—as the minister reflected in her contribution—that this is a policy space where the Commonwealth government plays an important regulatory role. We need that cooperation in order to continue that partnership. I reflect in particular on the work of former federal health minister Nicola Roxon, who did so much in her time to take on the tobacco industry in relation to plain packaging, health warnings and stronger regulation around the selling, promotion and display of tobacco products, particularly in the retail setting. This bill builds on that generation of work while providing better options for the enforcement of Commonwealth regulations and standards. I think that is a very good thing. Penalties have been put in place for operators who do not comply with this new regulation, and that works in several ways. It is a deterrent in its own right as there are significant penalties, but there is also a risk to those parties of future detriment by being refused a licence or having a licence removed. As I said, that helps to create a level playing field for those legitimate operators in the field.

To finish, I would like to thank the former minister for health for the development of this legislation. I thank the now minister for progressing the bill, and I thank the committee chair and members for conducting the inquiry and getting us to where we are today. This bill is an important step in tackling the ongoing challenges that we face as a community in tackling tobacco. That includes existing tobacco products as well as the serious and growing challenge we see with vaping, the deliberate targeting of children and the growing trend of dodgy producers who undermine legitimate retail providers.

I support the reforms to improve public health for those who are already engaged in this health challenge, those we seek to prevent from being at risk of doing the same and those public servants and regulators who are doing their best to pursue that goal. It makes sense to protect the broader community from second-hand smoke in a range of scenarios, all of which I support. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (4.28 pm): In making some comments about this bill, which we support, I acknowledge that there have been huge steps taken in the last two generations, particularly the last generation, to reduce smoking rates in Australia through the combined efforts of all levels of government. That is something that we need to remember. The public health benefits of those steps are enormous in terms of not only the reduction in health costs but also the reduction in preventable deaths as a result of tobacco use.

One of the main issues that I wanted to discuss, like a lot of members, is the proliferation of illegal tobacco sellers in the community—chop-chop shops as they are sometimes referred to. In areas around the Scenic Rim electorate near Ipswich and also in Beaudesert and other parts of the electorate, these have certainly popped up and caused economic loss to other retailers who are doing the right thing and selling legal product whereas these chop-chop shops are selling illegal tobacco.

There was recently some good media reporting done about this in the *Ipswich News Today*, a newspaper in Ipswich. It was a story done by editor Cameron Thompson, the former member for Blair who now works for *Ipswich News Today*, outlining how easy it was for him to buy a packet of cigarettes at an illegal cigarette shop for \$16 a packet. It was noted in the article that that is less than half of what the price should be if they were legal product. For it to be so easy for anyone to walk in a shop and do that just shows the relaxed attitude that these vendors have towards what is an illegal activity. I want to table that document, which incidentally has a really bright ad for Lance McCallum, member for Bundamba, at the bottom of it. That is quite interesting, but I table that article and acknowledge the good investigative journalism done by *Ipswich News Today*.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Ipswich News Today*, dated 30 March 2023, titled 'They're banned in Australia, but here they're... \$16 a packet' [\[719\]](#).

There have been a licensing regime and rules around the sale of tobacco even before this bill comes into effect, which it will after its passage through this House. A licensing regime is all well and good, but it needs to be enforced and it needs to be implemented in a way that cracks down on the illegal sale of tobacco. That is a job for the state government, which is implementing this regime. However, chop-chop shops really beg the question: how do these products get into the country? The article I just referred to notes that the illegal tobacco was marked duty free for duty-free sale only and presumably it came from overseas. How is this product getting into the country illegally and how has this sort of thing been able to get such a foothold in the community? It is therefore a job not only for the state but also for the Commonwealth to work with state authorities to try and crack down on that illegal supply of tobacco. It is clearly illegal activity that is going on, but if there are other organised crime aspects to it that needs to be cracked down on as well for not only the tax losses but also the damage to small businesses and for the undermining of public health measures in Australia.

The other point I want to touch on is an offence being introduced in this bill for the supply of tobacco by parents to children. It is a good move for that to occur. I cannot understand why any parent would supply tobacco to their own children, but it certainly helps shape attitudes towards tobacco for our youngest people and their parents. When I read this provision in the bill it reminded me—and many other members have commented on their experiences as younger people—of the fact that when I was a younger person I used to spend a lot of time with my grandfather, who was a smoker. Quite often in the afternoon he used to watch, as many people did, *Wheel of Fortune* at 5.30 every afternoon and at that time he often smoked a pipe. When I was visiting him at his house, it was great fun for me to blow the smoke back into his face as he smoked the pipe. He did not really appreciate that, but I was obviously being exposed to a lot of second-hand smoke through that activity. It obviously shaped my attitude towards tobacco because it was just a part of everyday life for my grandfather and for some of my aunts and uncles as well. Reducing availability overall is good, but that offence about supplying tobacco to children is a good move.

Other members have also made comments about the link between alcohol consumption and occasional tobacco use and the risks that that can pose in particular to people who have tried to give up tobacco in the past and that it can lead to relapses. Many people can probably relate to that. Yesterday the member for Mount Ommaney referred to the fact that having tobacco vending machines in licensed premises being forced to be put behind a counter might make people think twice about it and make it harder for people to access in that moment when they are trying to have a smoke and might prevent people relapsing. That is, again, a good move about reducing availability and reducing the risk of people relapsing where they have tried to cease the use of tobacco in the past.


The expansion of no-smoking zones at outdoor events is a positive move to eliminate the exposure of everyone, especially children, to second-hand smoke. I was having a conversation with one of my colleagues just a couple of minutes ago about the exposure that they had when they made a career out of working in nightclubs and that huge impact that has been shown now through research in the last generation or two that second-hand smoke can have on people's health.

Mr Watts: It stunted my growth.

Mr KRAUSE: I do not know that it did actually stunt the growth of the member for Toowoomba North, but the member for Toowoomba North has dobbed himself in. He would have been exposed to a lot of second-hand smoke through the nightclubs that he used to work at, so expanding those no-smoking zones is a good move.

Finally, something that I do not think was addressed in the bill but is alluded to in the committee report—and I think it must have been mentioned in a lot of submissions as well—is the usefulness of enforcement mechanisms at the moment. This is something that has been raised with me several times by local people in the Scenic Rim electorate where there are no-smoking zones in public spaces in shopping streets—for example, High Street in Boonah, Brisbane Street and William Street in Beaudesert and Main Street in Tamborine Mountain. The way that those zones are enforced and the process for being able to fine people and penalise people for infringing on them is cumbersome. I think it should be the case that either council officers or police officers are able to issue on-the-spot fines for those offences. If that is the case then I am mistaken and I apologise, but I do not think it is the case. I think it rests with Queensland Health, and that is cumbersome.

If we are really serious about not having any exposure in public places like streets or shopping streets for second-hand smoke, then that enforcement process needs to be improved. I do not think that that is addressed in this bill, but it has been raised as a concern by many submitters and it is something that the government should try and improve as much as possible. As it is, improving the enforcement in national parks and other spaces as set out in the bill is a good move. I have made those points about reducing the availability, cracking down on illegal chop-chop shops and the illegal tobacco that is in Australia and the offence introduced for the supply of tobacco to children and will leave my comments at that.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (4.37 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill. I will briefly explain why this is such an important bill to me, and I think I may have spoken about this before. I have said before that my father passed away from smoking, God bless him. He picked up the habit in the fifties when he was in the Nashos when he was given cartons of free cigarettes, and his habit started from there. At the end, 50 years after that, he had had a stroke, heart disease, blocked carotid arteries, osteoporosis and what eventually got him at the end was bladder cancer, which is one of the most prevalent forms of cancers associated with smoking.

As kids we would beg him. We knew the dangers. We would beg him to stop, but it was only when a heart surgeon said, 'I'm not putting a pacemaker in you until you stop smoking,' that he stopped smoking cold turkey that day. That had mixed feelings for my sisters and me because we had begged him for years, but it was a stranger surgeon who actually got him to stop in one day. He really wanted to meet his grandson, but because of smoking he died a few months before my son Guy was born, and he always regretted that. When my kids say, 'What happened to Pop Richard?', I just say, 'He died, kids, from smoking.' That is brutal for them but they got the idea, and that is the way that hopefully perhaps I have inoculated them against the desire to smoke. Therefore, this is an important bill to me. Whenever I see people smoking I think about what they may miss out on in later life because of their habit.

I welcome many things in this bill and I will go through those. I commend all the retailers and others who pushed for action on this. I can say to them that this is where we have ended up. Look at what we have in the bill before us. This is real action happening. The bill introduces a licensing scheme for the wholesale and retail sale of smoking products: 1,000 penalty units for the unlicensed wholesale or retail sale of smoking products; and 300 penalty units for supplying illicit tobacco, which includes products that do not comply with Commonwealth packaging rules. An authorised person will have expanded enforcement powers, which will be very much welcomed. Those authorities will be able to forfeit or seize products without first taking prosecution action, which I think is a marvellous initiative. Police officers will be authorised persons for the purposes of enforcing the new offences, which is very welcome. I also welcome expanding smoke-free public places to include outdoor markets and prohibiting smoking near organised children's activities and in car parks adjacent to schools. All of those things are incredibly welcome.

I welcome the LNP support for this bill. I have heard a couple of the members—the member for Warrego, for example—say that we have been soft because we have not been enforcing the tobacco regulations. I find that amusing because it is the federal National Party that takes donations from tobacco producers—still, in this day and age. The Liberals stopped in about 2013 and we stopped in 2004. As the member for Pumicestone said—and this will be to the Nationals' eternal shame—they have taken \$245,000 of big tobacco money since 2017. In fact, \$215,000 has come from Philip Morris since 2013. As the member for Bundamba pointed out, a national vaping lobby gave \$44,000 to the Liberals as a personal gift. While I thank the LNP for supporting the bill, if they truly felt strongly on this issue they would tell their colleagues in Canberra or wherever to stop taking money from big tobacco and vaping—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Order, members! Please resume your seat, member for Bancroft. We are getting towards the end of the day. We do not need this cacophony. I warn members generally that I will issue warnings under the standing orders from now on for those kinds of interjections.

Mr WHITING: The record stands on where the Nationals got their donations from. It is to their eternal shame that they keep taking that money.

Mr CRISAFULLI (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.42 pm): Before I start my contribution on the bill, I must say that I view a contribution about accepting donations from anyone from the Labor Party a little hypocritical because of the fact that they still take donations from the CFMEU, which raided the office of the transport—

Mr Whiting interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): The member for Bancroft is warned under the standing orders.

Mr CRISAFULLI: The fact is that the member for Bancroft is endorsed by and is a member of the CFMEU himself and the irony is not lost on me today. He is owned lock, stock and barrel. He comes into this place all righteous, but should people accept money from the likes of an entity that storms hardworking public servants' workplaces? That is a little bit rich.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I am conscious of the fact that you are responding to remarks by the member for Bancroft. However, I ask you to return to the relevance of the bill.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I join the member for Warrego in calling this out for what it is. While you would be hard-pressed to find anyone who will disagree with anything in this bill, without enforcement the best of intentions will not deliver results for everyday people. The fact that under the current regime there

are more illegal chop-chop venues than there are legal tobacconists shows that what we have at the moment is not working. Surely the limited number of convictions shows how much work needs to be done.

Mr Power interjected.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Logan is warned under the standing orders and the member for Mudgeeraba is very close.


Mr CRISAFULLI: I want to talk about another missed opportunity. I have read about enhancing the protection of children from the dangers of smoking and expanding outdoor non-smoking areas, which is wonderful and we all welcome that. However, at the moment there is another risk that our children are facing and it is the risk to them from vapes and e-cigarettes. I am mindful of the work of the committee and I know that both levels of government have an interest in doing something in this space. However, through vapes big tobacco has been able to rebrand its image to hoodwink a new generation of vulnerable minds into believing that nicotine is not harmful and that nicotine is cool. This bill does not address or acknowledge that. It speaks about the risk to children from traditional smoking but it does not address the elephant in the room at the moment. A large number of children are not smoking traditional cigarettes anymore—they are not. However, the volume of children who are experimenting with and using vapes regularly is frightening. This parliament and other parliaments have to acknowledge that and accept it.

Ms Pease: So it is great that the federal government has and we are doing the inquiry.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I take the interjection from the member for Lytton. I acknowledged that, member for Lytton. That was the first thing I did.

Ms Pease: Good.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It is good, thank you. I acknowledge that but I am addressing the elephant in the room, which is that this is one of the greatest challenges that we face as a state and a nation. I will conclude my remarks by saying that I have not met a Queenslander in my electorate of Broadwater or from across the state who would not support everything in this bill. People see merit in it. However, it needs better enforcement and we need to get serious about addressing the issue that is not in here, which is the use of vapes and e-cigarettes by our youth.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (4.47 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023. In Queensland smoking is the leading cause of preventable cancer. In Queensland one in five cancer deaths is linked to smoking, which, in itself, represents over 3,400 deaths each year. Each year the cost to the Queensland health system through smoking related diseases and ailments is \$27 billion. That is on the current figures and it used to be much worse. On current figures, regular smokers represent 10 per cent of the population, which is down from 24 per cent in 1998. The sharp decline in those figures is not accidental. It was the result of deliberate and proactive health measures and legislation implemented by both state and national governments over that time. Bans on advertising, a reduction in displays at point of sale and the world-leading plain packaging initiative have targeted the public perception and availability of smoking.

However, for all of those proactive steps and the knowledge we now have of the dangers of smoking—and we have come a long way from the time of doctors promoting cigarettes and McDonald's providing ashtrays in their restaurants—in Queensland there has never been a licensing framework for the sale of tobacco products. Where there is not a licensing framework there will always be difficulties in monitoring and enforcing legal requirements—a handy thing when the product you sell comes with addictive behaviours and, ultimately, deadly consequences. Therefore, the introduction of this bill, which primarily will establish a licensing framework for tobacco retailers and wholesalers, has received universal support from health professionals and tobacco manufacturers and retailers; a strange cohort indeed.

The retail licence will authorise the sale of smoking products by retail sale and the wholesale licence will authorise the sale of smoking products by wholesalers, but only to licensed retailers. Both types of licences authorise sales at one physical premises and one online shop, with additional premises or online shops requiring additional separate licences. There will be appropriate checks and balances on the licensee's standing as a fit and proper person to hold the licence. The licence fees are intended to ensure full cost recovery of the licensing infrastructure and delivery and fund additional compliance activities throughout Queensland. It will also allow police to become authorised to assist health department officers in monitoring and enforcement. With a licensing framework comes the ability

to better ensure compliance and crack down on illegal tobacco trade. A KPMG report calculated that almost 20 per cent of tobacco consumed in Australia was obtained illicitly. In excise fees alone, that is a revenue loss of \$3.4 billion to our bottom line.


A number of speakers have outlined the issues with and prevalence of the illegal tobacco trade in their areas. My electorate is no different. Chop-chop has always been an issue in Logan, in both the black market and the backdoor market of legitimate businesses. The creation of appropriate and deterrent penalties for the supply and possession of illicit tobacco will hopefully see a reduction in these supplies. While I cannot say that I am an avid supporter of the tobacco manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers, they are legitimate businesses who ostensibly are complying with the regulatory requirements that have been placed upon them by both state and federal governments.

Levies and excises have made smoking an expensive habit. This has been a deliberate lever pull by successive governments to reduce the appeal and rate of smoking, particularly for young people. These businesses, in collecting the revenue, help offset the health costs of the habit. They do not deserve to be losing business and market share to illegal operators who undercut this generally bipartisan stance.

I note that many contributors opposite have stated that they support the bill but that it does not address the growing problem that is e-cigarettes and vaping. While I do share the wider community's concerns about the prevalence and availability of vaping products, particularly to high schools, there is a body of work being done to take an informed and consultative approach to this. I note that the inquiry currently being undertaken seems to have foreshadowed the approach that the federal government appears keen to adopt. Let's be clear: a national response is required.

Regardless, the mechanics of this bill in establishing the licensing framework are the first step in any future crackdown on vaping products. Given that there is a legitimate role for vaping products within a health setting, having a licensing structure will ensure that when the time comes licensed wholesalers and sellers will be able to supply within the health network while also being able to enforce future provisions when it comes to the possession and sale of banned items. You cannot have monitoring and enforcement without an appropriate licensing structure. That is what the bill does. This is step 1.

There are many other provisions in this bill which aim to reduce the exposure and normalisation of smoking to our children. As a mother of teenagers and preteens, I applaud any effort by any government to this end. Smoking related cancers are such a sad tale, knowing that in most instances they are deaths that could have been avoided. While in decades gone by it was regrettable that the dangers were not publicly known, there can be no such excuse in these times. Everyone who puts a cigarette to their lips knows the risks and the dangers yet still makes that choice. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.53 pm): Formaldehyde, arsenic, lead—we would not accept these chemicals being put into our local streams. We certainly would not expect them to be in our food sources. The fact that they can be inhaled—currently legally—through vaping is just abhorrent. The Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023 is about establishing a new licensing regime for the wholesale and retail sale of smoking products and introducing new penalties, but at this point it does not cover vapes. I acknowledge that there is a committee process underway that is looking into this.


Most members of the House have addressed the issue of vaping. I will do that as well, because I think there have been successful inroads into reducing the uptake of tobacco use in our community, with good education and awareness across the generations of just how damaging it is; however, there has been this insidious and sneaky approach to try and rope in new generations of people to take on tobacco usage through vaping, without people being aware that it is not without health risks and that there are all these other toxic chemicals. As Dr Karl said—

Vapes contain a cocktail of toxic chemicals. Things like formaldehyde which they use in cleaning products, glue—and mortuaries! NOT somewhere you want to end up prematurely.

I think that really sums it up. We expect that we will look after the environment, but what about the most important part of the environment—the health and wellbeing of humans—and ensuring children in particular have good information and are kept safe so that they are able to live full and healthy lives? The vaping issue needs to be addressed because it does risk people's lives in a way that has been underestimated. Young people are being sucked in by products that are dressed up to be appealing, with different gadgets that can be quite trendy and flavours that may be appealing. I hope that the laws that will eventually come to this place will address this more effectively.

We need compliance and good education. We have to ensure that this generation, which unfortunately has been roped into the insidious and damaging use of this anti-health product, gets the support they need. Otherwise, tragically, they could be part of stories that we were hoping would no longer be heard about people who die from the health impacts of inhaling substances that damage lungs and damage health. This has an impact on not only them but also their whole families. The stories used to be a lot more common but they still exist. I have heard members in this House talk about family members and loved ones whom they have lost or who have suffered from lung cancer. This is largely a preventable disease. You can get lung cancer without having smoked but it is rare compared to those who have smoked, who are at higher risk. We should never lose sight of the fact that it is preventable.

The chop-chop shops that have been allowed to proliferate in our communities are an absolute disgrace. It has got out of hand. Finally, there is an attempt to regulate this, but I think this legislation is in fact an admission of failure. This has gone on too long and these shops are everywhere. They are selling illegal products and they have been virtually untouchable. It is really important that, with this legislation that is supposed to make it easier to crack down on illegal entities by regulation, compliance is enforced. That is so important, because those who are playing by the rules—while it is not a product I like, it is legal and it is supposed to be controlled—need assurance that they will not be undercut by the criminals and those doing the wrong thing. People should not think these chop-chop shops are being run by kindergarten teachers; they are being run by bikies and a whole lot of feral ratbag criminals who have been allowed to get away with it for far too long. We should toughen the laws but make sure there is compliance so that those who are acting legally are not penalised for following the law while the criminals, the bikies and the other ratbags are allowed to get away with not following the law. It is time to have the laws, but we should make sure they are enforced and there is a regime to address this in the appropriate way.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (4.59 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023 on behalf of my Mansfield electorate. At the outset, I acknowledge the great leadership of the former chief health officer, now Governor of Queensland, Dr Jeannette Young, who is passionate about addressing smoking across our community and worked tirelessly to establish Queensland as a smoke-free state, banning smoking on footpaths, outside public buildings, including hospitals, schools and workplaces. This bill extends on much of Dr Young's foundation work over her many years as chief health officer.

Tobacco smoking remains one of the largest causes of preventable death and disease in Australia. Smoking is estimated to kill almost 20,500 Australians a year, which is 13 per cent of all deaths. One in 10 adults were current daily smokers in 2021-22. People in areas of most disadvantage were more likely to be current daily smokers, 16.1 per cent, than those in areas of least disadvantage, 5.3 per cent.

The Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023 aims to strengthen, modernise and futureproof the requirements, restrictions and protections in the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998. This will improve monitoring of the smoking products industry and enable more effective enforcement of the act. It will also assist smokers to quit, discourage youth uptake of smoking and further protect the community from exposure to second-hand smoke. The bill gives effect to the 2020 government election commitments to strengthen Queensland's tobacco legislation and increase smoke-free public places.

The issues of the monitoring of the smoking product industry—particularly the number of tobacco shops popping up, the uptake of smoking by youth, protecting the community from exposure to second-hand smoke and increasing smoke-free public places—are very important to my community. Further, the issue of vaping, the contents of vapes and the persuasive campaigns by the tobacco industry that target our young people are of immense concern for families and educators in my electorate. In fact, my 2023 Youth Advisory Council, made up of 20 students, identified vaping as their No. 1 concern. I thank the Premier, health minister and health committee for their diligence in initiating a parliamentary inquiry into this important issue.

The bill establishes a licensing scheme for the wholesale and retail sale of smoking products. This will enable Queensland Health to more effectively identify and monitor the number, type and location of businesses supplying smoking products in Queensland. It is expected the application portal will go live on 1 September 2023 and suppliers will then have 12 months to become licensed. To assist Queensland Health to combat the increasing trade in illicit tobacco, police officers will be made authorised persons for the purpose of enforcing the new offences of supplying illicit tobacco and the unlicensed supply of smoking products. These changes to the law are most welcomed by my community.

The bill expands smoke-free public spaces to include outdoor markets. The bill also improves protections from second-hand smoke at other outdoor drinking and eating places where families and children gather. To capture these places, the bill prohibits smoking at or near outdoor organised schoolchildren's activities such as Scouts or Girl Guides and car parks adjacent to a school. We all carry the responsibility of protecting children from the influential and persuasive tobacco industry. The member for Maroochy spoke about just how pervasive and persuasive the tobacco industry has been and continues to be.

The bill protects children from exposure to smoking, second-hand smoke and smoking products. This includes measures to close the gaps in the existing legislative coverage and better align Queensland with the law in other states and territories. The act prohibits the supply of a smoking product to a child. However, there is no restriction on the age at which a person may supply a smoking product. Under-18 employees who sell smoking products may grow to view smoking as normal behaviour and be exposed to the variety of smoking products available, including multiple e-cigarette flavours. Of immense concern to me and to members of my community is the way in which the vapes and vaping products are marketed to our young people. The colours of the vapes and the flavours of the vapes are certainly attractive and perceived to be cool by our young people.


To prevent this, the bill prohibits the supply and handling of smoking products by children in the course of their employment. Despite the prohibition on supplying a smoking product to a child, no offence is committed where the supply is by a responsible adult for the child such as a parent or guardian. No other jurisdiction in Australia provides such an exemption. The bill will remove this exemption. This is another change welcomed by my community.

The bill regulates e-cigarette—vaping—as e-cigarettes are considered smoking products under the act. All smoking product amendments in the bill will also apply to e-cigarettes. The bill introduces a licensing scheme for wholesalers and retailers of smoking products which will give Queensland Health improved oversight of the entire smoking product industry. This will overcome the limitations in the existing monitoring provisions in the act, which rely on seeking information from wholesalers in an industry with no reliable list of e-cigarette wholesalers. This expanded information will then be used to develop more focused monitoring and enforcement programs, including in relation to e-cigarette sales.

The bill will also modernise the existing restrictions on advertising, display and promotion of smoking products. This will ensure the restriction captures the use of colloquial names for smoking products such as smokeless products or vapes and promoting e-cigarettes to children by supplying them for a nominal fee.

Finally, the bill makes it an offence under Queensland law to supply illicit tobacco. This includes tobacco products not complying with Commonwealth requirements for plain packaging and health warnings. The Commonwealth government has recently announced new packaging and ingredient requirements for e-cigarettes. This is another change that is incredibly welcomed by my community and something that parents care deeply about. To include these new requirements within the definition of illicit tobacco, all that is needed is an amendment to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Regulation 2021. This would mean that any contravention of these new e-cigarette requirements would be relevant to whether the person is a fit and proper person to hold a wholesale or retail licence under the new licensing scheme.

On behalf of my community, I thank the Minister for Health for these most welcome changes. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (5.06 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill. From the outset, I note that many members on both sides of the chamber have given examples of where the misery of tobacco smoking has led to the death of some of their family members. I can absolutely relate to that. I had a very dear aunty who succumbed to lung cancer after being a chain smoker for 50 years. She rolled the dice. She knew what she was doing, but sadly it got the better of her towards the end. I extend my sympathy to those on both sides of the chamber who have experienced the misery that tobacco smoking has caused their families.

Everything that we say here will be recorded in *Hansard*. I, like maybe a lot of members here, like to sometimes look at the old *Hansards*. The thing that strikes me whenever I do that is that I have to look at them with context at the front of my mind. Being born in the mid-1960s and growing up in the late 1960s and early 1970s, I remember—and I think some other members have said this—pretty much all of my relatives smoking and pretty much all of my father's mates smoking. It was the way it was. I recall, unbelievably, when we were at high school we were given the Benson & Hedges little cricket wallet. We would all get Big Boss cigars at the lolly shop. I remember when I was DJ'ing in the 1980s, I would come out of the DJ booth—

Mr Power: You would have been cool.

Mr MINNIKIN: Boy, did I play some good tunes, if I do say so myself. I will get to a rock icon very shortly. I would leave the booth and cross the dance floor to walk out and I could cut a swathe through the cigarette smoke. I understand that things have changed.

Some members have said—and I will echo their comments—that what both sides of the chamber federally and in the state have collectively done for society is a very good thing. So much so that I recall when I was with one of my now adult children when they were younger and watching a video—it was a bit of a horror movie—the thing they were most aghast at was depicted on the screen there was someone smoking a cigarette. It goes to show how far we have come.

In my contribution I want to highlight a couple of areas that need to be enunciated. We have said quite clearly that the LNP will be supporting this bill, but I want to talk about two particular aspects. I can recall many years ago when I was a shopping centre manager—at Albany Shopping Village, Beenleigh Marketplace and Runaway Bay—that every shopping centre had the same issue. It was when the government introduced the first furtive steps to ban smoking within a couple of metres of shopping centre entrance doors. That was very sensible. Do not get me wrong—that was eminently sensible. However, compliance was the issue.

I can recall many occasions when laws ahead of this particular bill were introduced. I come back to that word ‘compliance’. We would have shopping centre management security turn up. We would have Queensland police turn up. Sometimes we would have environmental health officers there from the health department. It became such a donnybrook that you would not know who was on first.

Some members have said that this bill will take care of any of those issues. I hope it does. As with everything in life, do not legislate what you are not prepared to enforce properly; otherwise the legislation quickly dissipates with the passage of time to become a toothless tiger. I sincerely hope that the measures that are being put in place to crack down on compliance absolutely work. We owe it not just to our kids but to society in general.

The next thing I want to briefly mention in my contribution—and it has been talked about by a lot of members, particularly on our side of the chamber—is that we are aware that there will be a committee inquiry into the whole scourge of vaping. Coming from a shopping centre and marketing background et cetera, I cannot begin to tell the House just how clever some of these companies are. They are making vapes in the guise of a little USB stick. I am aware that kids are putting this on their school knapsacks as a USB dongle, but it is actually a vape. It is incredible what they are trying to do to market them. I look forward to that committee’s work and the measures it will look at to countenance the scourge of vaping amongst young children.

My other point of reference is that, with my years, I now have adult children. You keep in contact with the younger generation through the joys of having your own kids. When I was growing up, I did not smoke. I will tell you the reason, Mr Deputy Speaker. I did an incredibly foolish thing when I was young and 14. I, along with a couple of cousins—I will not name them—consumed about three or four packets of Winfield Red in one night. There is a term that I will not use because it will not be parliamentary that describes the way we puffed those cigarettes. When you have enough of them over the course of about eight hours, you feel it for the next two weeks. I stand here hand on heart here on the floor of parliament and say that I have not had a cigarette since I was 14 and never, ever will. It was probably a silly way to learn, but at least it kept me off cigarettes all of my life.


Again, any measure that we can take to continue the downward drive—I believe that the statistics, being somewhere in the seventies, was 50 per cent or 60 per cent of people smoked. I stand to be corrected, but I think someone said the figure is now down to 10 per cent of the population smoke. If that is correct, it is still 10 per cent too many.

I cannot finish my contribution without raising on behalf of small businesses in my electorate of Chatsworth the scourge of chop-chop. It has been explained pretty eloquently. Regardless of what one’s personal view is on tobacco consumption—even if you are a non-smoker and you cannot stand it yourself—it has been said in contributions on both sides of the chamber that, as we are here today, legal tobacco is just that: it is legal tobacco. Whether you want to partake or not, that is up to you as an adult. When it is sold legally, it is just that: legal. Chop-chop is absolutely decimating a lot of those legal points of sale. I will give a tangible example, as I did before with my shopping centre management experience.

Take, for example, the newsagency industry. Many years ago it was very lucrative to have a paper run for that very reason—it was the source of news—but the products and services suite within newsagencies has changed dramatically like many retail businesses over the years. The large majority of their gross profit margin now comes through soft gambling—Gold Lotto tickets et cetera—tobacco products and giftware. That is why newsagencies have changed their product mix. They rely on the sale of tobacco—someone 18-plus coming in and buying it—which sits behind the counter in that white cabinet where the packets are all generically labelled. I have seen the whole range of labelling change over the years—which is sensible. People are now not buying anywhere near what they were, but that is affecting newsagents' ability to employ people. It is really biting. It does not matter which electorate you represent. The illegal chop-chop industry absolutely is decimating the legal trade.

I applaud any efforts that this legislation brings to the table to cut down or, in fact, try to stamp out—I am not naive: that is probably a bridge too far, as much as I wish it would occur—but at least curb the scourge of chop-chop throughout this state. As far as I am concerned, if you are embarking upon selling a legal product and service and are plying your toil, you deserve to make a profit so that you can employ people in your particular business.

Again—and I will end on this point—do not bring in legislation that you are not prepared to enforce. I heard the contributions from the government members, and they are very confident that with this raft of reforms those things will take place. All I say is that in the past when similar legislation has been introduced—I was not a parliamentarian back then but in the field—I had to wear the effects of it and it did not completely work. I hope it does with this particular bill.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (5.16 pm): For all my life—I think everyone in this chamber knows—I have known that smoking tobacco causes early death. Yet every day in Queensland a younger person is taking up smoking for the first time, not considering that perhaps their future selves will deeply regret their fitness loss, the cost, their health and, ultimately, the death that smoking causes. While it might be seen as a positive that smoking rates have halved in the last 20 years, we should not forget the half that continue to smoke. Over 400,000 Queenslanders smoke daily. One in 10 adults every day continue to hurt themselves and those around them. We know that many Queenslanders want to quit, but the habitual and addictive nature of smoking make it very difficult for them to take that step.

It is exactly what big tobacco corporations depend on. Possibly even more disturbing is that seven per cent of high schoolers have smoked at least one cigarette in the past seven days. Because the rate of smoking has reduced, one could be forgiven for thinking that death from smoking is mostly behind us. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Because of the 10 per cent of current smokers and the legacy of damage done by past smokers, a recent study by the Cancer Council of New South Wales predicted that cigarette smoking will cause more than 250,000 cancer deaths in Australia from 2020 to 2044. Let me put that in perspective. That is more Australians than those who died serving us in any war—in fact, in all wars put together—and more than the population of Ipswich.

The Chief Health Officer told us that in 2015 the cost of smoking was estimated to be \$137 billion across Australia. That translates proportionately to \$27.4 million based on Queensland's share of the Australian population. The member for Mirani seemed to have an issue with these figures. He said disturbingly—

Given the fact that smokers supposedly die earlier than everyone else, they must logically spend a lot less time on the aged or disability pension and far less time in aged care.

He went on—

Surely this must be saving taxpayers bucketloads of cash.

Firstly, the member misleads the House. It is very easy to see the paper that is the basis for the method of calculating costs. You can look it up in seconds. I say very sincerely that I would discourage any health body from attempting to see an economic benefit from early death. We on this side of the House—and I think most members share this view—have moral values. We value the full living of life, not—as the member for Mirani seems to do—a nihilistic rejection of the value of a life lived fully. I can imagine it would be hard to explain to a teenage son or daughter, as some members in this place spoke about, that health departments failed to find a benefit in their father dying of cancer. Imagine the member for Mirani saying, 'Your father may have died at 60 but'—and I quote him again—'this must be saving taxpayers bucketloads of cash.'


There is a moral value to living life fully. To see a benefit in an untimely death is a rejection of the moral value of life and the moral principles of both humanist and religious thought. The logic seems to be that, as soon as a person is no longer of economically productive value, they must not have intrinsic

value and their death should be seen as a saving. This logic must be utterly rejected by this House. We value life. We value a fully lived life. We value the elderly and their participation in Australian society. The value of a grandparent living to care for and pass on life lessons to grandchildren and even great-grandchildren is one of great value in our society.

There are others who take arguments to the extremes of libertarian thought: that personal choice and decisions trump all and the government should have no role except as perhaps an information provider; however, this extremist libertarian ideology does not meet the commonsense test. Some talked about the pub test. Everyone in the front bar of the Logan Village Hotel understands a few facts about smoking that libertarians do not seem to understand. They understand that many smokers take up smoking at a very young age and they are effectively stuck with a habit they almost instantly regret. Nicotine addiction and the habitual nature of lighting up and smoking a cigarette is a hard habit to break. Often young people try and quit the habit just a year after they begin. Research tells us that, on average, smokers attempt to quit eight to 11 times before successfully quitting; that is, most of the smokers that libertarians such as former senator Leyonhjelm think they are supporting have already tried to quit.

Even if smoking was not so dangerously addictive and habit-forming, libertarians would still be wrong. The decision taken by a 15-year-old boy is not consistent with the choice that person would make throughout their life. No 65-year-old suffering from cancer receives any solace from the fact that their 15-year-old self seemingly made a 'free decision' to impress their mates 50 years ago. No son or daughter will get any comfort from that fact at all.

This House supports the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill, which continues to take active steps to further reduce smoking and access to smoking, especially for young people. I endorse this bill and our state and federal governments' goal of eliminating the danger of smoking from our society.


 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (5.22 pm): I rise today to speak in support the Tobacco and Other Smoking Product Amendments Bill 2023. In doing so, I would like to acknowledge: the former and current ministers for health, Yvette D'Ath and Shannon Fentiman; the Health and Environment Committee chair; members of the committee; and the committee secretariat and Hansard.

Smoking remains a significant cause of death, disease and health inequality in Queensland. It is a major contributing factor to cardiovascular diseases such as heart disease and stroke. There are too many risks associated with this habit. The long-term effects are often devastating and it does not end well for some. People who smoke are at a very high risk of getting blood clots which can lead to poor blood circulation to the heart, brain or legs. Some end up having their limbs amputated. There is no denying that the effects of smoking are damaging and the cost to lives is enormous.

To put this into the context of dollars, Queensland is spending an estimated \$27.4 billion on hospital and other medical expenses to deal with the effects of smoking. We should also be very mindful that the tobacco industry is growing, and we are seeing this market becoming more innovative in the types and methods of smoking practices emerging in our communities that are designed to appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds. Queensland Health advised that the downward trend in smoking is at risk from the increasing trade in illicit tobacco and emerging smoking products and business practices targeted at children and young people, including in relation to electronic cigarettes.

As a parent, I am very concerned about the growing trend of electronic cigarettes. It is a growing phenomenon amongst young people. I have heard many stories of how easy it is to access electronic cigarettes, and it is alarming that young people access e-cigarettes to be a supply point for their peers. The aggressive new marketing of smoking products to young people, including using social media to promote allegedly new safer smoking products such as e-cigarettes, is unfathomable. These products are often illegally imported or manufactured in unsafe or uncontrolled conditions, and therefore they are also unlikely to meet Australian safety standards.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Member for Cook, I am sorry to interrupt you. Please resume your seat. Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House, and the time limit for this stage of the debate having expired, I now call the minister to respond to the second reading debate.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (5.25 pm), in reply: I thank members for their contributions to the debate on the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023. I was pleased to see support across the House for the bill and to hear these reforms described as common sense and sensible. I would like to briefly discuss some issues raised by members during the debate.

Over the course of the debate we heard members opposite claim that public health units are not appropriately resourced to enforce these reforms. As I said in my previous contribution, the licence fees will provide full cost recovery of delivering the scheme. The licensing fees paid by retailers will mean more frontline resources for public health units. In fact, additional funding will be available to public health units to expand their existing compliance activities, including recruiting new authorised persons if required.

I want to acknowledge the concerns expressed by Dr Donohue of the Townsville Public Health Unit during the parliamentary committee's public hearing which a number of members opposite raised during the debate. The enforcement provisions in the bill were developed in consultation with public health units right across Queensland. During this process Queensland Health worked with authorised persons to identify practical issues with enforcing the scheme. Based on this feedback, authorised persons will have significantly expanded powers to monitor compliance and take swift action to enforce Queensland's tobacco and smoking legislation. For example, authorised persons will be able to make inquiries to uncover the true owner of a business and hold them accountable for breaches. They will also be able to immediately issue improvement notices when they encounter unlawful activities and check compliance against that notice. Where illicit tobacco is seized by an authorised person, the bill enables the chief executive to forfeit the illicit tobacco without first taking prosecution action. This will mean that prosecutors can focus on the most serious breaches while freeing up health officers to continue their monitoring and enforcement work instead of preparing for court.

We also heard from those opposite during the debate that there has previously been no enforcement action in relation to illegal tobacco. I have to question whether any of the members opposite read the bill prior to the debate. If they had, they would know that this bill will make it an offence for the first time to supply illicit tobacco. While those selling illicit tobacco in Queensland may already be committing offences under Commonwealth laws, our public health units have not—until this bill—been able to enforce these laws.

I do want to say that that does not mean we have been idle. Queensland Health and the Queensland Police Service have supported the federal government in taking action on illicit tobacco and vaping in Queensland. Between July last year and February this year, public health units conducted 427 investigations and inspections to monitor compliance with the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 and 220 enforcement actions were taken. In December of last year, for example, the Sunshine Coast Public Health Unit, in collaboration with the Australian Taxation Office and the Queensland Police Service, took action against three tobacconists. Thanks to this operation, over 270,000 illicit cigarettes, 333 kilos of loose-leaf tobacco and 9,000 illegal vape products were seized.

Just this month, after a two-year joint investigation between the Metro South Public Health Unit, the Queensland Police Service and the Australian Taxation Office, a Brisbane convenience store was ordered to pay an \$88,000 fine for possessing and selling vapes containing nicotine, with over 45,000 vapes seized. The amendments in this bill will strengthen and streamline the work by allowing action to be taken against illicit tobacco under the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act. The bill also makes Queensland police officers authorised persons for the purpose of enforcing the new offences of supplying illicit tobacco and unlicensed sale of smoking products. This will provide public health units with additional support for enforcement action. To further strengthen compliance, monitoring and enforcement, Queensland Health will establish a dedicated intelligence capability unit. This will increase our data capability and coordinate with other agencies which share responsibility for illicit tobacco, including the Queensland Police Service, the Australian Border Force, the ATO and the Commonwealth Department of Health.

During debate, a number of members claimed that there were more illegal tobacco shops in Queensland than legitimate retailers. I am advised that industry estimates put the number of chop-chop shops in Queensland between 200 and 300. That is compared to over 500 tobacconists and 7,000 smoking retailers. The licensing framework established by this bill will ensure that we are able to effectively stamp out illegal operators.

We also heard a range of theories from members about how consumers can identify a chop-chop shop. Perhaps the most bizarre theory came from the member for Surfers Paradise who said that shops selling illegal tobacco, or chop-chop, behind the counter can often be identifiable if there is an ATM on the premises. Whilst we are committed to tackling illegal tobacco, I will not be asking the public health unit to raid every shop with an ATM onsite.

We also heard LNP members say that this bill does not deal with the issue of vapes. Of course we have recently seen the federal government announce reforms in relation to vaping and the Health and Environment Committee are currently undertaking an inquiry. This bill will complement the federal reforms and lay the groundwork for future reforms. The new licensing scheme will give Queensland Health improved oversight over the entire smoking product industry, including vape wholesalers and retailers. This additional oversight will be used to develop more focused monitoring and enforcement programs, including targeting businesses that are supplying vapes to people under 18.

I note the member for Hinchinbrook asked why Queensland Health is not providing more warnings to consumers about the risks of smoking. Retailers are already required to display a health warning wherever smoking products are sold. The Queensland government also invests in public education campaigns. We have invested \$1.7 million this financial year to implement campaigns that encourage Queensland smokers to quit and young people to never start vaping. For example, Dr Karl's vape truths first ran in 2022 and has been running again since March 2023 across social media. The Queensland government also provides significant support to assist Queenslanders to stop smoking. We provide Quitline with \$3.9 million every year to provide tailored support to people addicted to nicotine. In addition, Queensland is the only state to offer a free 12-week supply of nicotine replacement therapy to eligible individuals to support their quit journey.

Perhaps one of the most bizarre contributions came from the member for Mirani who claimed that smoking was somehow good for the economy. Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in this country. In addition to the impact of smoking on an individual level through lost lives and illness, smoking also presents a significant cost to our economy. In 2015-16 these costs were estimated to be \$27.4 billion. This includes medical and social costs such as hospitalisation, welfare and funeral expenses, along with intangible costs such as pain and suffering and the value of lives lost.

We cannot turn a blind eye to the insidious infiltration of vapes and illicit tobacco in our communities. By passing this bill, we send a clear message that we value the lives and health of our citizens above the profit-driven interests of those who would lead our young people into a lifetime of addiction and preventable illness. Today we have the power to make a profound and lasting impact on the lives of millions of Queenslanders.

I want to again thank members for their contribution to the debate on this important bill. I put on the record my thanks to the previous health minister, her office and the many Queensland Health staff who have worked on these reforms. This bill will safeguard our young people, preserve public health and ensure a brighter, smoke-free future for generations to come. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 39, as read, agreed to.

Clause 40—



Ms FENTIMAN (5.35 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 40 (Amendment of s 26Y (Person smoking must stop when directed))

Page 62, line 17, before 'contravention'—

insert—

the

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

Tabled paper: Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Shannon Fentiman's amendments [\[720\]](#).

Tabled paper: Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Shannon Fentiman's amendments [\[721\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 40, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 41 to 46, as read, agreed to.

Clause 47—



Ms FENTIMAN (5.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

2

Clause 47 (Amendment of s 26ZKD (Person must not smoke at or near under-age sporting event))

Page 67, after line 14—

insert—

Maximum penalty—20 penalty units.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 47, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 48 to 66, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading



Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (5.37 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. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (5.37 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.

WATER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 12 October 2022 (see p. 2608).

Second Reading



Hon. GJ BUTCHER (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (5.38 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to thank the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for its review of the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. I thank them for the work they do. In addition to holding two public hearings, the committee received 17 submissions from a range of peak industries, regional and environmental groups included. I would like to thank everyone who took part in the committee process along the way, particularly those members of that committee who were there for those hearings. The committee tabled its report on 9 December 2022, with the government's response tabled on 9 March 2023. The committee made four recommendations, including that the bill be passed, and I thank the committee for its support of the bill across both sides.

At its core, this bill is about strengthening water measurement across Queensland. In particular, it establishes a clear and transparent framework to implement Queensland's strengthened non-urban water management policy. This bill will improve the way that water take is measured and reported across the state which is a milestone in our government's commitment to improving water management and compliance here in Queensland. Strengthened measurement and reporting of water take will also help us meet our Murray-Darling Basin commitments in full.

The committee's second recommendation was for the department to monitor costs and transition time as the regulations and the guidelines are rolled out. I want to assure stakeholders that the strengthened measurement policy was, as its very core, intended to strike the important balance between improving water measurement and minimising costs for water users. My department will

carefully look at costs and availability of suitable measurement devices as part of the rollout of the measurement policy annually. I also would like to make sure that the industry's ability to meet increased demand for measurement devices and validation services is monitored, and that it gives as many Queensland businesses as possible a chance to play their part in this process along the way.

There is also further work underway about when pattern approved meters may be required for those larger water allocations in Queensland. This is in direct response to feedback about large pattern approved meters as we heard along the way.

There are many benefits to the telemetry when it comes to water management. However, I acknowledge telemetry may be a change for some water users in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin. Recognising this, the Palaszczuk and Albanese governments have come together to subsidise the cost of installing telemetry equipment for water users in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin.

Preparing measurement plans, where they are required, will also be a new process for some water users. Again, the supportive and educational approach being developed by my department will enable water users to use their existing on-farm measurement devices and infrastructure which I know was an important part of some of these discussions that were had with those water users.

The committee's third recommendation is for the department to provide the Water Engagement Forum with exposure drafts of supporting regulations and those standards in advance of this implementation, and that a review of regulations be conducted after a period of no more than five years. I once again thank the committee for acknowledging the constructive and collaborative approach taken by my department and the Water Engagement Forum.

I certainly want to take the opportunity now to thank the Water Engagement Forum for all the work that they have been doing in relation to this bill moving forward. This consultative approach has helped members understand how the Water Regulation amendments will certainly work together with the Water Act amendments in the bill to create the framework necessary to implement the strengthened measurement requirements for this. Work on this committee recommendation is already underway and a draft of Water Regulation amendments was recently provided to the Water Engagement Forum for their feedback.

In relation to a review of regulations being conducted after a period of no more than five years, we will do it sooner. The Water Regulation is due to be remade by 2026 and we will conduct that review then, sooner than five years. With annual reporting on the progress of implementation, any issues with the regulation can be identified and they can be addressed at that time. This progress reporting will be publicly available on the department's website.

The committee's fourth recommendation is that the department develop and publish a clear framework that specifies how reported data will be collected, used, distributed and published.

Mr McDonald: A very good recommendation.

Mr BUTCHER: I will take that interjection from the member for Lockyer, one of the members on the committee. It certainly is a very good recommendation coming forward. Data privacy affects all of us, no matter who we are and how we interact with government. Access to better water take information for both the department and water users is an important benefit of the proposed measurement requirements in this bill.

For the department, information about water use is critical to understand water availability in Queensland, and to make informed water allocation and planning decisions into the future. The better information the department receives, the better the information we can provide to water users to meet their needs. For example, this can include information about their water use, their water entitlements and about water they can buy or sell on the market. As I move around the state and regional Queensland, it certainly is all about how they can get access to that extra water if it is available at that time on the market. We have done a lot of work as a department to make sure those opportunities for those irrigators are certainly available for them.

Queensland's Information Privacy Act 2009 sets out the protection of personal information collected and held by Queensland government agencies and outlines how personal information must be managed. We take this very seriously. We want to make sure that that data certainly is protected for those users. The department will ensure that the collection, use and storage of data meets the requirements of the Information Privacy Act here in Queensland.

Once again, I thank the committee again for their consideration of the bill and for the points that they raised in their recommendations. Fair and sustainable access to water is vital for Queensland's regional communities. It drives economic growth and job creation and supports social and environmental outcomes for these communities.

The primary aim of the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 is to set up a clear and transparent regulatory framework to implement Queensland's strengthened non-urban water measurement policy. Implementation of the policy will improve the way that water take is measured and reported right across the state. This will provide more accurate information about how much water is being taken from our precious water resources so they can be managed sustainably, not only now but also long into the future.

The measurement requirements will apply to water users with a volumetric entitlement to take surface water or underground water. For water users who take water directly from a river or groundwater aquifer, this will mean attaching a meter to their pump or ensuring existing meters meet the meter standards here in Queensland. Where water take is more complex, the water user will need to describe the details of their measurement system in a measurement plan for that property. Measurement plans will be required for entitlements to take overland flow water in catchments in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin. Overland flow take in these catchments is significant and can amount to up to 40 per cent of all water consumed. These measurement plans will improve our ability to understand the impact of this take on river flows and water availability for other users so it can be managed more effectively.

The bill also makes amendments to improve the way water users report the amount of water that they take under their entitlements. For some water users, this will mean installing telemetry devices on their meters in Queensland. Telemetry devices transmit metered water use data in real time. They are very useful for monitoring the take that is time-and-event based, for example, where water may only be taken where certain water flow conditions occur. The strengthened reporting requirements will ensure that the department receives more detailed information about water take to make better water resource planning and management decisions across the board.

This will help stimulate economic development in regional communities; support businesses to thrive, expand and diversify; and ensure our precious water resources are managed sustainably for the benefit of all water users and our environment. The government is serious about strengthening water measurement in Queensland. The amendments in this bill will support appropriate action where water is taken and those important measurement requirements are not met. This bill before the House is a clear demonstration that the Palaszczuk government is delivering on its commitments to strengthen water measurement in Queensland and it is meeting its national commitment to the Murray-Darling Basin.

During the committee hearings the Inspector-General of Water Compliance for the Murray-Darling Basin stated that he welcomed Queensland's strengthened water measurement framework, congratulating Queensland on establishing arrangements for telemetry and measurement plans for measuring overland flow in Queensland. It was noted that this is a significant step towards improving water management in both Queensland and the whole northern basin. I must say I have taken the opportunity to visit the northern basin and seen firsthand how great this water system is in Queensland and we want to protect it.

The bill that I present today also includes amendments to other aspects of Queensland's water legislation portfolio. These amendments will ensure water laws remain effective and fit for purpose. To achieve this outcome, the bill makes several administrative amendments to the Water Act. The bill amends the current water licence process to ensure the chief executive can consider certain licence applications. This will protect the water rights of other users, environmental water needs and the public interest as well.

The bill modernises administration of category 1 water authority boards to bring them into line with other government boards with similar governance responsibilities. In particular, the amendments will ensure that swift action can be taken to address poor performance or bad behaviour of board members. This is important for safeguarding service delivery and accountability of these organisations that manage significant state owned assets and large capital investment programs in Queensland.

Minor operational changes and technical amendments to underground water management under chapter 3 of the Water Act are also included. This will improve the operation of the framework administered by the Department of Environment and Science. These amendments are brought forward on behalf of the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

The bill also amends the water supply act to clarify dam safety and drinking water provisions. Dam safety amendments will ensure that the emergency action plans for Queensland's 114 referable dams are reviewed and approved well ahead of the start of the wet season. I am sure that the communities that are in the vicinity of those 114 referable dams will want to know of their emergency action plans well before the wet season. This will ensure that dam operators are well prepared and can readily respond to unforeseen circumstances, and Queenslanders know so much about that.

Other amendments to the water supply act include improving water service provider registration, reviews of customer service standards, reporting, auditing drinking and recycled water plans, and clarifying offence provisions. These amendments will allow the department to work more effectively and more efficiently. As I said, this bill is all about ensuring Queensland's water legislation operates efficiently and continues to reflect the principles of best practice regulation.

The bill will be supported by future amendments to the Water Regulation. This will include the detail to support implementation of the strengthened water measurement policy. As I outlined earlier, consultation is already underway with the Water Engagement Forum. I now turn my attention to an amendment I will move during consideration in detail to clause 17 of the bill.

Mr Stevens: Keep it coming!

Mr BUTCHER: I will take that interjection from the member.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members. There is so much more goodwill in the chamber since I was here the last time. I do not know what has happened in the intervening time.

Mr BUTCHER: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker, for your protection! Prompted by stakeholder feedback, the amendment clarifies the process for deciding an application for a water licence dealing. The bill currently provides that the chief executive is not required to publish—

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I draw your attention to standing order 244(6). The member for Lockyer did not acknowledge you as he crossed the chamber.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld. Do not do it again! We will continue business without the jocularity from here on.

Mr BUTCHER: I just have to find my place now! The bill currently provides that the chief executive is not required to publish a public notice of an application to add, remove or change a condition of a water licence if satisfied that granting the application will not have an impact on other interests or water needs. The amendment will ensure this also applies to the renewal of a water licence or reinstatement of an expired water licence.

In acknowledgement that the public views on these applications have already been sought and considered as part of the original application, this amendment will reduce the administrative burden and red tape for straightforward renewal and reinstatement of applications. A related amendment clarifies that a public notice must be published if granting the application would or could result in additional take or impact. This will affirm protections proposed by the bill for other interests and third parties.

As I am nearing the end of my speech, I just want to take the opportunity to thank the committee once again for the work they did, including members on both sides of the House, in making sure that my first bill in this House is heard. I would like to thank the committee members for their efforts in getting through this bill and taking the opportunity to meet with those stakeholders and irrigators who reported to the committee during that time. They certainly did a fantastic job in doing that, led by the chair of that committee, Chris Whiting.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. We are not allowed in the House to mention members by their names.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The point of order is upheld—please use correct parliamentary titles.

Mr BUTCHER: As I said, not only was it the committee that went through the process as they do, but the secretariat also spent a lot of their time supporting our committees. The support of the secretariat and sometimes other support that is around as well as witnesses who came in to the public hearings does mean a lot to the committee members in ensuring there is the opportunity for them to get the good information.

An opposition member: And Hansard.

Mr BUTCHER: I will take that interjection. Hansard certainly does play a big part, and I acknowledge the Hansard ladies in the House tonight who have to listen to my dragged out second reading speech.

In all seriousness, the committee certainly engaged with the department. They certainly engaged far and wide to make sure they had all the information they needed for this bill. As we heard, four of those recommendations were supported by both sides of the House to make sure we can get this bill—

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: I will take that interjection—to make sure that this bill can move forward today. At the end of the day, I think it is a special time for us that we are now supporting this as we move forward with the second reading of this bill. I know the member for Nanango is certainly keen to get in and talk to this bill as well. I know how passionate she is about water in Queensland because we certainly hear about it. It is unfortunate that the member for Southern Downs is not here because I am sure he would be supportive—

Honourable members: He is.

Mr BUTCHER: He is. He is that interested in this bill he is still in the chamber.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. As we know, we are not allowed to talk about the absence or otherwise of members in the House.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I call the minister to conclude his remarks.

Mr BUTCHER: As I said, the amendments I have been talking about are consistent with the policy intent of this bill. I would like to take this opportunity now to say that I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Butcher, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Indigenous Councils Critical Infrastructure Program



Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (6.00 pm): I rise tonight to highlight another example of the Palaszczuk Labor government's systemic failure to plan and deliver for our Indigenous communities. I refer to my question on notice to the Deputy Premier on 25 October 2022, which I table.

Tabled paper: Answer to question on notice No. 1092 asked on 25 October 2022 [\[722\]](#).

It regards the funding provided under the Indigenous Councils Critical Infrastructure Program. I asked about total grant funding for each of the councils, total approved projects to date, and project name and progress update, reported separately for each project. In the Deputy Premier's answer I was provided a table outlining the breakdown of \$120 million. On 20 April 2023—177 days, almost six months, later—my colleague the member for Maroochydore again asked the Deputy Premier for an update on the projects, together with the progress milestones. I table a copy of that.

Tabled paper: Answer to question on notice No. 481 asked on 20 April 2023 [\[723\]](#).

After a comparison of the Deputy Premier's responses, I was disappointed to discover that very little has changed in a number of these councils. In fact, the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council had not moved at all, with every single milestone being the same as it was six months ago.

Under the Indigenous Councils Critical Infrastructure Program, funding has been allocated to the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council for infrastructure projects, including water sources and treatment investigation, water mains and system upgrades and sewerage pump stations. On Tuesday this week I learned of deeply concerning reports of water contamination at Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council. It took a brave whistleblower to expose this serious issue that the chaotic Palaszczuk Labor government should have fronted up to Queenslanders about. I table a copy of my media statement.

Tabled paper: Email, dated 23 May 2023, from the Opposition Media, referring to a media statement by the Shadow Minister for Seniors, Communities and Disability Services and Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, regarding reports of drinking water contamination at Yarrabah [\[724\]](#).

The state government is responsible for both scope and quote approval of these projects. Here we have a community in Queensland not having access to clean drinking water. These people should not be forced to live in Third World conditions because the Labor government is too busy with internal chaos and crisis to deliver basic services.

We heard back in June 2022 the Deputy Premier touting in the 2022-23 budget the announcement of \$22.3 million as part of the \$120 million for the ICCIP to support Indigenous councils to implement projects and infrastructure works relating to critical water and wastewater. Where is the progress? It certainly is not in Yarrabah. I table a copy of that.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 21 June 2022, from the then Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic Infrastructure, Hon. Dr Steven Miles, titled 'Budget back infrastructure for a growing Queensland' [725].


I also table a copy of a statement by the Local Government Association of Queensland's CEO, Alison Smith, who said that 'councils needed certainty to plan how best to deliver for the communities that rely on them; there are huge challenges' and that 'at a time when so many of the communities are having to tighten their belts, demands on councils to provide communities with services and improvements are growing, not shrinking.'

Tabled paper: Article, dated 4 May 2023, from the Local Government Association of Queensland titled 'LGAQ: review will put key infrastructure projects at risk' [726].

We saw the former minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships patting himself and the Premier on the back for passing Path to Treaty laws whilst in Cairns, but Indigenous communities are enduring substandard living conditions. I quote the minister, who said in Cairns that he had travelled the length and breadth of Queensland and the common message from discrete communities was that 'no-one consults with them about key matters'. What was the minister doing? That is why he has gone.

(Time expired)


Queensland Volunteering Awards; National Community Languages Schools Day

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.03 pm): It was an absolute pleasure to represent the Premier last week at the Queensland Volunteering Awards. I congratulate every single Queenslanders who was nominated for one of these awards. I definitely want to congratulate all of the finalists at the awards last Monday, and I really want to congratulate one of the local Mount Ommaney residents whom I specifically nominated: Mr Brian Tovey. Mr Brian Tovey fits more into the daylight hours than I think any member of this House could possibly hope to aspire to. In addition to looking after the Corinda P&C garden once a week, he also helps the school with tennis court hire. He is also the JP on call for the midnight police phone calls. That is not a job that a lot of people want to sign up for. He volunteers weekly at the Sherwood Meals on Wheels and he also ran the Corinda Oxley Neighbourhood Watch. That is just a taste of the work he does in our community, so it is no wonder that out of hundreds of nominees he was one of three finalists. I could not be prouder of Brian and his achievement in that space.

It was such a pleasure to represent the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister Linard, a few weeks ago at the Mother Languages and Cultures National Community Languages Schools Day. It was hosted by Ethnic Schools Association Queensland and the Brisbane Bangla School. Like many members of parliament, I am privileged to have a mother tongue language school in my electorate—a Vietnamese school which has been run out of Darra State School for about 30 years now—and I feel incredibly proud. It is important for the one-in-two Queenslanders who have a parent who was born overseas, or who were born overseas themselves, to continue to have that strong and close relationship with their mother tongue language. In many cases, it is the only way they can communicate with older relatives.

While I am on my feet, it would be remiss of me not to mention what a pleasure it was to celebrate the Sinhala and Tamil new year with many of my parliamentary colleagues including the members for Ipswich West, Jordan and Oxley as well as Greg Adermann, who is the councillor for the Pullenvale ward. We had a lovely time and it was great to see so many Mount Ommaney locals who had come all the way out to Chuwar to celebrate that occasion. I received a blessing. I am going to live to be 100 now, which is exciting. I want to thank the local residents who played such an important role in putting that event together—Ruan, the Jays and the fabulous organising committee.

St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital; Annat, Ms I, MBE, OAM

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (6.06 pm): On 17 May 2023, St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital marked its 65th anniversary. It was an honour to attend this event along with UnitingCare Queensland CEO Craig Barke; UnitingCare Group Executive of Hospitals Michael Krieg; St Andrew's War Memorial

Hospital General Manager Mairi McNeill; Director of Medical Services Dr Michael Gillman; Director of Clinical Services Deborah Turton; Business Development Manager Susan Walsh; Wesley Medical Research CEO Andrew Barron; and Brisbane City Councillor for the Central ward, Councillor Vicki Howard. This 65th anniversary event was also held in conjunction with a special memorial service for the late Isobel 'Pixie' Annat MBE, OAM. I table a copy of the official program.

Tabled paper: Document, dated 17 May 2023, titled '65th Anniversary of St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital A memorial service for the late Isobel (Pixie) Annat MBE OAM' [727].


I wish to formally acknowledge the extraordinary life and contribution of Pixie Annat, who was recognised as a Queensland Great in 2021 and who died on 24 September 2022 at the age of 92. Pixie Annat was an outstanding Queenslander, a true trailblazer and a visionary health leader. Above all else, Pixie Annat was a fierce advocate for nurses. She was absolutely dedicated to helping the homeless and vulnerable. Pixie assumed the role of matron—later known as 'nursing director'—at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital in 1965. Pixie's subsequent tenure as chief executive officer from 1978 to 1992 at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital revolutionised the delivery of health care in Queensland. Under Pixie's leadership, St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital launched one of the first neurosurgery units in the country, launched the first nuclear medicine department at a private hospital and established a cardiac unit, with St Andrew's becoming the first private hospital in Queensland to provide open-heart surgery. In 1977 Pixie was awarded an MBE and in 1992 she received a Medal of the Order of Australia. As a member of the Centaur Memorial Fund for Nurses, Pixie tirelessly championed postgraduate education for nurses.

As the shadow minister for education and state member for Moggill, it was an honour to represent the Leader of the Opposition at this year's Anzac Nurses Memorial Candlelight Vigil, held in Brisbane's Anzac Square on 24 April 2023. This service was also attended by Her Excellency the Hon. Dr Jeannette Young AC, PSM, Governor of Queensland; the then minister for health and ambulance services; the president of the Centaur Memorial Fund for Nurses, Colonel Julie Finucane OAM, Rtd; along with representatives of the 2nd Health Battalion including Major Kelsey Hamsey, Major Dee Hinde, Regimental Sergeant Major Warrant Officer Class One Matt Shoemark, Lieutenant Kelly Broughton and Lieutenant Alex Beaumont, who led and commanded the catafalque party.

It was an absolute privilege to know and work with Pixie Annat during my previous tenure as the executive director of medical services at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital. At the candlelit vigil for nurses she was formally recognised once again for her work with nurses across Queensland. Vale, Isobel 'Pixie' Annat MBE OAM.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: A truly great nurse.

Caloundra Electorate, Events

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (6.09 pm): It was all about commemoration and veterans in Caloundra last week. 14 May marked the 80th anniversary of the sinking of the Australian hospital ship *Centaur* in 1943. At 0410 hours the Imperial Japanese Navy submarine I-177 put a single torpedo into the port side of the *Centaur*, hitting the oil fuel tank and causing a massive explosion. In barely three minutes it was gone and of the 332 people on board only 64 survived, rescued after 36 hours in the water by the destroyer USS *Mugford*.


Centaur is now 30 nautical miles off the coast of Moreton Island and it played an important part in the fabric of the community of Caloundra. Indeed, in recent years I have learned that one of my wife's relatives was lost that morning on the vessel. Last week I was genuinely delighted to attend the advanced screening of a brilliant documentary that our fantastic subbranch of the Caloundra RSL caused to be made so that we never forget our local history. Many thanks go to the subbranch President, Heather Christie, and Mr Terry O'Connor for all of their hard work, and a special mention to Mr Jeff Hughes from This Story Australia whose charity did such an incredible job making the documentary into a reality—a documentary made possible by this government's Anzac Day Trust grants.

The following morning I was honoured to emcee a deeply moving commemoration ceremony organised by one of our Caloundra Rotary Clubs, again in conjunction with our subbranch of the Caloundra RSL. On our beautiful headland overlooking the Pacific, the ceremony was well attended by people from all branches of the military and included the families of *Centaur* survivors. I want to single out for special mention Deb Taylor and Jim Lombard in particular and the executive members of the

RAAF 23 Squadron, which is the former squadron of the member for Southern Downs, if I am not mistaken. A special shout-out to Unity College for its own *Centaur* commemorations where the names of all of the women and men who perished were read out aloud. It is the first time I have heard that done and it was brilliant—very moving.

That same week I also met with the unstoppable force that is SMEAC, the military acronym—a veteran support group which describes itself as warriors, not victims, that believe in a hand up, not a hand out. Tim, Nick, Stephen, Kendall, Matt, Melody and Tony, you are absolute legends. This implacable band of veterans has a fully functional support hub in Brisbane and is already looking to expand its support operations on the Sunshine Coast. The only thing bigger than their ambition is their hearts and I thank them for all of the work that they do with vets and the families of veterans.

Titles Queensland, Morecroft Family


 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.12 pm): I rise to bring to the attention of the House the mean-spirited, Ebenezer Scrooge impersonation of the Treasurer of Queensland, ostensibly keeper of the \$7.6 billion titles office of Queensland. It beggars belief that the Treasurer can ignore the directive of the courts of Queensland to pay the innocent victims of a Queensland fraud over a house they purchased the \$2.7 million compensation they are owed over their home in Mermaid Beach.

The Morecrofts bought their house five years ago before the boom at public auction and did everything honestly and correctly to satisfy all legal compliance issues. Unbeknown to them, the son of a previous owner had fraudulently mortgaged the property with money lenders which resulted in the house being sold as a mortgagee in possession. Subsequent court action returned ownership to the mother of the son, with the courts ordering the Queensland government to compensate the Morecrofts the \$2.7 million the house is now worth. The titles office failed to transfer title of the property to the Morecrofts awaiting the outcome of the court case about the fraud. This has led to the Morecrofts being financially crippled following court costs and the seizure of their home which they had innocently purchased.

This is a one-off case with no precedent to be created by the government settling its \$2.7 million debt to the Morecrofts as ordered by our independent judiciary. The Treasurer in his miserly and ill-advised attitude by appealing the decision of the courts demonstrates a complete lack of empathy and feeling for a totally innocent victim of a substantial fraud in Queensland. This highlights the lack of care the Treasurer has about home ownership in Queensland and I am asking the Premier to step in again and override her Treasurer as she has done before to withdraw the appeal and pay the Morecrofts the \$2.7 million they are owed, allowing them to get back into a home. Dragging out this case will cost the Morecrofts even more pain and financial stress and at the same time cost Queensland taxpayers more legal fees that I am sure the three compassionate and considerate judges of the Court of Appeal will uphold in the Morecroft's sensible award in the lower courts.

It is absurd obstinance that the Treasurer is pursuing this case on innocent victims of a Queensland fraud. If this is the degree of empathy and compassion this Queensland government is prepared to show good law-abiding family people like Jess and Jackie Morecroft, then I fear for everyday Queenslanders facing a despotic and money hungry government unprepared to follow reasonable court direction. The ridiculousness of this appeal could even escalate to the High Court if the bloody-mindedness the Treasurer is demonstrating is not curtailed by the Premier. I genuinely ask that sanity and goodwill prevail and the appeal against the Supreme Court decision be withdrawn.

Smith, Mr CJ

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (6.15 pm): This evening I rise to honour my late cousin and best friend Christian James Smith. Before I do, I want to acknowledge the member for Southern Downs and the member for Macalister for their advocacy and courage. Mental health issues are something that affect all of us from time to time. Everyone is touched in some way—themselves or others whom they love. Regrettably, it sometimes claims lives.


Chris was a year younger than me. From my earliest memories we were together. As kids we used to see each other often and we grew to be great mates. We both had the same warped sense of humour and a willingness to take risks. In fact, given the type of mischief and things we used to get up to, it is amazing we got this far. I know my mum and Aunty Sonya were certainly given some grey hair from the pair of us. I cannot describe some of our shenanigans as some are things I would not like anyone else to attempt. Even when we were separated by the tyranny of distance, any chance we could

find to be together and muck up we certainly did. Chris was the manager at Tyrepower in Frankston, Victoria, and a keen fan of all things motor and fast. He was a bloke who had a great sense of larrikin. He was also a big kid and loved my children as if they were his own.

Over the last week and a bit I have thought long and hard about our lives together. It has been so difficult and I have gone through the whole grief cycle. I have worried about my aunty, cousins and Nicole. I have been erratic and emotional. I am very thankful that Aggie and the kids have endured and been there for me. I am grateful for all of the calls from relatives and friends and my staff, who are both. Dan, you are my good lieutenant. After the emotions subsided, I became reflective and enjoyed thinking about Chris and our memories—so many, so much fun and so much laughter.

Chris, I tried to call and left messages, but you were in a place that was hard to reach. I know the feeling and I wish I had just got in my car and come down to see you. Life is complicated and so is the end of it, I suppose. I hate the fact that I cannot say to myself, 'We'll eventually catch up for a beer.' I am glad though of our time together. You were my best mate. I will find you on the other side because you owe me a beer, old son. I love you, I miss you and I hope that you have become 'comfortably numb'.

Gold Coast, Housing

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (6.18 pm): At the outset I want to congratulate the member for Gaven on her new posting as the Minister for Housing, but boy has she got some work to do. In a moment I want to table a spreadsheet that I have been compiling over the last 10 or 15 years which basically highlights or details capital works spending on the Gold Coast over the last 12 years on public housing.

Disappointingly, the Gold Coast has only received 4.8 per cent of all capital works spending for the last 11 years in spite of the fact that the Gold Coast's population is something like 12 per cent of the state's total, and we wonder why there is a housing shortage and a public housing crisis on the Gold Coast. No doubt the Minister for Housing, who is a Gold Coast member, will be very interested to see those figures. Hopefully, when the budget is laid out in a few weeks time, we will see a significant increase in spending on and commitment to the Gold Coast because things in our city are indeed incredibly dire.


To put that in dollar terms, basically, in capital works over the past 11 or 12 years, we have received about \$287 million out of some \$5.5 billion spent across the state. Even if we just got our fair share proportionately, based on population, that represents an underspend of about \$358 million, which is actually more than the full amount that has been expended over that time frame. Unfortunately, these figures are budget figures. I would love to see the spreadsheet updated, and perhaps I will lodge that as a question on notice, to reflect the actual spend rather than the intended spend for that same period. I table that document.

Tabled paper: Spreadsheet, undated, titled 'Department of Housing and Public Works' relating to social housing in Queensland [728].

I give a shout-out for this year's Vinnies CEO Sleepout. It will be my eighth year participating in the sleep-out. I am pleased that all of the money that has been raised on the Gold Coast has stayed on the Gold Coast. Recently, Vinnies announced their new Nerang housing project. The land was purchased with money that was raised over the past seven or eight years. The hope is that on that site they will develop 60 dwellings, with a mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments, to provide desperately needed housing for people on the Gold Coast.

We have heard a lot about housing this week, but I want to highlight the fact that there are people sleeping in tents the length and breadth of the Gold Coast. You do not have to go far within the electorate of Gaven, the electorate of Bonney or even within my own electorate to see that. In Southport there are people camped next to the cemetery, which is simply not good enough.

Titles Queensland, Member for Mermaid Beach

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (6.21 pm): I rise to respond to the false, erroneous and disgraceful claims made in the House this evening by the member for Mermaid Beach. The matters referred to by the member for Mermaid Beach involve complex matters of law. It is a complex legal matter involving a number of parties and significant legal principles relating to the registration of title in Queensland and land law itself in this state. Those are significant principles and matters of law that have the potential to impact on all Queenslanders. The state of Queensland is represented in this matter by Crown Law.

Our government acts on the advice of independent legal officers, governed by model litigant principles. Given the circumstances of this matter, it would not be appropriate for politicians to intervene in such matters and to intervene in their resolution contrary to the advice that the government receives from independent legal officers and independent officials.

I note that the member for Mermaid Beach has weighed in on this principle. That is entirely of no surprise to me because the member for Mermaid Beach has, on numerous occasions, demonstrated repeatedly that he has no respect for independent public servants and independent officials in this state. The member for Mermaid Beach has previously come in here and impugned the integrity of the State Actuary, an independent official of the Treasury, with the most vile, despicable and false imputations about that independent officer.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence at the matters that the Treasurer has raised. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I will take some advice. Before I respond to that point of order, I note, member, that you had been interjecting on a number of occasions. I acknowledge that they have been short, but you have made a very serious speech in the House tonight and the Treasurer is being directly responsive to that speech. I ask that you listen to the Treasurer's response. Treasurer, the member has taken personal offence and I ask you to withdraw.

Mr DICK: I withdraw. I have repeatedly called the member for Mermaid Beach to account on this matter. I have repeatedly called on him to apologise. He has no right to speak on this issue or any other issue that impacts on the decision of independent officials of the Public Service until he retracts the false allegations he made about a senior public officer in this state.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The advice goes for the member for Southern Downs as well.

Mr DICK: Again I call on the member for Mermaid Beach to publicly apologise to the State Actuary for his disgraceful claims.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am offended by the comments that the Treasurer has made and I ask him to withdraw.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Treasurer, the member has taken personal offence and I ask you to withdraw.

Mr DICK: I withdraw. I understand that, according to senior Channel 9 political editor Tim Arvier, the member for Mermaid Beach is under preselection threat. I never wish good luck to any LNP politician but in this case I offer the LNP challenger to the member for Mermaid Beach all the very best of luck in his preselection claim on the seat of Mermaid Beach. This parliament deserves better than the member for Mermaid Beach. The people of Mermaid Beach deserve better than the decrepit, broken-down shadow of a member of parliament—


Opposition members interjected.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order, members! Member for Southern Downs, you are warned.

Mr DICK:—and now has none. Policy responsibility in this matter does not even lie with me; it lies with the Minister for Resources. Any further questions or allegations in this matter should properly be made publicly and not under the privilege of this House.

Theodore Electorate, Roads


 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (6.25 pm): Tonight I want to speak about some local issues for the Theodore electorate, predominantly to do with roads. The safety upgrade for Michigan Drive and Tamborine-Oxenford Road is desperately needed. It is certainly something that residents have been waiting a long time for and it is something that I have been very vocal about for many years. There is a little issue: we are hoping that the department sees some sense and includes Georgina Street in the upgrade. The entrance to Georgina Street is in the middle of two long sweeping bends. A lot of vehicles use the main road. As I have alluded to in the House before, Tamborine-Oxenford Road can be used by up to 19,000 vehicles per day. The long sweeping bend where Georgina Street is located is used by heavy vehicles such as the Coles trucks that go up to Mount Tamborine and the quarry trucks from the local area. Residents who live on that street fear that they will end up with a vehicle in the tail pipe of their car. They need a slip lane to take them safely off the road while allowing other vehicles to continue along safely.

I want to quickly talk about Charlies Crossing Road and Tamborine-Oxenford Road, which the department is working on. As I said, 19,000 cars use that main road every single day. We have a beloved cenotaph in that location and we want to make sure it is respected and looked after properly. The original statue is no longer on the cenotaph. The old cenotaph used to have statue of a soldier with a British service cap and bandolier across the chest. The newer version of the statue has a slouch hat and is missing the bandolier across the chest. Damage has been caused to the cenotaph previously.

Residents want to make sure that the cenotaph in its current form is there for generations to come and is respected by all those who travel past. We are looking to the department to take a lot of care of the cenotaph. We need it kept close to its current location because a lot of the older families in the area will salute the cenotaph as they drive past. It is certainly very precious to my local community and I hope it is treated with respect by the department. Perhaps we could requisition some of the vets land to make a decent park to hold Anzac Day services in in the future. That would be truly wonderful for my community. That is something that Main Roads can look into.

(Time expired)

Pine Rivers Small Business Awards

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (6.29 pm): What a pleasure it is to update the House on the wonderful Pine Rivers Small Business Awards, hosted only last week. We welcomed our small business minister and champion Di Farmer into our community along with our Small Business Commissioner, Ms Dominique Lamb. I am rising tonight to let the House know about the fantastic winners from our 2023 small business awards.


In the category of health and fitness, our winner was Integrate Physiotherapy. Integrate Physio pride themselves on delivering exceptional care. The team's expertise extends over a combined 70 years during which they have seen and treated over 25,000 patients. They also offer fixed travel costs for NDIS and community home visit clients. This saves thousands of dollars right across our community. In trades and services, our winner was All Occasions by Nic. This is a fantastic business that customises balloon garlands, balloon bouquets and backdrop hire for all types of events and occasions. They also offer a range of event prop hire and DIY 'grab and go' balloon gardens. The balloons that they use for events are biodegradable.

In the beauty and hairdressing category, our winner was Hair and Beauty by Peta. This is a wonderful salon that is home-based in the community of Bray Park. When you walk into the salon you get to meet Frankie, the salon's mascot cat. Lots of other foster kittens and cats from the Animal Welfare League have called Hair and Beauty by Peta home over the years as part of their socialisation process to be adopted. Peta is a bubbly personality and at a recent drop-in she helped me tame my toddler's curls, which was quite appreciated.

Our cafe and restaurant winner was Uno Caffe & Pizzeria, a fantastic family orientated venue for young and old. They minimise their global footprint by buying local and employing locals, including supporting local school students with work experience and employment opportunities for our youth. Melissa and Dan bring together their passions—flavourful food made from the heart and customer mateship.

The winner in our trades category was JBS Dog and Cat Grooming Services + Doggy Daycare. Not only do they get your dogs and cats looking and smelling great but they also take care of them. They love giving back, including by providing essential goods after the recent Lismore floods. In the early childhood category, after 50 years in our community, it was Dayboro Community Kindy, which is a fantastic child-led play-based indoor-outdoor program which focuses on independence and empowerment of children. We had over 30,000 votes in our small business awards, just in the final category. It is absolutely fantastic. Our small businesses create jobs, support our local economy, contribute to our community and provide unique and personal services. They are absolutely fantastic. It was wonderful to celebrate them last week.

4MBS Festival of Classics

 **Mr ACTING SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the 4MBS Festival of Classics is Australia's largest classical music festival. Only the BBC runs a larger festival than the one hosted here in Queensland. I am proud to be a supporter. Tonight I will swap this chamber for chamber music. This year the festival celebrates 30 years with 30 concerts over 30 days, all of which include 100 per cent Queensland-based performers and support staff, supporting over 1,000 Queenslanders in jobs. This

event is an amazing achievement for a community radio station in the electorate of Greenslopes which is dedicated to classical music and jazz and is significantly supported by volunteers. After the adjournment, I will be heading to QPAC to enjoy a program delivered by Camerata—the Queensland Chamber Orchestra—with William Barton performing. The festival is only part way through and does not wrap up until 11 June. Anyone wanting tickets should get there before they are all sold out. I encourage everyone to support the 4MBS Festival of Classics 30th anniversary.

The House adjourned at 6.33 pm.

ATTENDANCE

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