



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 13 June 2023

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TUESDAY, 13 JUNE 2023

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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



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

ASSENT TO BILLS



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

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

Dear Mr Speaker

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

Date of Assent: 2 June 2023

A Bill for An Act to provide for the monitoring of places of detention under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and to amend this Act, the Corrective Services Act 2006 and the Youth Justice Act 1992 for related purposes

A Bill for an Act to amend the Corrective Services Act 2006, the Corrective Services Regulation 2017, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Youth Justice Act 1992 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes

A Bill for an Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes

A Bill for an Act to amend the Forestry Act 1959, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006 and the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act 1998 for particular purposes

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

2 June 2023

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 2 June 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 2 June 2023 [\[787\]](#).

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS


Absence of Speaker



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am very happy to be back after greatly missing you all for the past few weeks. I would like to sincerely thank Deputy Speaker Joe Kelly for very capably acting as Presiding Officer in my absence and for the Panel of Temporary Speakers for their usual great assistance in the running of this chamber.


Honourable members, all of us in this place need to ensure we keep an eye on each other and to also be prepared to listen when somebody needs to talk. I thank the many members of this House for their messages of support that I received whilst I was on leave.

Absence of Member

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have received advice from the member for Mirani, Stephen Andrew MP, that he will be absent from this week's sittings of the House. The member's notification complies with standing order 263A.

REPORT


Information Commissioner

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I have to report that I have received from the Information Commissioner *Report 4: 2022-23—Data breach response plans: Effective and responsive plans—building public confidence*. I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Information Commissioner Report 4: 2022-23—Data breach response plans: Effective and responsive plans—building public confidence [788].


SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Record of Proceedings, Incorporation of Material

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, sessional order 11 provides that for the debate on the annual appropriation bills it is not necessary for members to seek leave of the House to incorporate material in the *Record of Proceedings* provided members have shown the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker the material sought to be incorporated and have obtained the Speaker's or the Deputy Speaker's consent as per standing order 25.

Before consent will be given, members must assure and undertake that: for a speech relative to the appropriation bills, the member's total speech must not exceed that which would normally be allowed in a 15-minute speech, thus no speech should exceed approximately 2,600 words; speeches should not include graphs, charts or other material; members must provide the Parliamentary Reporting and Broadcasting Service with their speech in electronic form prior to rising to give their speech—other members will be provided access, on request, to a member's speech prior to the publication of the *Record of Proceedings*; and speeches intended to be incorporated should not offend standing orders in any way, such as by containing personal reflections, imputations and the like.

School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Arundel State School in the electorate of Bonney and Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic School in the electorate of Greenslopes.

PETITIONS

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

Cash Transactions

Mr Andrew, from 11,811 petitioners, requesting the House to introduce legislation that will make it illegal for any company, council or business to refuse to accept cash (subject to existing regulations) as legal tender in Queensland [780].

North Queensland, Light Rail

Mr Dametto, from 669 petitioners, requesting the House to adjust any current and future TMR projects between Ingham and Townsville to allow railway corridors for a light-rail project [781].

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

Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices

4,430 petitioners, requesting the House to amend the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices so that when considering a change in the speed limit, wildlife deaths form part of the assessment process [782].

Elected Officials, Publications

704 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that all publications by ministers and mayors carry the author's name and authorisations if content is not by the hand of the minister or mayor [783].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS (SO 31)

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

26 May 2023—

[729](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on Ministerial Study Tour to India and the United Arab Emirates by the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing, Hon. Grace Grace, 23-30 April 2023

[730](#) Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission—Annual Report 2020-21

29 May 2023—

[731](#) Auditor-General Report 13: 2022-23—Managing Queensland's debt and investments 2022

[732](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on official visit to New Zealand by the Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Hon. Craig Crawford, 26-29 April 2023

30 May 2023—

[733](#) State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 42, 57th Parliament—Examination of Auditor-General Report 6: 2021-22—Regulating animal welfare services

[734](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on Trade and Investment Mission to Latin America by the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment, Hon. Cameron Dick, 23-30 April 2023

2 June 2023—

[735](#) Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 35, 57th Parliament—Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Surgeons) Amendment Bill 2023

5 June 2023—

[736](#) Education, Employment and Training Committee: Report No. 34, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 22 February 2023 and 28 March 2023

7 June 2023—

[737](#) Auditor-General Report 14: 2022-23—Health outcomes for First Nations people

[738](#) Response from the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment (Hon. Dick), to an ePetition (3834-22) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 845 petitioners, requesting the House to remove Allianz Australia as a compulsory third party insurer under the Motor Accident Insurance Commission insurer option for vehicle registration

8 June 2023—

[739](#) Response from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services (Hon. Ryan), to an ePetition (3878-23) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 465 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the construction of a PCYC on the Northern Gold Coast

[740](#) Response from the Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice (Hon. Farmer), to a paper petition (3900-23) presented by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(3), and an ePetition (3860-23) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 4 and 5,186 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to undertake a number of initiatives to end youth crime in Queensland

[741](#) State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 42, 57th Parliament—Examination of Auditor-General Report 6: 2021-22—Regulating animal welfare services: Erratum

[742](#) Final report of the independent Developer Review Panel—Setting the tone: The role of developers in Queensland's building and construction industry, April 2023

[743](#) Education and Care Services National Law: Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2023

[744](#) Education and Care Services National Law: Education and Care Services National Amendment Regulations 2023, human rights certificate

[745](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing (Hon. Grace), to an ePetition (3857-23) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 899 petitioners, requesting the House to undertake consultation and devise a solution that enables Year 8-10 students living in rural and remote Queensland towns that have a state primary school to continue their formal education at the same facility

[746](#) Response from the Minister for Housing (Hon. Scanlon), to an ePetition (3875-23) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 833 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the construction of new social housing to accommodate Queenslanders in need

[747](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3856-23) sponsored by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(4) from 365 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure that Queensland Rail adjust automated and in person South East Queensland on-train announcements of stations to include bus services at which people can easily transfer to high frequency bus services or busways

[748](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3873-23) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 362 petitioners, requesting the House to upgrade the 728 and 729 bus services between Beenleigh Railway Station and Ormeau Railway Station

[749](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3874-23) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 276 petitioners, requesting the House to provide a regular daily bus service connecting people to the transport hub of Ormeau Train Station and the Pimpama shopping precinct

[750](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3879-23) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 537 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure the upgrade and improvements to the operation of Exit 38 of the M1

[751](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3880-23) sponsored by the member for Coomera, Mr Crandon, from 763 petitioners, requesting the House to undertake the completion of a full upgrade of Exit 45

12 June 2023—

[752](#) Response from the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure (Hon. Dr Miles), to an ePetition (3858-23) sponsored by the member for Surfers Paradise, Mr Langbroek, from 859 petitioners, requesting the House to reduce the building height of developments on Chevron Island to 33m (approximately 9 storeys)

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Major Events Act 2014:

[753](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Townsville 500) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 41

[754](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Townsville 500) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 41, explanatory notes

[755](#) Major Events (Motor Racing Events) (Townsville 500) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 41, human rights certificate

Public Trustee Act 1978:

[756](#) Public Trustee (Interest Rate) Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2023, No. 42

[757](#) Public Trustee (Interest Rate) Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2023, No. 42, explanatory notes

[758](#) Public Trustee (Interest Rate) Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 2023, No. 42, human rights certificate

Nature Conservation Act 1992:

[759](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) (Girringun National Park) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 43

[760](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) (Girringun National Park) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 43, explanatory notes

[761](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas Management) (Girringun National Park) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 43, human rights certificate

Fisheries Act 1994:

[762](#) Fisheries Legislation (Coral) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 44

[763](#) Fisheries Legislation (Coral) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 44, explanatory notes

[764](#) Fisheries Legislation (Coral) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 44, human rights certificate

Nature Conservation Act 1992:

[765](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) (Omission of Heathlands Resources Reserve) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 45

[766](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) (Omission of Heathlands Resources Reserve) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 45, explanatory notes

[767](#) Nature Conservation (Protected Areas) (Omission of Heathlands Resources Reserve) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 45, human rights certificate

Building Act 1975:

[768](#) Building (Private Certification Endorsement) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 46

[769](#) Building (Private Certification Endorsement) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 46, explanatory notes

[770](#) Building (Private Certification Endorsement) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 46, human rights certificate

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990:

[771](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Regulation 2023, No. 47

[772](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Regulation 2023, No. 47, explanatory notes

[773](#) Superannuation (State Public Sector) Regulation 2023, No. 47, human rights certificate

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994:

[774](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Carbon Farming Advice Assistance Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 48

[775](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Carbon Farming Advice Assistance Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 48, explanatory notes

[776](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Carbon Farming Advice Assistance Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 48, human rights certificate

Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014:

- [777](#) Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 49
- [778](#) Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 49, explanatory notes
- [779](#) Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 49, human rights certificate

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services (Hon. Ryan)—

- [784](#) Letter, dated 13 June 2023, from the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, Hon. Mark Ryan, to the Clerk of the Parliament, Mr Neil Laurie, regarding an amended response to Question on Notice No. 1088 of 2022
- [785](#) Amended answer to question on notice No. 1088 asked on 14 October 2022

MEMBER'S PAPER


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

Member for Aspley (Mr Mellish)—

- [786](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report to Parliament on Premier's Anzac Prize, Veteran's Affairs and Other Business by the member for Aspley, Mr Bart Mellish MP, 20-30 April 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Budget

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.35 am): This afternoon the Treasurer will hand down this year's state budget. It is a budget that will deliver for Queenslanders—in health; in housing; in community safety; and, crucially, in bringing down cost-of-living pressures that thousands of Queensland families are facing. We know there are national pressures across the board that mean Queenslanders are doing it tough. That is why this budget will deliver an historic cost-of-living package—the largest of any state.

Our government appreciates the extraordinary pressures being experienced in the housing market. We are taking unprecedented action to support the housing needs of Queenslanders in the short, medium and long term. This budget will unlock additional affordable housing supply and community housing including the implementation of Build-to-Rent incentives and further investment through the Housing Investment Fund. It includes an additional \$322 million, as we announced, to build an additional 500 social housing properties. It also includes, as already announced, \$64.3 million to purchase and lease emergency accommodation facilities.

Today we also deliver record funding to ensure Queenslanders have access to the health services they need in addition to our recent commitments of \$586 million for LifeFlight to provide ongoing emergency medical helicopter services and \$150 million for a new mental health facility for the Redland Hospital, building on our record mental health investment of \$1.645 billion.

It is imperative that we build for all Queenslanders—not only those who already call our great state home but those who are flocking here in record numbers. Queensland has the fastest growing population in the nation, and today's budget recognises that planning for future growth is vital.


We have a strong focus on implementing the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan with substantial investments in renewable energy infrastructure that delivers secure, affordable energy for decades to come. This is about growing industries that are critical to the global shift to a net zero economy which will drive economic growth in our regions.

All Queenslanders need to feel safe, and our government is continuing our dedicated focus on responding to serious repeat youth offenders. Our budget provides for new youth engagement measures, and these will be outlined shortly. To that end, today we also have a strong focus on giving every Queensland child the best start in life. The budget invests in education facilities and early childhood education and free kindy for Queensland families, representing significant savings for family budgets.

Despite challenging global conditions, Queensland's economy is continuing to grow. Our strong economic management has created the budget position we need to make investments in good jobs, better services and embracing our great Queensland lifestyle.

As the Treasurer will outline in more detail later today, our government will deliver a budget that positions our state for that ongoing prosperity at the same time we continue to deliver for all Queenslanders in the crucial areas of health, housing, education and community safety.

Kindergarten

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.38 am): Ours is a government that stands beside the people of this state—in floods, in fires, in cyclones and in global pandemics. Because Queensland is strong and our economy is strong, it means that we can invest in our future and help families ease the cost of living and we can do both at the same time. That is why I am proud to announce today free kindy for every Queensland child.

From January 2024, all four-year-old Queensland children will have access to 15 hours of kindergarten a week for free. It applies to all families, whether they are in receipt of other government assistance or not. Every child in Queensland deserves the very, very best start in life, and that includes access to quality education. I really want to thank Minister Grace, who has been working tirelessly on this.

Dr Miles: A champion.


Ms PALASZCZUK: A champion for early childhood education for young children. This kindy announcement is testament to her passion for education, and she has worked closely with me and CBRC on this issue.

Ms Grace: Thank you, Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you. This measure alone will save the average Queensland family \$4,600 per year. That is \$4,600 that families no longer need to find—money that we know is desperately needed. This is an opportunity our children deserve. Free kindy is not a gift. It is an investment in keeping with Labor's core belief in the value of hard work and a good education. These are the golden tickets to a better future, and Labor believes they should be available to all.

Free kindy is not only valuable for the children who attend; it opens up more opportunities for more families to participate in more work, further helping household budgets. This is particularly true for women who bear the greatest burden of family care. With their children in kindy, mothers who want to return to work and careers can do so now sooner. This is obviously beneficial in a variety of ways, not least of which in addressing workplace shortages. Since raising the possibility of expanded free kindy, the government has received more than 6,300 messages of support. 'Free kindy would be a great investment in our future generation,' said one. 'As a one-income family, having free kindy would benefit us immensely,' said another. This is just a snapshot, and we will hear more from the Treasurer this afternoon.


Queensland Day; Queensland Greats

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.40 am): Last Tuesday we celebrated Queensland Day. On 6 June 1859, Queensland separated from New South Wales. It is an occasion marked with celebration in Queensland, including the announcement of the Queensland Greats Awards. Since 2001, 120 Queenslanders have been added to the list of Greats. They include names we know, like Bruce and Denise Morcombe and Steve Irwin. It also includes scores of names that are less well known but whose works enrich our communities in thousands of different ways.

This year's Greats are: Tony Fitzgerald; the creator of *Bluey*, Joe Brumm; 'The Pearl', Steve Renouf; world renowned musician and artist, William Barton; and passionate refugee advocate, Adele Rice. One of our state's biggest volunteer organisations, the Rural Fire Service, was also recognised for their heroic work, along with two posthumous awards. One was for Indigenous early childhood educator Honor Dell Cleary OAM. The other was for pioneering stem cell researcher Emeritus Professor Alan Mackay-Sim AM.

Each recipient says the same thing: despite their inspirational achievements, they are deeply humbled to be considered as worthy as the other nominees. They speak of the opportunities Queensland has given them and their great pride in being able to serve in whatever way to help their community. Plaques commemorating the Greats are displayed in the Roma Street Parklands. Soon, a QR code will give visitors the opportunity to learn more about the recipients and their stories. Nominations are now open for the 2024 Queensland Greats Awards. There is no shortage of Queenslanders doing great things, and I know everyone in this House can nominate someone they know so more of us can applaud their fabulous achievements.


K'gari

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.42 am): K'gari has been returned to its original name. This name has been used for more than 60,000 years. It is the name for the white spirit sent from the sky to make the land and the seas. It means paradise, and that is certainly what K'gari is. This decision came after many years of consultation with the traditional owners, the Butchulla people, as well as tourist operators and the Fraser Coast Regional Council. I am particularly proud that the vast majority of public submissions received on the name change are supportive of the name K'gari.

I will never forget the emotions of that day as the traditional owners reclaimed their connection to K'gari. The rain that came as the proclamation was made was, they said, the tears of their ancestors. What K'gari means to the traditional owners was perfectly summed up by the youngsters who were there—none more so than 10-year-old Gari, who I had the honour to meet on the ferry over and later at the ceremony. Gari spoke for all there, so beautifully spelling out the significance of the occasion, the emotion, the relief of the day and that the time had come.

This is another step on our path to treaty as truths are told and wrongs are righted. As the Uluru Statement from the Heart says, the celebration of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage leads to a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood. In K'gari's case, it will also offer tourists from around the world a richer experience, not to mention more economic and cultural opportunities for the Butchulla people and the Queensland community as a whole.

Biomedical Industry

 **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) (9.44 am): Mr Speaker, 25 years ago Queensland set out to become a world-leading biomedical hub. The strategy has evolved over time, but the vision has remained the same—to become a state where knowledge and innovation drive economic growth to improve prosperity and the quality of life for all Queenslanders. Now our biomedical sector is booming and is set to grow even further. It is already worth \$2.1 billion to our annual economy and it employs more than 12,000 people.

Last week I had the privilege of joining some of our greatest minds at the BIO International Convention. Queenslanders were out in force at BIO 2023, which attracted more than 14,000 industry figures from across the globe. Delegates from 50 companies, universities and research institutions joined me to talk up Queensland's success in biomedicine, setting our state up for the next 25 years of opportunity. Queensland is fast becoming a global research and innovation centre thanks to the Palaszczuk government's investment in state-of-the-art facilities, talent attraction and partnerships. We are home to more than 300 research centres, institutes, research hospitals and innovation precincts. Everyone who visits remarks on the collaboration between our universities, so it was little surprise that more people wanted to tap into our market.


Atlanta's Emory University, the University of Queensland and Sanofi announced plans to join forces to set up the Queensland-Emory vaccine centre, bringing together the best and brightest minds to accelerate the development of vaccines. Partnerships like these position Queensland to take a greater share in the world's multibillion dollar biomedical sector and build on investments the Palaszczuk government has made to grow this high-value industry.

I am pleased to advise the House today that Professor Ian Frazer, an industry leader in the biomedical field, will continue shaping our bright future in biomedicine as the Queensland government's new Biomedical Adviser and Chair of the Translational Science Hub Statement of Cooperation Steering Committee. Professor Frazer is recognised globally for his contribution to medical science, the most significant being the creation of Gardasil, the cervical cancer vaccine. Because the Gardasil vaccine was invented in Queensland and we were the first to embrace it, Queensland is projected to be the first place in the world to eliminate cervical cancer.

Professor Frazer's incredible work has led to thousands of lives saved, and I have no doubt his guidance in this area will mean more groundbreaking developments will come out of this great state. He will get straight to work chairing the steering committee overseeing the implementation of the statement of cooperation for Queensland's translational science hub. The Translational Science Hub Statement of Cooperation was signed by Sanofi, the Palaszczuk government, the University of Queensland and Griffith University in December, committing to work together to establish a world-first mRNA research centre here.

On behalf of the Palaszczuk government, I signed a statement of intent with Sanofi to further explore the manufacturing of vaccines here in Queensland. This would put Queensland at the forefront of vaccine development globally. It is this Palaszczuk government doing what good governments should do. We are investing in our experts and boosting intergenerational prosperity by building high-value industries, and the sky is the limit. We are not about to change course. We are going to keep building on this strong foundation. Only the Palaszczuk Labor government is sticking to the plan to deliver better lives for the next generation of Queenslanders.

Kindergarten

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.48 am): As the Premier has said, the budget is about delivering cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders. There is no better example of that than our historic announcement of free kindy for all Queensland families. We asked Queenslanders what they thought about free kindy. More than 6,500 responded to our survey, with 98 per cent saying it would help them and their families. We have listened and we have acted. From next year, every child of kindergarten age will receive 15 hours of kindergarten a week for 40 weeks—a total of 600 hours a year—free of charge, whether they are enrolled at a sessional kindergarten or a kindergarten program in a long day care centre. I am incredibly proud to be the education minister in a Palaszczuk Labor government that is bringing free kindy to Queensland.


This is an additional investment of \$645 million over the next four years, bringing our total investment in kindy to over \$2 billion over the next four years. This is a long-term reform that will provide lasting, positive results; it also provides immediate cost-of-living relief for families feeling the crunch, with savings of up to \$4,600 a year for thousands of families.

The announcement today builds on the back of the great success of Kindy for All that started earlier this year. Kindy for All has done a fantastic job in providing free kindy for around 14,000 families and children this year, but the investment today means that more than 50,000 additional children will be able to attend kindy for free from 2024 onwards. This includes around 8,000 kids who could be enrolled in kindy each year who are not. We want everyone to experience the great benefits of kindy, giving our kids a great start.

To support the increased numbers, we are also increasing the support available to the sector to provide a quality kindergarten program for all children, no matter their background, abilities or where they live in the state. We will increase the funds to attract and retain a quality workforce to \$120 million, with a portion specifically dedicated to getting staff to kindy services in regional and remote areas by providing benefits like relocation expenses and accommodation assistance. The successful Kindy Uplift program, which provides targeted resources and professional development to services where children are more likely to experience disadvantage, will receive a \$20 million boost to make a total of \$112 million over the next four years. The number of services benefiting will grow from currently 930 to 2,000 services. There is also an extra \$15 million boost to support children with disability and additional needs, taking the total to \$91 million.

This is a great Labor reform that will leave a legacy for years to come. It ticks all the boxes—good for children, good for families, and good for the economy, but particularly to support women to participate in the workforce. It is another way the Palaszczuk government is delivering on the things that matter to Queensland families.

Maternity Services

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.51 am): I have made it clear that one of my top priorities is ensuring all women in Queensland have access to high quality care close to home, no matter where they live. I am very pleased today to inform the House that the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service has reinstated its full birthing services at the Gladstone Hospital. I thank the hardworking staff at the Gladstone Hospital and acknowledge all of the women who campaigned for local birthing services in their community. I also want to acknowledge the member for Gladstone who has advocated tirelessly on this issue.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr Butcher interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Member for Gladstone!

Ms FENTIMAN: I also want to acknowledge the former health minister, the member for Redcliffe, who worked to reintroduce these services. On my first full day as health minister, I travelled to Gladstone—

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on a matter of privilege, something arising. I believe the member for Gladstone did an unparliamentary gesture towards the member for Callide.

Honourable members interjected.


Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I will hear the point of order in silence. Manager of Opposition Business, I was paying particular attention to the member. I did not see such a gesture. I think there is no point of order.

Ms FENTIMAN: On my first full day as Minister for Health, I travelled to Gladstone to meet with mothers impacted by the disruption of birthing services at the hospital. I particularly want to thank Jemma, Coco and Marlena for sharing their experiences with me and the member for Gladstone. Extensive work has been undertaken to recruit qualified medical professionals to cover vacancies, while also building a framework that will deliver safe and sustainable long-term solutions for maternity care right across Central Queensland. Following the recruitment of additional obstetrics and gynaecology specialists, all expectant mothers with moderate-risk pregnancies, being 37 weeks or more gestation, can give birth in their local community. I know this return of birthing services to Gladstone comes as a great relief for many expecting mums and their families.

Last week I was joined by the member for Cook to announce \$42 million to support rural maternity services. This funding will allow the expansion of outreach maternity services to help reduce the need for expecting mums to travel to larger centres. It will provide funding for the Flying Obstetrics and Gynaecology Service based out of Roma to continue its vital work. This funding is building on the learnings from the Rural Maternity Taskforce, addressing concerns raised in the Women's Health Workforce Forum by expecting mums and healthcare workers. We are putting money on the table to develop place-based solutions because what will work for Cooktown will be different to what works in Chinchilla.

I look forward to discussing these matters at our maternity round table on Friday. I am looking forward to being joined by the federal Minister for Health, Ged Kearney, to have this important discussion. The challenges being felt by maternity services across the state are not unique to Queensland, but I am excited about Queensland leading the conversation nationally about how we can strengthen maternity services.

Social and Affordable Housing


 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing) (9.55 am): Recently the member for Caloundra and I met with new mum Amelia who bravely shared her story. At 30 weeks pregnant with her soon-to-be son Luca, Amelia became homeless. She was able to receive emergency accommodation and keep a roof over her head during her pregnancy. I am pleased to say she has now found a new permanent place to call home in a new social housing development at Beerwah on the Sunshine Coast. She is one of the dozens of new residents at the 33-unit complex built by the Palaszczuk government and delivered alongside community housing provider Coast2Bay. With Luca, she now has a safe place to call home that is close to vital services, shops and transport.

People like Amelia are why this government has committed the largest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing in Queensland's history to help deliver 13,000 homes and why last week the Treasurer and I announced that this year's budget will build on that, including \$64 million of additional funding for emergency supported accommodation. The accommodation will provide immediate support for people and families experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It means a bed to sleep in, a place with a roof and wraparound support if you need it.

Across the country housing pressures are having an impact, including here in Queensland. That is why we are taking action with a record investment in new social and affordable homes and providing more immediate services to those who need it. It adds to other housing and homelessness supports the government currently provides, including rental grants, bond loans and headleases, and builds on the three former retirement villages we are turning into accommodation in Redlands, Toowoomba and Clayfield.

I have seen the power social housing and reform can have on people's lives. It is why I am proud to be a part of a Palaszczuk government that is for social housing, for helping Queenslanders rent or buy their home, and for helping each other out when we are at our most vulnerable. Today's budget is one that reflects our collective ambition, one that is focused on cost of living, health and housing for every Queenslander.

Police Service, Personnel

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (9.57 am): Welcome back, Mr Speaker. It is great to have you back. Despite the global headwinds impacting labour markets and the workforces of all industry sectors, Queensland Police continue to make solid progress in their recruitment efforts. That is no accident because the Queensland Police Service immediately recognised the challenges of the changed workforce conditions we now face and acted swiftly and innovatively to attract new recruits.


I can advise that the Queensland Police Service now has more than 1,200 recruit applications in the recruit pipeline. In a matter of weeks, there will be another graduation of new constables and yet another intake of recruits will enter the Oxley Police Academy. The Queensland Police Service advise that due to increased interest and a stronger applicant pipeline, they have now increased the expected number of recruits for that intake to 120. There will be further intakes of recruits at the Oxley academy in September and October. Across both academies, essentially every six weeks there will be a new intake of recruits to Queensland Police academies.

Police advise that there were nearly 500 new applications to join the Queensland Police Service in the month of May alone. I am also advised that, due to the efforts of the Queensland Police Service to recruit overseas police officers, significant progress has been made. Since the announcement of the federal Labor agreement with the Queensland Police Service for skilled police officers, more than 11,000 inquiries have been received from 21 countries. There are currently nearly 300 overseas applications being dealt with. To give an example, I advised that a superintendent of police from Alaska is currently applying to join the Queensland Police Service.

In the past fortnight, interviews with overseas applicants began. The majority of applicants are from the United Kingdom and South Africa, with the first training course for overseas recruits expected to begin at the Oxley academy in October. Additionally, further advertising campaigns are about to roll out and will target catch-up TV, the digital sphere and radio. The Queensland Police Service have determined that this where is their target audience are. I have heard firsthand that there are a lot of Victorian police and New Zealand police who are eyeing a move to the Sunshine State. Who could blame them, with the lure of a great lifestyle, nation-leading employee benefits and the chance to work for a truly world-class police service.

The Police Commissioner has advised that she is confident the Queensland Police Service will be able to recruit the record numbers in police growth that the government is funding—a great outcome in a very challenging global market. We are delivering record budgets, more police, more boots on the ground and more support for community safety. The Palaszczuk government will always deliver for the Queensland Police Service.

Path to Treaty; K'gari

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algerie—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (10.00 am): Welcome back, Mr Speaker. The Palaszczuk government is proudly on a Path to Treaty, with the Interim Truth and Treaty Body having conducted consultation sessions across the state for the past four months to help inform the next steps of Queensland's Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry and the establishment of the treaty institute. I look forward to updating the House further on this work in the coming weeks and months. Truth, treaty and voice are, of course, the three key interconnected pillars of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and to have Queensland's Path to Treaty bill passed with bipartisan support by this parliament last month was historic.


Last week saw another historic moment in Queensland with K'gari formally reinstated as the rightful name for the world's largest sand island. To coincide with the restoration of the name, more than 19 hectares of land was transferred to the Butchulla Aboriginal Corporation. I was pleased to join the Premier, ministers Stewart and Linard, along with the member for Hervey Bay and the hundreds of people who gathered to mark this truly historic day. This was a day that had been a long time coming but equally, a day that was always meant to be.

Last week, we joined together to speak the truth back into the land formerly known as 'Fraser Island'. It is a truth that has lived in the DNA of that place since time began; a truth that has been carried for thousands of generations by the Butchulla people; a truth that every visitor to beautiful K'gari has been breathing in, whether they knew it or not.

The reclaiming of its traditional name means that all of us can benefit from the reconciled truth of what that place has always been called—K'gari. We can all benefit from the strengthening of the Butchulla people through the rightful transfer of land. The taking of K'gari's name from her was an injustice of the past—a past in which lies were spread and a false story was told. A woman's story of mistreatment by the Butchulla people has since been debunked. The false story which was told by Eliza Fraser not only sealed the fate of K'gari's name but also the fate of the Butchulla people. These were the same people who gave Ms Fraser shelter. Last week we told the truth about the past and returned K'gari to her rightful name.

On the Path to Treaty, recognising Indigenous languages and names against the backdrop of the truth of our shared history—uncomfortable and confronting as it may be—demonstrates the Queensland government's commitment to reconciliation. Steps like this one mark important progress on our journey and help us to realise the benefits of truth-telling in Queensland. It was an honour to be a part of this special occasion on K'gari. I look forward to many more special occasions ahead of us on our Path to Treaty.

K'gari

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.03 am): I, too, joined with the Premier and some of my cabinet colleagues in being welcomed by the Butchulla people onto their country for the historic name restoration of K'gari. It was certainly a wonderful day, an amazing day and a very emotional day. Generations of Butchulla people came together at their sacred site to welcome K'gari back home. I thank the Butchulla people for their hospitality and for their patience and willingness to work with the Palaszczuk government to achieve this momentous outcome.


K'gari is the name of the white spirit who was sent down from the sky by the god Beeral to help his messenger Yindingie make the land and seas that are home to the Butchulla people. She is a female white spirit who is beautiful; she is the Butchulla people's mother. She provides food, water and shelter and in return, they protect and preserve her.

As the minister for resources, I had the pleasure of returning 19.5 hectares of land back to its traditional owners. The land comprises four parcels—two at Eurong and two near Maheno Beach. The Butchulla Native Title Aboriginal Corporation now hold this land as Aboriginal freehold land. This means that it can never be bought, sold or mortgaged and that it will be held forever for the benefit of the Butchulla people. Just like any other freehold, it is now private land for the use of the Butchulla people. As Butchulla elder Aunty Gayle said on K'gari last week, these blocks of land, linked to spiritual areas, will now be used to strengthen their traditional customs for generations to come.

There are few places in this world that are so peaceful and that have the breathtaking beauty that we see on K'gari. Although she looks good for her age, K'gari has certainly had a lot of help along the way. Professor James Shulmeister of K'gari's World Heritage Committee was recently quoted in an article as saying that 'the landscape you see is the actual result of 60,000 to 70,000 years of Indigenous occupation and Butchulla land management'. What we have today at K'gari is a direct result of the cultural obligations and land management practices of the Butchulla people and their ancestors. Who better to look after K'gari than the people who have cared for and maintained her for the last 60,000 years? We will continue to recognise and honour all First Nations communities, traditions, cultures and their continued connection to land and waters of this great state that we live in. It was an absolute privilege and pleasure to restore the rightful name of K'gari to the Butchulla people. It always was, and it always will be. I would like to present the parliament with the first official map of K'gari containing the first official name change. I table that.

Tabled paper: Map of K'gari [\[789\]](#).

Small Business, Grants

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (10.06 am): The Palaszczuk government champions small business. They are the heart and soul of our communities. By supporting small business we are growing good jobs, a strong economy and an unbeatable lifestyle. Last month, we reached a milestone in our support for small businesses—\$35 million in grants supporting more

than 5,800 Queensland businesses has been provided under the *Big plans for small business strategy 2021-23*. The three pillars are: Business Boost grants of up to \$15,000; Business Growth Fund grants of up to \$75,000; and our \$5,000 Business Basics grant. This will help small businesses grow and prosper and make it easy to do business in Queensland.

In last year's budget, funding for these three core small business grants was set in stone. The Business Boost Grants Program has helped 379 businesses to share in more than \$4.7 million so they can increase their productivity—businesses like the Vision Splendid Outbreak Film Festival in Winton, which received more than \$11,000 to create a new website that includes a ticketing platform and film directory with online streaming options.

In May, I announced \$5.8 million for 1,159 small businesses in the latest Business Basics round, taking the total grant funding allocated under this very popular grants program to almost \$27 million, which helped 5,379 businesses over the period. Hairdressers, tradies, personal trainers and accountants were among the latest recipients looking to build websites, develop marketing strategies and upskill staff in emerging industry trends to improve their business. It included Cairns Adventure Therapy in the electorate of Cairns, which will use its funding to access training and mentoring from two of Queensland's leading bush kindy providers and ultimately expand their bush kindy program.

A government member interjected.

Ms FARMER: I take that interjection. Our Business Growth Fund has supported 82 businesses with funding of over \$3.7 million. This means businesses like Weltrade Packaging in the electorate of Southport can buy specialised equipment to unlock growth potential. This company specialises in producing biodegradable and sustainable plastic packaging. They are using their grant to purchase an automated blowing and bagging machine to increase production.

We know that small business values what we do to help it because it tells us, like Brisbane business Hunter Model Management in the electorate of McConnel which received a grant in round 4. It said—


Thankyou so much ... this is going to do so much to propel my modelling agency forward. This will allow me to lean more into my business development and expand.

Imbil Family Day Care in Gympie said—

This will really help my business grow and become a very high quality of care and education for the children here and into the wider community.

We will continue to support small businesses to survive and thrive as we near the end of our three-year Big Plans for Small Business Strategy, which saw \$2.5 billion provided to small business through the COVID period. I am excited about the new small business strategy we are in the process of developing and for which we have already received outstanding input in record numbers in our survey of small businesses across the state through my Small Business Advisory Council and key small business stakeholders and others in terms of how small businesses can be part of the 2032 Olympics and other key government initiatives like the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. These are all on the table. We will help small businesses around the state be their absolute best and we will drive our economy forward.

Transport Infrastructure; Koala Protection

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (10.10 am): Welcome back, Mr Speaker. It is great to have you back. The Palaszczuk government is making the most significant investment in transport infrastructure in our state's history with \$13 billion for our Bruce Highway Upgrade Program, the \$2.16 billion Coomera Connector built by us and the \$298 million Centenary Bridge upgrade, as well as billions going into the M1. We are delivering the services that Queenslanders deserve in the transport and main roads space. One of the great success stories for our government has been the balance we have been able to achieve as our road network and transport footprint continue to expand. We are building a balanced transport network that tackles the rapid population growth while also protecting our landscape and environment.

On the Gold Coast construction is right now underway on the northern section of the Coomera Connector stage 1. It was the Palaszczuk government that unblocked this project, secured the corridor in the three years to 2019 and has committed the billions in funding to make the second M1 a reality.

We have also made an historic purchase of 400 hectares of land—which to give members a sense, that is 140 hectares larger than Toohey Forest on Brisbane's south side—for koala habitat. The area called Greenridge near Pimpama is where we are relocating the often fractured and at-risk local

koala populations that live adjacent to what will become the second M1. In doing this we have worked with local koala conservation groups to give fresh hope to a koala population that was in terminal decline from urban development. Wildlife fencing has been installed along the length of the new motorway corridor to protect native wildlife from construction activities.

Last week I was in Tallebudgera on the southern Gold Coast at the Tallebudgera Connection Road, which is a state controlled road.

It was very good to meet with the locals; I enjoyed it immensely. This area, sadly, has a poor track record of fatal and traumatic vehicle strikes for koalas. That is why I was joined by staff from the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, Wildcare Australia and some of our TMR Gold Coast staff to announce a new koala trial zone on Tallebudgera Connection Road.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh and member for Coomera!

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, people do not seem to support the protection of koalas. It is very sad.


Opposition members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: I would have thought bipartisan support would have been a lay-down misère on this, but nonetheless. We are introducing a 50-kilometre-an-hour speed limit from 6 pm to 6 am every day in a trial during the most active time for local animal movements. We are also installing signage along the entire stretch of the road to warn motorists about the koalas that are in the area. TMR will be monitoring vehicle speeds and we are aiming to see a reduction in the number of koala deaths and strikes along our road. I want to thank Tracey and Joanne, two of the local residents who joined in with the announcement, who do so much to protect and support local koalas and their habitat.

It is disappointing to see that the Brisbane City Council has failed to do the same along Boundary Road at Whites Hill. In March 2021 I wrote to the council to outline the process for a speed limit review on the road. At the time council's engineer conducting its 2020 review had not taken wildlife into consideration and recommended retaining the 70-kilometre-an-hour speed limit. It has now been more than two years and the number of cars on Boundary Road has continued to grow and the strikes of local koalas has, sadly, continued. I urge the Brisbane City Council to undertake its speed review and include wildlife in the brief, which it should have done in the first place in 2020. It must do everything it can to protect the local koala populations that live in the vicinity of Boundary Road at Whites Hill. I am pleased to say that the Palaszczuk government is acting to protect one of our most treasured animals along the Tallebudgera Connection Road, because we take our obligations in that regard very seriously.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner, Report

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (10.15 am): I lay upon the table of the House the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner's report titled *Report on the results of the inspection of the records of the Crime and Corruption Commission pursuant to section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000*, dated May 2023.


Tabled paper: Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner: Report on the results of the inspection of the records of the Crime and Corruption Commission pursuant to section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, May 2023 [\[790\]](#).

The report concludes that during the period covered by this inspection the Crime and Corruption Commission and law enforcement officers of the Crime and Corruption Commission complied with the provisions of chapter 13 of the PPRA in all respects. The committee received the Parliamentary Commissioner's report on 8 May 2023 and it is being tabled within 14 sitting days of receipt as required.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.15 am.

Youth Crime

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.16 am): My question is to the Premier. It has been almost six months since the government announced yet another crackdown on youth crime. In the past two weeks alone Queenslanders have been threatened in their homes, in their businesses and on the roads. Will the Premier admit that her latest changes are not keeping Queenslanders safe?

Ms PALASZCZUK: What I say to the Leader of the Opposition is that those opposite voted for the laws. They voted for the exact same laws that are out there in the community at the moment. There are no further announcements from the opposition. It voted for the laws. Today there will be some further funding that will be additional—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr Crandon interjected.

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

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

Mr CRANDON: I withdraw.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The laws that were passed include increased penalties. The opposition voted for them. We talk—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango!

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to wait until those opposite are finished.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms PALASZCZUK: Later today when the Treasurer hands down the budget there will be additional programs tackling issues after we have personally visited communities and they have asked us to do some more. As we know, these laws were passed with the opposition and these laws will take effect. There are tougher penalties for stealing cars and other more severe penalties. We also have money for the fast-tracked sentencing program. We have committed to two new youth detention facilities aimed at being therapeutic to get these people to break the cycle of crime. We have an assistant commissioner of police who is also charged with looking at these serious issues across the state. Let me say once again, and I will keep repeating it in this House: the laws that were passed were voted on by those in the opposition as well.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Southport, I ask you to please resume your seat or leave the chamber. You cannot loiter.

Maternity Services

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. Does the Premier acknowledge Gladstone maternity services being on bypass for 339 days is a service delivery failure of her government; and with Biloela, Chinchilla, Weipa and Cooktown still on bypass, can the Premier promise no other maternity services will be lost under the Palaszczuk government?

Ms PALASZCZUK: There is a lot of opinion there, but let me address some of the substance of the question. We have announced over \$40 million to increase maternity services in rural areas.

Mr Head interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In fact, the minister is convening a round table on Friday and I will be attending with the minister because this is about listening and responding.

Mr Head interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: Let me make it very clear to those opposite that we are also putting in place incentives to attract more people to our rural and remote areas of this state. With over 140 hospitals and being a decentralised—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You are so rude!

Mr Bleijie: There will be a task force. So arrogant.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, you are just rude.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members. Members to my right. One person has the call and that is the Premier. Premier, please continue.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As the health minister has announced, \$42 million over the next four years to expand rural and regional birthing services. There is an expansion of outreach.

Mrs Frecklington: You spent eight years shutting them down.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango.

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

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. What would the Premier have found offensive in her government shutting down maternity services?

Mr SPEAKER: Could I ask the member for Nanango whether you said the word 'you': if it was directed personally? If it was not then I accept that.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My recollection is that I did not.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I clearly heard 'you' and I will be writing to you.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! As you know, personally directed interjections are not tolerated in this chamber and I certainly will not accept those. However, there is a royal 'we' and a collective 'you'. I will accept the member for Nanango's rising to a point of order.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I will write to you on that matter. As we also know, every year thousands of babies are born in Queensland hospitals and we want them to be delivered safely.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, member for Kawana.

Ms PALASZCZUK: As we know, when it comes to providing these services it is not just about having one obstetrician; you need to have three. Then you need to have all of the staff around that to ensure—

Mr Crisafulli: Weipa!

Mr McDonald: Biloela. Chinchilla.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition and other members, I do not need a lesson in geography. I do not want names shouted out randomly.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is about making sure that these services and the people are there so the services can run effectively and safely. Let me say this very clearly: on this side of the House we do not sack midwives like those opposite did. We do not sack nurses like they did. We do not decimate regional and rural communities by ripping the health services and the health workers out of there. Today I am so looking forward to the Treasurer handing down the budget for the biggest health spend in this state's history. There is not long to go—just a few hours—and those opposite will understand how much we appreciate the people of this state and how we are responding to the issues that Queenslanders hold dear.

Mr SPEAKER: I always look forward to a good budget.

Cost of Living

Mr HUNT: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. What action is the Palaszczuk government taking to help Queenslanders with the national cost-of-living pressures and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As we know, Queensland households are facing tough pressures, even when it comes to going down to the local grocery store and seeing the grocery bill increasing and also the payment of different bills. On this side of the House we have always realised that one of the best ways we can provide relief to people is through their electricity bill. We have done that progressively over the years. Because Queenslanders own the assets, we are able to give those dividends back to the public.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member for Nanango may talk, but when she was in government they went up 43 per cent.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We will continue to provide cost-of-living relief to Queenslanders.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am very pleased today that we are able to announce free kindy. This means so much to the families out there. In terms of our public engagement, over 6,000 people have actually responded to us to talk about whether or not they wanted to see free kindy. This means so much because a lot of the times people from disadvantaged backgrounds cannot get their children to kindy and that means they start prep at a disadvantage from others. In fact, they are going into a cohort of prep classes where you actually have two cohorts, which is not fair. What we are trying to do is level the playing field and give every child access to free kindy in this state—15 hours per week—to ensure that this measure will work and give them the best start.

We know that those opposite do not believe in any new policies and they do not believe in cost-of-living relief because it was under their watch that prices went up. Electricity bills went up. Water bills went up. What we know today is that the Treasurer and every member of this cabinet and government has been focused on listening to Queenslanders and providing cost-of-living relief. There are many concessions available to people and we want to make sure that people know about them and know how to access them. Finally, there will be something special for pensioners. The Treasurer is very focused on making sure that our seniors in our community do not feel the burden of those cost-of-living pressures. This afternoon the big focus is on cost of living. We will deliver for Queenslanders because we are listening and we care about the people in this state.

Townsville Hospital, Audiology Review

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister commit to releasing the terms of reference of the Townsville Hospital audiology review and the full findings of the review when complete?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. Firstly, I extend my thoughts to Townsville families who have been involved in audiological testing at the Townsville Hospital and Health Service and I appreciate that it would be a very stressful time for families who are having their young ones retested. I am advised that the preliminary testing and auditing of the children conducted by expert audiologists from Children's Health Queensland and Cochlear Australia has been completed and the hospital is in the process of contacting families but also retesting some children where required. That has to take place first. We have to be working with the families who are directly affected before there is any public report around the testing, but once that has been done and once families are okay with us releasing a report I have said I am very happy to give a public update about that testing. I think that it is important to first work with the families. We will work directly with the families and I give a commitment to absolutely provide a public report on the outcomes, but at this point in time the most important thing is working with the families and those kids.

Health and Hospitals Plan

Mr WALKER: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Can the Premier update the House on how the Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan will improve services across Queensland and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Mundingburra for the question. Recently the member for Mundingburra joined me and the Minister for Health as well as the other Townsville MPs at the Townsville Hospital where we announced the tender for the \$530 million expansion. Members would be aware that in our last budget we handed down the biggest hospital spend that this state has ever seen—over \$9 billion—including brand new hospitals, a new cancer centre and upgrades to regional hospitals. Now we are seeing the tenders awarded for significant hospital expansions across this state. It was wonderful to also join the members and the minister as we went through the paediatric ward, meeting the families and the staff. I put on the public record how much I appreciate what the staff do in our hospitals each and every day: the doctors, the nurses, the admin assistants, the orderlies—every person who is involved in our hospitals—and even the volunteers, who are there to make sure that people feel welcome in our hospitals.

Those opposite want to continue to talk down our system. On this side I will always back our frontline health workers and I will back our system because they try their hardest each and every day. What we saw very clearly there is that people, children and families were being flown from all around

the far north into that hospital to receive the best possible care. That is what health care is about; it is about delivering those services, whether people are from Mornington Island or Cloncurry—or we even had a young girl from one of the Torres Strait Islands; it was the member for Cook's niece, who had broken her leg. What we know is that by delivering these services across Queensland, people are brought to a central hub with the best possible care. I will tell honourable members that there were no families complaining about the service. They were actually congratulating the staff on the great services they were providing.

There is a very clear difference between this side of the House and that side of the House. We back our workers. We will support them. We will increase our frontline health staff. On that side they will always look towards sacking staff, which has a detrimental effect on rural and regional communities. This morning I heard some negativity coming from those opposite. Perhaps they should speak to some of the mayors out there. The mayors will sit down and tell them how many doctors, nurses and allied health staff were sacked in their communities, which actually made people leave their communities.

(Time expired)

Health System, Data Reporting

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the health minister. Reports reveal the Mackay HHS has been placed on code yellow 14 times between February and May. Will the minister commit to releasing the number of times and for how long each Queensland Health hospital goes on tier 2 and 3 emergency per quarter rather than bundled in HHS numbers?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. I have been very clear that I have asked Queensland Health to look at how we can better release this information as part of our quarterly data. I want to make sure Queenslanders absolutely know the health of their hospital system; it is incredibly important, and we have been incredibly clear about how important it is to be transparent with our hospital and health system. We release hundreds and hundreds of points of data every quarter for every health and hospital system in this state. We also work very closely with consumers on the MyHospitals website. I am absolutely committed to looking at what more we can do to release this regularly as part of our quarterly performance data. I have asked the department to look at how we can report that.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Ms FENTIMAN: I will tell honourable members what does not help with code yellows or hospitals under pressure and that is sacking the staff, which is what those opposite did during their entire time in government. I can tell them what makes it harder to get people off the stretchers is when there are fewer ambulances on the street, because the LNP went to the election in 2020 with a plan to have 155 fewer ambulance officers. What do they think that does for ambulance ramping?

As I have travelled the length and breadth of Queensland in the last few weeks, I have met some incredible nurses, midwives and doctors and they have told me they are doing everything they can to get patients moving through our hospitals and they appreciate our huge capital investment in the beds that are coming—huge expansions. We stood at the Townsville Hospital—and the Premier was just talking about it—to announce the biggest expansion to the Townsville Hospital since it opened. It will literally change the skyline of Townsville. That is how big this expansion is, and it is not just Townsville. We have expansions across many hospitals; we have our satellite hospitals; and we even have three new hospitals including at Bundaberg and Coomera.

I absolutely understand that our hospitals are under pressure, but our staff are working hard every single day. All of our category 1 patients are being seen within the recommended time frames; 100 per cent of category 1 patients are being seen within the two minutes of the clinically recommended time frame. I will commit to making sure we present data and have transparency around our hospital systems, but backing the staff and not calling them duds is the way to do that.

(Time expired)

Ms Bates interjected.

Ms Pease interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Mudgeeraba and the member for Lytton are both warned under the standing orders for quarrelling across the chamber.

Cost of Living

Mr SULLIVAN: My question is of the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure. Could the Deputy Premier advise the House how the Palaszczuk government will provide cost-of-living relief through the budget, and are there any other approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Stafford for his question. I know he is pleased to be a member of the Palaszczuk government, proudly delivering measures in our budget that will address the cost of living for residents in Stafford and, indeed, right around the state. It is an important acknowledgement of the global inflationary pressures that the world is experiencing right now and how that is having an impact on Queensland's households.

We are only able to deliver these cost-of-living measures in the budget because of the strength of our economy and the strength of our revenue streams. That is what will allow the Treasurer, in the budget to be brought down later today, to outline a range of measures to address cost of living. They are the result of deliberate decisions this government has made—decisions that have delivered a strong economy and strong economic growth and strong jobs growth; decisions that have ensured that Queenslanders receive a fair share of the revenue from the resources that Queenslanders own; and the decision to retain ownership of our assets, in particular our energy assets, which allows us to deliver a dividend back to Queenslanders who are, after all, the shareholders of those assets. Thanks to those deliberate decisions by the Palaszczuk government, we are able to make deliberate decisions to address the cost of living—decisions like making kindy free for all Queensland kids.

This is a fantastic cost-of-living measure, saving those households \$4,600 every year, but it is also an investment in the future of our state, an investment in the wellbeing and the prosperity of young Queenslanders going into the future. It is one of a range of cost-of-living measures that also invests in a better future for Queenslanders like more social and affordable housing for our lowest income households.

The Palaszczuk government has a proud record of addressing cost of living while the only plan we have heard from those opposite, the only plan from the LNP to address cost of living, is to ask pensioners to donate to their own political party. How disgusting is that? Thirty-five days later and that is their only plan. They are so obsessed with fundraising that they are targeting pensioners with a scam, telling them if they donate to the LNP it will somehow save on their cost of living. On this side of the House we have a real plan that will deliver cost-of-living savings.

Bundaberg Hospital

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question is to the Minister for Health. At the 2020 election, the government promised the people of Bundaberg a level 5 hospital. The government has since walked away from that commitment. Will the minister reverse the Palaszczuk Labor government decision and stick to the promise made by the now member for Bundaberg for a level 5 hospital?

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. In asking a question the member should have to verify the facts that they are putting forward. They should authenticate those facts.

Dr Miles interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Premier will put his interjections through the chair or cease them. I will first deal with the point of order from the Leader of the House.

Mr Mander interjected.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Everton is warned under the standing orders and the other member who interjected. I am taking advice and I will do that in silence. Member for Nanango, are you able to authenticate that in terms of the promise that was made and that the government has not actually delivered upon that?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Yes, I can. I am happy to table from the member for Bundaberg, Tom Smith, a Facebook post of 26 August 2020 where he commits to delivering a new level 5 hospital.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 26 August 2020, from the Facebook page of the member for Bundaberg, Mr Tom Smith MP, regarding Bundaberg health services [791].

Mr SPEAKER: Has there been a repudiation of that though?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Speaker, it is public knowledge that the Palaszczuk Labor government is not building a level 5 hospital.

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

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the minister, I will take the point of order from the member for Bundaberg and then I will address the matter.

Mr SMITH: A level 5 hospital is the slang term for 'level 5 services'—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member is not—

Mr SMITH:—they are absolutely being delivered.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Bundaberg, it is not an opportunity to debate the matter. If you have a point of order related to the question, I will hear it. Otherwise, I will ask you to resume your seat. In terms of the question that has been asked, there has been, at least for half of the question, authentication. I will allow the minister to answer the question in the manner in which she sees fit.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Ms FENTIMAN: It was wonderful to visit the Bundaberg Hospital with the member for Bundaberg, who is a wonderful local member who won a hard-fought victory in Bundaberg because the Labor government promised a new hospital for Bundaberg. What did the member for Nanango, as the leader of the LNP at the last election, promise the people of Bundaberg? What did they promise? They certainly did not promise a new hospital. It is the Palaszczuk Labor government that is delivering a brand new hospital with the brand new local member. Can I say that, from talking to the hardworking staff and meeting some of the patients, I know that they are very excited about the brand new hospital that we are delivering in Bundaberg.

It shows their hypocrisy when, of all people on that side, it is the member for Nanango who asks a question and quarrels about the kind of hospital we are delivering. During the election campaign the member for Nanango travelled to Bundaberg and still decided that she was not going to promise one extra dollar towards a new hospital. In fact, she did not support our delivery of a new hospital that, as the member for Bundaberg has said, will be delivering level 5 services for the growing community of Bundaberg.

Ms Bates interjected.

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

Whereupon the honourable member for Mudgeeraba withdrew from the chamber at 10.44 am.

Ms FENTIMAN: It is not just a building that creates a hospital; it is the people who care for Queenslanders when they need it most. We are not only delivering the infrastructure but also working hard to deliver the people who care about Queenslanders in their time of need. That is why our workforce attraction incentives are putting \$70,000 on the table for staff to come from interstate or overseas to work in wonderful communities such as Bundaberg. We know it is not just about a building; it is about the nurses, the midwives, the doctors, the allied health professionals, the wardies, the cleaners—

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under relevance, standing order 118(b). I appreciate that you have given the minister some latitude, but the question was specifically about a level 5 hospital and not level 5 services.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, there is no point of order. I have given the minister latitude and the fact that I allowed the question is a result of that.

Ms FENTIMAN: As I was saying, it is not just about the beautiful new building that we will be delivering; it is about bringing the best and brightest medical workforce from around the globe to regional Queensland because we back our staff in regional Queensland. We do not call them duds. We value them. I have to say that in the past few weeks I have travelled across our health and hospital services and staff have said how much they appreciate me saying 'thank you' and our local members showing up and saying 'thank you'. They feel appreciated.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

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

Ms FENTIMAN: They care for us and we care for them.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the next questioner, I suggest to all members that when questions are asked in this House that contain alleged facts you must be in a position to authenticate each fact. That is a general warning and caution to all members of the House.

Kindergarten

Ms LAUGA: My question is to the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister update the House on how free kindy will support families, especially women, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Keppel for the question. I know that she well and truly appreciates kindy. Her little girl attended kindy and she understands the benefits that come from kindy.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has a really strong record in supporting families and our plan to make kindy free is another example of that. Last month we asked Queenslanders whether free kindy would help them and we have listened. The feedback was extraordinary. There were over 6,500 responses to our survey, 98 per cent of which were very supportive. There are always those who have alternative things to say, but all the responses were absolutely wonderful. We have listened and we are about to embark upon free kindy in the state.

The important part about this is that we know how important early education is for children. We know that it makes a big difference. The Premier, the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier, other members in this place and I visit schools all over Queensland very regularly. Teachers tell us they know that there is a difference between a child who has attended kindy and a child who has not. We want to make sure that every child in the state will get that chance.

The new policy builds on the kindy reforms we have already introduced, which saw 14,000 families access free kindy. That has meant a big turnaround for women in the workforce. Women can now take on additional part-time hours. It has alleviated the cost of the days when their children are in kindy as part of long day care or sessional care. It has really turned around the way people can balance their family budget by taking on additional days because their earnings are not going to be eaten up by paying for 15 hours of kindy for their child. It is an incredible system that will benefit an additional 50,000 families.

I call on every member in this place—members from all sides—to identify those families that can take advantage of this program. Working with our local community organisations, identifying those children who can benefit from this free kindy, let us identify those 8,000 children who are not in kindy yet and get them into free kindy, because this is what it is all about. This is what Labor governments do.

In eight years we have heard of absolutely no alternative policies from those opposite. They talk about eight years in opposition and about our eight years in government. I will put our record against those opposite any day of the week. The ideas, plans and the 'stuff' coming from this side of the House absolutely shadows those opposite who have no plans, but I bet anything that they will claim credit for it.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, you are on a warning. You can leave the chamber for one hour.

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Coomera, you are on a warning. There is no debating the issue.

Whereupon the honourable member for Coomera withdrew from the chamber at 10.50 am.

Health Workforce

Dr ROWAN: My question is to the Minister for Health. Over two months ago the opposition revealed a report of the Cairns Hospital Mental Health Unit which found a culture of very high levels of workplace bullying and violence where unqualified staff are forced to perform tasks they have not been trained to do. What actions has the health minister undertaken to improve workforce recruitment and workplace culture at Queensland Health?

Dr Miles: Just come in here and attack the staff.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, Deputy Premier!

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. I have of course met with the chief executive and we have discussed these issues. There is an enormous amount of work underway with the staff to ensure they do feel supported. As the member well knows, it is incredibly difficult work, particularly working in mental health. I can report that unions and staff are feeling as though they have been supported since that independent review, which is very positive. Clearly we know, particularly coming out of COVID and as I meet with staff—and I know as the member would well know—that in a lot of places staff are feeling burnt out. They are working incredibly hard. They worked incredibly hard during COVID to keep us safe.

Unfortunately, a lot of staff right across the globe—not just here in Queensland—have decided to leave. That is putting incredible pressure on our frontline staff. It means in particular that a lot is falling to more experienced staff to do more training for new staff coming through, but that is why we have to do everything we can to get more clinicians into our hospitals and why we have our workforce incentive scheme in place. We not only want to attract wonderful clinicians down here in the south-east to consider an opportunity in regional Queensland; we want people from outside of Queensland to come and work in our wonderful hospitals.

Of course, it was wonderful to be with the Treasurer in Mackay to also talk about how we are encouraging young people doing nursing and midwifery placements who have to travel more than 100 kilometres from their home to have a cost-of-living allowance, because it can be incredibly tough. They must do a placement in their final year of study and they do need support to pay for accommodation, fuel and food. If we can support the next generation of nurses and midwives who will be caring for us, I know that they will feel much more supported and welcomed. Do you know the best thing about this scheme? We want them to do a placement in regional Queensland because of the number of staff I meet travelling across Queensland who say, 'I came here for a placement 20 years ago and I never left regional Queensland.' They absolutely love the lifestyle and the communities in which they have travelled.

If we can do more to encourage our training and placements for our medical workforce in regional Queensland—if we can do more to attract more workers—that will take the pressure off because we know they are working hard. I acknowledge not just our doctors, nurses and midwives but also our cleaners and kitchen staff. The people who really make people well and get out of hospital are the people who cook them food every day. There are so many people who work in our hospitals. We thank each and every one of them for the work they do to care for Queenslanders when they need it most.

Health Workforce

Mr KELLY: My question is of the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women. Can the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's track record of backing our frontline health workers, including in terms of the budget being handed down today, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question as, again, he well knows just how hard our frontline staff work each and every day. I thank him for his work as a nurse before he came to this place. The member is quite right: the Palaszczuk government has a long and proud track record of backing in our frontline health workers. Nurses, midwives, paramedics and doctors are our health heroes who have committed their lives to supporting us, so we commit to supporting them. That is why last week we announced a \$22 million package to support our nursing and midwifery students and it is why since 2015 we have hired well over 11,000 more nurses. It has been a real privilege to get to meet so many of these staff and to hear firsthand from them about what more we can do to support their work.

Unfortunately, it would seem that not everyone is as excited about the new Queensland health minister meeting Queensland's health workforce. The member for Mudgeeraba has apparently been very unimpressed with my hospital visits where I keep Queenslanders up to date in terms of the staff that I meet and the conversations that she has complaining about the photos as I travel around Queensland, because God forbid we should celebrate the work of our frontline workers! I make no apologies for meeting with our staff. I am quite proud to celebrate the work that they do. If I were the member for Mudgeeraba, I do not think I would be pointing out anyone else's social media videos, because less than two months ago the member for Mudgeeraba posted on social media a photo of herself dressed up in RN scrubs on the floor of a hospital with other nurses.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member. Will you table that?

Ms FENTIMAN: I table that.

Tabled paper: Photographs depicting the member for Mudgeeraba, Ms Ros Bates MP, in scrubs [\[792\]](#).

This is despite the fact that the board of Ahpra placed restrictions on the member for Mudgeeraba's registration—years ago. Ahpra made it very clear that, while the member for Mudgeeraba could practice in areas like training or administration, she cannot undertake any clinical roles. I want to be very clear that I am not suggesting that the member for Mudgeeraba has breached her restrictions, but I think the member for Mudgeeraba needs to be very careful about the images she portrays on her social media, because presenting oneself as a nurse who can perform clinical work in scrubs—with clearly 'MP RN' specially printed scrubs—is verging on being very misleading. Shame on the member for Mudgeeraba.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I will wait for the House to come to order.

Central Queensland, Hospitals

Mr MICKELBERG: My question is to the Minister for Health. It has been nearly three years since the government promised a cardiac theatre, renal dialysis chairs and mental health beds for Rockhampton and Yeppoon hospitals. In what year will the first Central Queensland resident start to use these facilities?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question, because I am very happy to update the House on all of the work that is happening across Central Queensland. I did see a very misleading press release a couple of weeks ago from the Leader of the Opposition which tried to scare the good people of Rockhampton that somehow the government is axing projects that it promised; well, far from it. I am very happy to give an update to the House. I make an offer: if the Leader of the Opposition ever wants a briefing or an update on any health projects, I am more than happy to sit down with him and give him the facts, instead of him putting out press releases with incorrect information.

I am very pleased to report to the member for Buderim that all of these projects are underway and will be delivered. I can assure members of Central Queensland that a lot of detailed work and planning is underway on these projects. I am very happy to work with the members for Rockhampton and Keppel—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will cease his interjections.

Ms FENTIMAN: I will be travelling up there shortly to provide a wonderful update for the community on these projects. I would urge the members—

Mr Powell interjected.

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

Ms FENTIMAN: I would urge residents of Central Queensland to be very wary of anything the Leader of the Opposition has to say about health projects in Central Queensland because how many projects did the LNP promise Central Queensland at the last election? It is very easy to go around putting out press releases with wrong information trying to scare people when in fact your own track record was that you were not delivering one project in Central Queensland.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, direct your comments through the chair.

Ms FENTIMAN: It is the same—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders. I have given you a fairly wide berth today.

Ms FENTIMAN: As I said, I will be up there very soon and I look forward to standing with the member for Rockhampton and the member for Keppel to announce more information on these wonderful projects, but I can reassure the community that planning is well underway and they will be delivered this term of government.

Social Housing

Ms BUSH: My question is to the Minister for Housing. Can the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is increasing social housing options in Brisbane?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for Cooper for the question. I know she is a big advocate for our big social housing build, where we are delivering more homes for more Queenslanders. In fact, it is the largest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing in Queensland's history. While we

build we are also providing other supports for people in Brisbane and all throughout Queensland. Last financial year we provided over 200,000 forms of support for Queenslanders—housing but also things like rental grants and bond loans; things that allow people to maintain private tenancies. We are also leasing a number of properties in the private market to increase our housing stock.

Members can imagine my surprise when I heard those opposite suggesting that they do not support this policy of headleasing properties for vulnerable Queenslanders. They do not support a policy that is currently housing over 2,000 individuals and families. These are people like Michael who is a single dad who applied for hundreds of new rentals but because his income was not high enough he became homeless. Thanks to our government's investment in headleasing, he and his children, Zane and Ashleigh, now have a safe place to call home close to their school.

Is the opposition's policy that we should just tell those families, 'We are not going to help you,' and just leave them to the private market? That is effectively what those opposite are saying when they do not support this particular policy. All we have heard from the Liberal National Party is complaining with no actual suggestions.

I am not talking about suggestions like the Canva graphics we have seen with just slogans. I should mention that we are addressing the very things that they are suggesting in the slogans. They talk about increasing housing supply and working with local governments. Our Catalyst Infrastructure Fund and our Growth Acceleration Fund are working with local governments to unlock more supply.

Their second slogan is 'Empowering the community housing sector'. There has never been more money available to the community housing sector than now, and there could be more if Peter Dutton and the LNP would stop blocking federal government funding. The third slogan is 'Building government social housing'. If this is a priority I am not sure why they would appoint the former Newman government housing minister because his track record was delivering less social housing. In fact, he cut the social housing construction program by 90 per cent.

We know that they will cut again. They have already said they have \$10 billion worth of cuts. I call on the Leader of the Opposition in his budget reply speech on Thursday to be honest about whether or not he will cut funding from the social housing budget like they did last time.

Fishing Industry

Mr DAMETTO: My question is to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities. Last week the state and federal government announced the death of commercial gillnet fishing in Queensland by mid-2027 and that compensation would be paid to licence holders. Will the minister advise the dollar figure licence holders should expect and whether fishers who lease a licence and businesses affected by wild caught product will also be remunerated?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for his question. No doubt many people in this House, if not the broader community, would be aware of the UNESCO decision that was handed down last year. A lot of that report has been ventilated in the community. In fact, when we were in Cairns for our parliamentary sittings we engaged with a number of fishers in terms of the effects of this report. We are working with the Commonwealth and the state environment minister, and we will continue that consultation, to make sure the settings are right in terms of delivering what is expected out of that report.

There are two recommendations in that report that will affect fishers. No doubt the member would be aware of those recommendations and their effect on gillnet fishing. We will no doubt deal with those recommendations in cabinet and through CBRC to deliver support for those fisheries. One thing this government has done time after time again since being elected is ensure we have a sustainable fisheries sector. Without a sustainable fisheries sector our children and grandchildren would go without the opportunity to have fresh wild caught seafood on their tables and would not have the good jobs in Queensland that the sector provides. I will not rest and neither will the Palaszczuk government in ensuring—

Mr DAMETTO: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Could I bring the minister back to the question which was in regard to remuneration and compensation?

Mr SPEAKER: Member, the minister has 1½ minutes remaining and I expect that the minister will round out his answer to try to provide some clarity in terms of your question.

Mr FURNER: The report recommended that the Great Barrier Reef be ascribed to the List of World Heritage in Danger. It identified 10 priority areas. As I said earlier, two of those will affect fisheries. One area identified is the phasing out of large mesh or gillnet fishing—N2 and N4. We will continue our engagement with those fishers.

Today the member requested a briefing from my office in respect of this. It would be beneficial for the member to make sure he absorbs the information he was provided with today in that briefing to make sure he is fully abreast of what is ahead of us. I also encourage any other member in this House who has an interest in fisheries to contact to my office and receive a briefing. My office will make sure members receive a fulsome briefing with regard to what will be beneficial in terms of not only the sustainability of the fisheries sector but also the effect on fisheries in their electorates.

We will continue supporting the fisheries sector as we always have done. We will not be cutting the number of fisheries jobs as the Newman government did. Some 25 per cent of the fisheries sector was cut. It was cut to the bone so it could not ensure the sustainable future of the sector. We will continue supporting fisheries in this state.

(Time expired)

Water Safety

Ms McMILLAN: My question is of the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement. Can the minister explain how the Palaszczuk government is supporting families to help ease cost-of-living pressures in the very important area of water safety for their children?

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I thank the member for Mansfield for the question. I know the member is out and about in her community talking to people on the ground about the issues that matter in this state. The member is right: water safety for our children is essential. We want to ensure that it is not dropped by families who are battling to make ends meet in an environment where cost-of-living pressures across the globe and nationally are causing belts to be tightened in families.

The Palaszczuk government announced prior to the today's budget that we will be expanding the FairPlay voucher program to include learn-to-swim lessons for zero- to four-year-olds. It is called SwimStart, and it will see more than 30,000 vouchers made available to low-income families, valued up to \$150 each, to help cover the cost of learn-to-swim classes. That is up 30 per cent. That is up to 30,000 preschoolers who might have otherwise missed out due to the cost of lessons.

Mr Nicholls interjected.

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

Mr HINCHLIFFE: This important budget measure will cost some \$4.8 million over two years and will deliver far-reaching benefits as kids build confidence in the water and develop active lifestyle habits early on. The learn-to-swim classes can be provided by private operators or not-for-profit clubs as they are registered as activity providers. So far we have significant interest from swim schools across the state all very eager to sign up. That is good news for that preschool group.

For children older than four, swimming lessons and water education programs continue to be available through Queensland state schools from prep through to year 6. It is also important to remember that FairPlay still caters for older kids who are wanting to be in that swimming space. SwimStart will give preschoolers from low-income families a healthy and lifesaving start.

I note that the member for Burnett has claimed this announcement as a win for himself—which is great to see—purely because he asked a question on notice about swimming lessons. Members are out there claiming credit for great Palaszczuk government policies all over the state—and that is good to see—but it does somewhat reveal his lack of knowledge about government processes. It does reveal that once and for all.

The member for Burnett also says that swimming lessons should be free for everyone. Is this LNP policy? Is that their commitment if they are elected? Those opposite, who are talking about winding back the mining royalty regime, have to tell us how they are going to pay for it. That has to be part of their response to the budget this week—how will they pay for free swimming lessons for all?

(Time expired)

Housing Affordability

Mr BERKMAN: My question is to the Minister for Housing. Two months ago the Greens warned that the government's last minute tenancy amendments would incentivise landlords to kick out tenants after six months so they can raise the rent. We have now heard from countless renters facing eviction in the middle of a housing crisis thanks to this loophole. When will the government introduce legislation to fix this?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for the question. We make no apology for bringing into this House reform to try to limit the number of rent increases that renters see across this state. This was about bringing our legislation in line with almost every other jurisdiction in the country. I understand Western Australia is now progressing reforms in a similar nature as well.

I have said on the record that I am incredibly disappointed at some individuals in the community who are taking advantage of the rental market and particularly of vulnerable Queenslanders. As a result of that, I convened a round table with peak organisations to talk about options. Now government will consider those options. If there are any changes, of course we would undergo community consultation.

My message is very clear to people out there in the community: if you are concerned about anything that is happening in your particular rental arrangement—

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr Dick interjected.

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

Ms Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The Premier will cease her interjections.

Ms SCANLON: If anyone needs additional advice, I would encourage them to come forward to the Residential Tenancies Authority to get advice about their particular matter. I suspect that in some cases some landlords or real estate agents maybe providing incorrect advice, so it is important that tenants are aware of what their rights are.

We have progressed stage 1 of our rental reforms. We have been out to consultation on stage 2 of our rental reforms. We will continue to make sure that we have a balanced rental system. We know that of course we need more supply but we also need to make sure that renters' rights are protected, and that is what we are focused on.

Police Service, Recruitment

Mr HARPER: My question is of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Will the minister update the House on the recruitment activities of the Queensland Police Service and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr RYAN: You are always very generous, Mr Speaker. Thank you very much. I thank the member for the question. I also acknowledge in the gallery today some members of Rainbow Labor. It is great to see those comrades here today.

There are some things that are certain in life—like night following day, like Queensland always having the best State of Origin team, like our Townsville MP team being the best team that has ever been in North Queensland, like the LNP always whingeing and whining, and like there will always be more police in Queensland under Labor. We went to the last election with a commitment of 1,450 extra police. The commissioner assures us that recruitment efforts are going well. The commissioner is committed to delivering those growth positions.

Those opposite went to the election with a commitment to cut—a thousand less police. If those opposite had been elected at the last election, there would be a thousand less police in the growth pipeline. As Ian Leavers, the President of the Police Union says—and you don't need the labour calculator to work this out—1,450 is always better than 400. That is the evidence of our government's commitment to the Queensland Police Service and why we always back the front line. It is why we are always investing in the Queensland Police Service and why that certain fact will always be true: that there are always going to be more police in Queensland under Labor than those opposite.


The Queensland Police Service is being very proactive around recruitment activities. Mr Speaker, you would have heard in my ministerial statement about the pipeline being very strong. Our incentives, our advertising and recruitment campaigns, are going well. As I said, the commissioner is very confident that recruitment targets will be hit.

Ms BOLTON: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired. You can save that one up for another day.

TOW TRUCK BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (11.15 am): I present a bill for an act to regulate the operation of tow trucks to remove motor vehicles from private property and damaged and seized motor vehicles, to amend this act, the Photo Identification Card Act 2008, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 for particular purposes, and to repeal the Tow Truck Act 1973. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Transport and Resources Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Tow Truck Bill 2023 [\[793\]](#).

Tabled paper: Tow Truck Bill 2023, explanatory notes [\[794\]](#).

Tabled paper: Tow Truck Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[795\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Tow Truck Bill 2023 to the House today. As Queensland road users, we hope that we will never be in a crash and need a tow truck, but this industry provides a vital service in clearing the road to get traffic moving again and also getting the driver and their car back to where they need to be. Crashes are traumatic events and we cannot forget that even an uninjured driver is often in a very vulnerable position after a crash. I know that personally after seeing the aftermath of a crash at Stones Corner many years ago.

As the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services, I am committed to supporting vulnerable motorists and the industry that helps to keep traffic on our roads moving. This bill strikes that balance. It provides for road and public safety and delivers improved outcomes and protections for motorists. It will also support industry to deliver efficient and effective services.

Regulated towing, as defined in this legislation, refers to the removal of vehicles damaged in a crash, vehicles seized by police and the removal of vehicles from private properties in defined areas of Queensland. These areas are predominantly in South-East Queensland but they also cover major regional cities such as Cairns, Mackay, Bundaberg, Townsville and Rockhampton. They are locations with high population density where there is a need to facilitate the quick removal of vehicles involved in a crash to aid the return of normal traffic flow.

The scheme currently comprises 97 tow truck business operators, approximately 1,200 drivers, 70 assistants and 670 tow trucks. A modern and efficient tow truck scheme is important. In 2017 the Palaszczuk government commissioned an independent investigation into the tow truck industry in response to rising community concerns about unfair and intimidatory practices around the removal of vehicles parked on private property. Reforms to address these issues were successfully introduced by this government in 2018.

Aside from these reforms, the legislative framework for tow trucks has remained largely unchanged for decades. To ensure that the legislation for tow trucks continues to provide a valuable service to Queensland motorists, Transport and Main Roads has undertaken a comprehensive review. This review sought to ensure the legislation is simple, precise, accessible and appropriately targeted. This bill has been developed based on the outcomes of this review.

The bill aims to protect the public by ensuring tow trucks undertaking regulated towing are operated safely, competently and professionally, and at a reasonable cost to consumers. This is done by requiring scheme members to undergo checks, such as a criminal history check, before being considered suitable to be accredited by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. It is also achieved by outlining clear requirements for each step of the towing activity—from arrival to tow, to storage and release of the vehicle.

The bill modernises the existing legislation by introducing a new structure and terminology used to refer to scheme members. Terms such as ‘driver’s certificate’ and ‘tow truck licence holder’ will be replaced with ‘tow truck driver accreditation’ and ‘tow truck operator accreditation’. The bill also provides modernised enforcement powers to ensure authorised officers have appropriate powers to undertake compliance activities. These powers include the right for authorised officers to enter business premises and seize evidence when necessary. To balance these powers, the bill has safeguards for accredited persons where compliance with a requirement may lead to self-incrimination.

A robust framework for offences and penalties remains critical to the tow truck scheme. Offences and penalties deter noncompliance, make undesirable behaviours clear and provide a consequence. It also supports best practice in the tow truck industry. A full review of offences and penalties has been undertaken to ensure that unacceptable behaviours are sufficiently covered and that the associated penalties reflect the seriousness of the offence.

As a result, the bill introduces new offences and penalties to provide further protection to vulnerable motorists. The new offences strengthen fundamental requirements of the scheme, such as ensuring only authorised holding yards are used to store vehicles. This will give motorists greater confidence in the safety of their property.

The bill makes it an offence to use unauthorised tow trucks to tow vehicles to ensure that appropriate vehicles are used to safely transport passengers and vehicles. It also protects vulnerable motorists from being subject to predatory behaviour by unauthorised parties by introducing an offence for non-accredited tow truck drivers towing a damaged vehicle. The maximum penalties of these offences range from over \$7,000 to \$11,500.

The bill will also introduce offences for an operator who directs people to do something contrary to the act. For example, it will be an offence for a person who uses their position as an employer to direct an unauthorised tow truck driver to perform work. This has a high maximum penalty of \$23,000 as it covers a range of obligations under the act, including protecting personal information. It also has the aggravating factor of using a position of power to coerce another person to commit an offence.

The bill will also include specific offences for forging a range of documents integral to the operation of the scheme. This includes accreditation documents, a towing authority or a private property towing consent. There is also a new offence for knowingly using or directing a person to use an accreditation document fraudulently. These offences have a maximum penalty of \$8,625, which aligns with other transport legislation.

The bill expands on the current requirements for accredited persons to notify the chief executive if charged or convicted of a notifiable offence. The list of notifiable offences has been reviewed to ensure direct relevance to the towing profession. For example, offences involving violence or abuse, theft, or intimidation have been included as they are likely to make a person unsuitable for a towing role which has them interacting with vulnerable people and their property.

Offences with no direct correlation to towing have been removed from the list of notifiable offences and will help protect privacy. These privacy protections are particularly important as there are also new offences for executive officers to notify their business partners within 14 days if charged or convicted of a notifiable offence. Similar offences are also included for partners in a partnership to notify each other.

The bill also provides stronger grounds for amending, cancelling or suspending an accreditation, as well as the introduction of 'public interest' grounds to refuse an accreditation application. This puts the tow truck scheme into alignment with other transport industry accreditation schemes and aligns with the bill's objective of protecting the community. These new provisions provide increased community protections, without imposing unnecessary burden on industry. Importantly, these very sensible offences need not impact anyone who is doing the right thing.

This bill also removes administrative burden to make the industry more efficient. For example, the bill provides for the regulation to approve holding yards on a temporary basis if, for example, their usual holding yard is unable to be used due to flooding. Previously, temporary exemptions were not provided for. In an emergency event, such as flooding, businesses would have had to apply for a full exemption, which was a thorough and sometimes lengthy process. I note that many of those holding yards are inherently in low-lying areas.

Finally, to support the new act, it is proposed that a new tow truck regulation will be progressed following passage of the bill. This will help support more detailed operational requirements. As such the bill provides appropriate heads of power to allow for these operational activities. This will allow flexibility to respond to changing circumstances as operations modernise. This bill demonstrates the Palaszczuk government's commitment to delivering better services to the Queensland community and ensuring the integrity of our regulatory frameworks. The bill will deliver a modern tow truck scheme that is responsive and safe and delivers improved community outcomes. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. MC BAILEY (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (11.24 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.


Referral to Transport and Resources Committee

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Transport and Resources Committee.

BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION BILL

Resumed from 2 December 2022 (see p. 3934).

Second Reading

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.25 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

On 2 December 2022 the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022 was introduced into the Legislative Assembly. The bill was subsequently referred to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for its consideration. I thank the committee members for their thorough examination of the bill. I would also like to thank the many stakeholders, organisations and individuals who made submissions to the committee and participated in the public hearing. I acknowledge those in the gallery today and those from Rainbow Labor.

On 24 February 2023, the committee tabled report No. 42 on its inquiry into the bill and made three recommendations. Subsequently, on 24 May 2023, I tabled the government's response to the committee's report. First and foremost, the committee recommended that the bill be passed. I thank them for this recommendation.

Recommendation 2 is that the Queensland government reports to the Legislative Assembly on its progress regarding the Closing the Registration Gap Strategy Plan 2021-24 within 12 months of the tabling of the committee's report. The government supports this recommendation and will provide a progress update. For the benefit of the House, I can advise a variety of targeted and culturally sensitive strategies and programs have been employed to encourage birth registration, developed with input, advice and direction from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders and community members. This has included extensive community engagement, with over 40 community events since the initiative commenced. The Closing the Registration Gap Strategy will be subject to a full evaluation at the end of this calendar year so that we may reflect on the approaches taken and refine future service delivery to build on the program's successes.

Recommendation 3 is that the Queensland government agencies undertake an audit of the Queensland legislation within their remit to identify amendments required as a result of the introduction of this bill. The government also supports this recommendation. Each agency will undertake an audit of its portfolio legislation to identify and assess the use of gendered language and determine whether any amendments are needed in light of the bill.

The bill before the House repeals and replaces the existing Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2003 to ensure registration services remain relevant, responsive and contemporary. Some of the most important reforms in the bill will strengthen the legal recognition of trans and gender-diverse people by removing the discriminatory and unfair barriers to obtaining legal recognition of their lived identity. This bill will help reduce the distress, fear, discrimination and privacy violations that many people in our communities face on an all too frequent basis.

At a recent meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council in March this year, 28 member states, including Australia, called on states to develop laws and policies that allow self-recognition of gender identity based on self-determination. I want to read to the House an excerpt of this call to action—

... human rights derive from the dignity and worth inherent in the human person, and are universal, inalienable and indivisible. As such, each person's self-defined gender identity is integral to their personality and a manifestation of self-identification, dignity and freedom.

Legal recognition of the gender identity of transgender persons is key to their enjoyment of human rights.

Today I am proud to say that Queensland answers that call. Today is a day we celebrate and embrace our trans and gender-diverse community through these landmark reforms.

The government's proposals for change and progress have caused much discussion and debate. The committee received 385 written submissions, some for the bill and some against. We know that some people have campaigned for such changes for years, and I pay tribute to the tireless advocacy of so many. However, I also know that others have concerns. I acknowledge their concerns and say to them today that this bill is not dangerous or reckless. It follows in the footsteps of reforms which most other Australian jurisdictions have already progressed. Today I ask that we lead by example and, as parliamentarians, set a tone of respectful debate. We can disagree without spreading stigma or being offensive or abusive. On that note, I would now like to address specific issues that were raised in the statements of reservation by non-government members and also as part of the committee's inquiry.

The member for Noosa and various submitters took issue with the consultation undertaken during development of the bill, stating that the introduction of this bill into parliament was the first time many heard of the proposed changes. With respect, these reforms have been canvassed widely and advocated for over a number of years. In 2021, a petition with over 10,000 signatures was lodged calling on the government to amend the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act. The former attorney-general was asked about the status of these reforms at last year's portfolio estimates hearing before the committee. The development of these reforms has also been well ventilated and reported throughout the media over the last couple of years.

At the committee's public hearing on the bill, the Queensland Human Rights Commission observed that the bill has been talked about for the last 10 years. The deputy commissioner acknowledged the Queensland Human Rights Commission, or the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland in its previous iteration, had been making submissions about the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act since 2013 and that it has been a source of ongoing discussion. The consultation process which informed the development of these reforms was lengthy and extensive. In the words of the QHRC, there has been consultation across the whole community 'where many people have had an opportunity to try to put their point of view across to try to create the legislation that is necessary for the 21st century'. Queensland also had the benefit of considering the outcomes of reviews undertaken in this area by law reform bodies in other jurisdictions, including by the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute and the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia.

I also reject the assertion that an alternative consultation process would have avoided creating unnecessary divisions in our communities. Not every reform that government brings forward to this House has universal support. This is simply not how policy development works. Stakeholders have taken strong and polarising views in this policy area. There is no middle ground or no compromise position. To suggest there is misunderstands this reform package.

Those opposed to this bill advance the argument that sex is an immutable, biological fact and therefore, for example, a transwoman is not and cannot ever be a woman. Our government's position is clear: the government, as expressed in its *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022-2027*, recognises all people who identify as women, including those who are transgender, non-binary or gender diverse have the right to be safe and be provided with the same opportunities as everyone else. This foundational position underpins this bill.

One of the key issues explored by committee members during this inquiry was the conflation of 'sex' and 'gender' in the bill. In their statement of reservation, the LNP members questioned the appropriateness of drawing or not drawing a distinction between these terms and claim that this issue has not been adequately addressed, given the short examination period. For the benefit of the House, I can advise this issue was canvassed in detail and the resulting approach in the bill was a deliberate policy choice. Over recent years, international developments, changing common law and advancements in research have led to agencies with responsibility for human rights law taking a more expansive and purposive approach.

In Australia, the courts have noted that biological factors are not the only relevant factors in determining sex. Further, the QHRC's *Building belonging* report found a narrow interpretation of 'sex' as meaning only biological sex was unlikely to be compatible with human rights under the Human Rights Act. There was also strong feedback from stakeholders throughout the development of the bill. They advised that legislating a distinction between biological sex and affirmed gender could propagate a culture of discrimination against trans and gender-diverse people. We listened to this feedback. The approach taken in the bill as introduced is consistent with other jurisdictions including both Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory.

In her statement of reservation, the member for Noosa also asked why the government has not investigated the option of omitting the 'sex' field from birth certificates or provided reasons why this was not viable. I note, as part of the committee's public hearings, the member explored with stakeholders the prospect of introducing an alternative document instead of enabling a person to amend their birth certificate. During the development of this bill, a wide range of options and proposals were put forward. Queensland is one of the last Australian jurisdictions to progress reforms in this area, so we were also able to look at the models established in other jurisdictions and learn from them. The various policy options and proposals were the subject of extensive research and consideration. The policy position taken in the bill provides greater legal recognition in a way that avoids 'othering' trans and gender-diverse people and exposing them to further harm.

In addition, the bill specifically adopts an opt-in approach to the inclusion of sex information on a person's birth certificate. This is designed to give people the greatest agency over what information they want recorded on their certificate. Providing these protections to trans and gender-diverse people does not pose a threat to others. The rights of women and others were put in opposition to the rights of trans and gender-diverse people by a number of submitters typically on the basis that these reforms undermine protections for women and may in fact lead to harm.

The LNP members of the committee in their statement of reservation noted the number of women's groups to come forward with concerns about the bill. This risk of harm, however, is not supported by the evidence. As part of extensive reviews, both the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute and the Law Reform Commission of Western Australia noted that they were not presented with any evidence which established that transwomen pose an inherent risk to others in female spaces.

A review of literature performed by the Scottish government in 2019, in the course of preparing an equality impact statement on its birth certificate legislation, found no empirical data to suggest the legal recognition of trans and gender-diverse people on the basis of self-identification results in increased levels of sexual violence against cisgender women and children in public spaces. The review found no empirical data to support the claim that transwomen are more likely than cisgender women to sexually assault other women in women-only spaces; nor any evidence supporting a link between women-only spaces being inclusive of transgender women and non-transmen falsely claiming a trans identity to access these spaces and committing sexual violence.

We must be clear that all the evidence tells us that the cause of violence against women and girls is predatory and abusive men, not trans people. It is important that we do not conflate the two. It is not just important; it is essential. There is no evidence that predatory and abusive men have ever had to pretend to be anything else to carry out abusive and predatory behaviour.

When considering the balance that is struck between competing rights then, on one side of the scales is an existing and ongoing limitation to the human rights of trans and gender-diverse people and on the other are a number of potential harms to women and others which have not eventuated in other jurisdictions with similar laws. The government is committed to advancing equality for women and protecting women's rights. That commitment is not affected by our support for trans and gender-diverse people's rights. I again draw on the recent statement of the Human Rights Council in which they 'strongly support all policies that combat violence and discrimination against all women and reiterate that these policies should be based on an intersectional approach, protecting women who are subjected to multiple forms of discrimination, including transwomen'.

I note that at the committee's public hearing, the QHRC advised that it did not consider that changing the record of a person's sex on a birth certificate would significantly impact the protection of people's human rights as the Anti-Discrimination Act has prohibited people discriminating against others based on their gender identity since 2002.

Another aspect of the reforms requiring careful consideration is how the rights of trans and gender-diverse children and young people may best be served. I am inspired by the words of a young trans girl who provided an oral submission during the committee's public hearing as part of Transcend Australia's submission. She stated—

My family and friends love and support me for who I am. I am proud of who I am, but every time I see my wrong name I feel a shock and I flinch. It's wrong. It's not who I am. It's not who I ever was ... I am female. I want to be seen for who I am and who I always have been—just like all the other girls. Please make this change to help me and the other young trans people like me who have less support. Help us to just be ourselves.

I want to say to that young girl: this parliament hears you; this government hears you.

I know some concerns have been raised about the application of part 5 of the bill to children and young people. Some submissions raised concerns about gender dysphoria and opined that establishing a pathway to alter a child's record of sex that is more accessible would lead more children to seek medical transition. Let me be clear: this bill is not about the medicalisation of trans and gender-diverse people. Trans and gender-diverse children and young people who feel an incongruence between their gender identity and sex assigned at birth sometimes experience distress known as gender dysphoria. Gender dysphoria is a medical condition. Medical treatment for gender dysphoria in children and adolescents is guided by clinical treatment guidelines and standards of care. I note surgery does not commonly occur before a person turns 18. Clinical responses including diagnosis of gender dysphoria and whether treatment is required is a health response and outside the ambit of this bill.

I want to say very clearly here that the bill does not change the ability of parents or persons with parental responsibility to seek the necessary supports for their children. Not all children who are gender questioning or who identify as trans or gender-diverse will exhibit symptoms of gender dysphoria. Transitions which can alleviate dysphoria or gender incongruence can be social, changes in presentation such as in hair, name or pronouns; legal, changes of name or sex or both; or medical through gender-affirming medical care. Some children or young people may only undertake one type of transition whereas others may choose to pursue medical, social and legal transitions. Each transition journey is unique and decisions, steps and pace should reflect an individual's needs and situation.

I acknowledge the distress parents may feel as they try to work out how to best support their child who is transitioning and how tensions and conflict may arise where parents and their child have different views. In no way do I wish to diminish the impacts of these experiences. However, every case is different and the bill before the House today is about creating an accessible process for legal affirmation. The bill does not alter or affect the law regarding who can consent to medical treatment for a young person seeking gender-affirming health care with the prevailing authority being that both parents must consent to any medical treatment where a young person is under 18.

I also note emerging evidence that shows children and young people with gender incongruence often have high rates of mental health concerns and neurodiversity, referred to in the research as 'co-occurring issues'. This was raised by some submitters. As the Australian Professional Association for Trans Health points out, identifying these issues early and putting in place strategies to identify them is appropriate. Other stakeholders also questioned and raised concerns around gender-affirming care. Australia has its own peer reviewed *Australian standards of care and treatment guidelines for trans and gender diverse children and adolescents*. This guide endorses gender-affirming care based on available evidence and clinician consensus. An affirmative approach is about listening to the individual and working with them to achieve the outcomes most appropriate for them. This is consistent with a person-centred approach to health care.

Regardless of where one's views and opinions lie in the very robust societal and cultural debate, it is important to remember that children lie at the centre of the framework in the bill and that the ongoing polarised debate undermines or, worse, silences the voices of children who seek or require support and care at what is likely to be a very crucial juncture in their life. What we do know is that children who experience gender incongruence are more likely than cisgender peers to experience anxiety or depression, have suicidal thoughts or self-harm. This is even more likely if they face barriers to expressing their gender identity or have negative experiences like bullying, stigma or discrimination.

As part of his oral evidence to the committee, Mr Luke Twyford, Principal Commissioner of the Queensland Family and Child Commission, said—

I spoke to young people specifically and directly this week in relation to what this bill would mean to them. One of them said, ... 'It will mean fewer young people committing suicide.' It was a confronting statement and a confronting conversation. Young people said that this change will deliver significant benefit to the mental wellbeing of transgender and gender diverse people.

It does not matter how many times I read that out, whether aloud or to myself, I still get goosebumps and get emotional about that statement. This is about saving lives—young people and adults—and we have a responsibility to do that, knowing that in doing so it does not cause harm to anyone else in the community.

I note the views of some submitters who question the maturity of children to make decisions about altering their record of sex. The framework for children in the bill recognises the important role of parents or other persons allocated parental responsibility, particularly in the exercise of parental responsibility about major long-term decisions that affect their child. It modifies that role only when necessary to achieve the best interests of the child in line with the child's evolving capacity.


While it is presumed that parental responsibility for a child ends when the child reaches the age of 18, as a matter of common law parental authority diminishes as the child's capacity to decide matters for themselves develops. A child can be competent to decide a matter for themselves before they turn 18. The 'best interests of the child' acknowledges that a child should, as far as practicable, be involved in decisions about their life. This principle is established on the premise that children acquire maturity at different rates and, apart from biological age, there is a range of other factors which influence children's maturity. The bill strikes an appropriate balance between the best interests of the child and the diminishing responsibilities of parents as children get older.

The reforms in the bill will have implications for other laws across the statute book. Some stakeholders, most notably the Queensland Law Society, the QHRC and Equality Australia highlighted the potential downstream implications of the bill. As I mentioned earlier in relation to the government's response to the committee's recommendation 3, each agency will undertake an audit of its portfolio legislation to identify and assess the use of gendered language.

This is a historic day for the LGBTQIA+ Queenslanders. The struggle for legal recognition of trans and gender-diverse Queenslanders has asked a lot of the LGBTQIA+ community and has taken a lot from them. It is interesting and somewhat fitting that the ordinary meaning of 'recognition' includes 'acknowledgement of the existence or legality or validity of'. It can also mean 'treating as worthy of consideration'. This bill acknowledges trans and gender-diverse peoples by giving them greater legal recognition through an administrative process that allows a person to alter their record of sex to align with their lived identity. I am privileged to be standing here today and I am hopeful that there will be occasion in the future to reflect on the progress that has been made in achieving legal recognition for our LGBTQIA+ Queenslanders.

I want to conclude by acknowledging the work of all those who have fought long and hard for the legal recognition of our LGBTQIA+ Queenslanders. There are people who have put their own lives into the public domain and opened them up for discussion in the pursuit of change. The real heroes are those many people not elected to parliament but navigating their everyday lives as part of the LGBTQIA+ community who have borne the brunt of disapproval, vitriol, discrimination and hate, often based on fear, and who have nonetheless chosen to stand up and fight for their legal recognition.

I also take a moment to acknowledge and remember those who are no longer with us, who have taken their own life over the years, who could not battle, those who found the battle too great to withstand. This bill is for all of them as well. To all of the rainbow community out there listening, to all who work tirelessly in the quest for change, we want to say to you: lives matter; your stories matter; your struggles matter. We see you, we hear you, and today we proudly stand beside you. Trans rights matter, and I am extremely proud to commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (11.49 am): The LNP wants a Queensland that is free from discrimination, a place where individuals are respected and all are free to live safely within their communities. We are cognisant that many Queenslanders have not been respected for their lived identities. Their stories are powerful, and discriminatory behaviour should be called out. We approach the debate on this bill in a respectful and considered manner. It is not the type of bill that benefits from anyone being strident or shouting out across the chamber, but that does not mean an unquestionable acceptance of the propositions that are put forward, and it does not mean that there are not different views in relation to the policy behind this legislation. Indeed, in her remarks, the Attorney-General has indicated that there are strong and divergent views in society. This place, as a representative of that society, will have similar strong and divergent views. It is our hope, and our request, that they are all considered and listened to with the respect that they deserve.

We thank the many good and thoughtful organisations and individuals who took the time to lodge submissions to the committee that investigated the bill and to reach out to members of the LNP on this side, and I am sure who equally reached out to other members in this place. We acknowledge those

people who shared their stories with us and with the committee. I know that there were a number of closed sessions of the committee at which a number of people also told their stories. I know many LNP members of that committee found many of those stories of families and individuals compelling and, in some cases, heartbreaking.

While our position on this bill will hearten some and no doubt disappoint others, it has been reached after a full and thorough consideration of those stories; the submissions that were made to the committee, as well as the material provided by the department in response to questions; the material otherwise provided to the committee; and the written submissions of the many groups. We are also cognisant of the differences of medical opinion across the disciplines that are particularly involved in the area of gender identification and children's health and wellbeing. I think it is important to note that debate on this bill does bring into sharp focus medical issues, as well as the legal and human rights issues that have been mentioned by the Attorney. Whilst we might like to say that this bill does not affect other areas of social policy in relation to gender identity, a bill like this one inevitably draws information and positions out across matters that it might not necessarily cover but which come to the fore when we discuss these types of issues.

We come to this debate with a willingness to listen and take action. Due to the sensitivities and impacts that some of the changes might affect, we also approach this debate with a cautious and considered position. That is why the LNP has a number of reservations about this bill in its current form. Those reservations do not undermine our belief that all Queenslanders should feel safe and respected. Rather, the LNP wants to ensure all the matters addressed in this bill, which have wideranging implications for Queenslanders, have been thoroughly considered to ensure there is safety, respect and consideration for the views that are held by very many good and caring Queenslanders.

While we accept that much of the bill deals with the desirable aims of modernising the operations of the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, safeguarding registry data and accounting for social change, our reservations about the bill include the consultation time for the bill. These were concerns that were raised by people who were not subject to the early consultation that the department carried out in a focused way. There were three rounds of consultation, as were announced and recorded, but the bill in its final form was substantially different from the consultation bill. So the bill that was presented to this House for investigation was not the consultation draft that was sent out to the specially selected bodies for discussion prior to it. It is only reasonable that a bill that affects a very substantial societal change is given adequate time for consultation. I will return to that point.

A majority of submissions that were received by the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee were opposed to the bill. The majority of the submissions did not support the bill, and it is only fair and reasonable that those submitters have their views taken into account as well. Our concern is that part 5, which is the part of the bill that attracted most of the submissions and most of the support and criticisms, really cannot be excised from the bill to allow those other parts to proceed. The concern is that the current drafting of the bill may give rise to unintended consequences.

I turn to the short consultation time. The bill was introduced on 5 December 2022 and referred to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee on the same day. Submissions were due to the committee by 11 January 2023—so let's think about that. It was introduced in the last parliamentary sitting week of the year as we head into the Christmas season. It is notoriously difficult for staff to complete activities—people are going on holidays and taking leave. There was a submissions closing time of 11 January, in a period of just over a month which took in the traditional Christmas and New Year holiday period, and the committee's report was then due by 24 February 2023.

It is not just the LNP who have concerns about the short consultation time. It was criticised by the Queensland Law Society, who in their submission made the same point, and it was criticised by a number of other organisations who otherwise support the legislation. They said that it was an insufficient time and an inadequate and inappropriate time frame to meaningfully and robustly respond to important legislation to ensure the proposed laws work as effectively and as efficiently as possible and, importantly, that they have community support and do not have unintended consequences. The Law Society said—

The reforms proposed in the Bill are significant and will have wide-ranging implications for Queenslanders. It is in all our best interests to ensure proposed laws work as effectively and efficiently as possible, and this requires meaningful and robust consultation with stakeholders. Short consultations held during the Christmas and New Year shut down period will not yield the best legislation for the people of Queensland.

We are concerned about the time period that was allowed for consultation and for the quality of that consultation that was allowed to occur during the committee process. It is interesting to note that there is a great deal of community concern in this piece of legislation, which is not surprising given the experience in other jurisdictions and given the subject matter of the bill.

The committee received 385 submissions: 170 were supportive but 208 were not. The majority of those submissions did not support the bill—seven were unclear. Despite the very real concerns about the bill and its consequences being raised by such a large number of expert and well-informed stakeholders, the committee proceeded to recommend the bill proceed and be passed.

Although the committee accepted that the bill could have a significant impact on other legislation, rather than waiting for those impacts to be identified and clarified, the committee did recommend the bill be passed with the recommendation that an audit be undertaken to identify other legislation which might need amending. The committee was, in fact, doing its best—all members of the committee were doing their best to see that this bill could proceed—to act in a proper fashion. But, in effect, finding out what other legislation might need amending could be considered to be the equivalent of closing the stable door after the horse has bolted. This bill will be in place, without knowing its effect on other legislation.

I want to turn to part 5, which is, without doubt, the most controversial part of the bill and the part that has excited most of the comment. Of the 385 submissions that were received by the committee, some 338 commented on part 5—supporting my argument that that is the most contentious part of the bill. Of those 338 submissions, 151 were in favour of the proposed amendments and 187 were against the proposed amendments. I will discuss some of those aspects of part 5 in a little while.

The other issue I raised was unintended consequences, and I think it is important to note that the Law Society, while supporting the policy objectives of the bill, was of the view that the bill as currently drafted may give rise to those unintended consequences, and this was a view that was supported by Pride in Law in its submission, specifically in relation to the lack of clarity around concepts of sex and gender and the implications that may flow as a result of this ambiguity. I note that this was a matter that was raised by the Attorney-General in her contribution just recently and it was a matter that was the subject of a considerable amount of debate and response by the department.

Turning to part 5 of the bill which is headed 'Acknowledgement of sex', previous consultation drafts of the bill contemplated that sex and gender would be distinct concepts with different meanings and protections. As I indicated previously, those earlier drafts had different propositions in them from the final version of the bill that was presented to the parliament. Those different meanings and protections were for where a person who registers a gender would not be deemed to have changed their biological sex for legal purposes, leaving this to a separate process—namely, amending their record in the registry. The bill in its current form brings those two concepts together contrary to the distinction recognised by a number of authorities throughout Australia and worldwide.

I note the Attorney-General's comments in relation to the common law and the strict definition of 'biological sex' and how that is implemented and also note the department's comments as reported in the committee report and also as considered in its written submission in response to the matters raised by submitters during the committee process. It is clear that it is referring to the High Court decision of *AB* and the state of Western Australia, which was a decision made in 2011 regarding the prospects of registering a change on a birth certificate for some people who had undergone a medical procedure and in particular the provisions of that bill and the provisions of the Western Australian act. That was indeed a decision of five justices of the High Court in favour of the applicants for that matter against the registrar in Western Australia who had refused to register the change of sex on the birth certificate.

Indeed, the comment was made that biological sex is not the sole determinant of a person's sex in that matter, but it involved a very different set of circumstances from the legislation that we are discussing here today. It involved a requirement for gender-affirming surgery to take place. It was not simply a matter of just a self-identification process, which is predominantly what we are talking about here. It involved the level of surgery that was necessary in order to meet the requirements under the Western Australian legislation in order for someone to be able to prove to the satisfaction of the registrar over there or the board over there that that person had indeed chosen to change their sex. That point, if you like, is not made in relation to any of the responses that the department has referred to.

There is a similar matter here in Queensland with the matter of *Coonan*, which is a QCAT decision in relation to registering a person who had changed their identity to a male but still retained the capacity to give birth. The matter of *Coonan* was a 2020 matter considered by Commissioner Sam Traves. There are decisions in relation to this, but I would say that the answer given by the department in relation to the questions that were raised is not a complete answer and is not an answer to the submissions that

have been made in relation to the distinction between 'sex' and 'gender'. For example, the distinction between 'sex' and 'gender' is recognised by the *Australian government guidelines on the recognition of sex and gender* and by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

It is also the case that the legislation in the Northern Territory, South Australia and Tasmania differentiates between 'sex' and 'gender'. Indeed, as Pride in Law and the Queensland Law Society note in their submissions, the Tasmania Law Reform Institute—which again the Attorney referenced in her contribution here and its investigations with regard to a separate matter regarding transwomen's safety and other issues regarding safety in safe women's spaces and adopted much of that Law Reform Institute's information—has highlighted the value in maintaining a distinction between 'sex' and 'gender'. The Tasmania Law Reform Institute, which has, according to the Law Society, undertaken a significant amount of work on these issues, said—

... there is increasing acceptance that sex and gender are different concepts, and that neither concept is confined to binary classifications.

We accept that. It continues—

However, there is often a lack of understanding of the breadth of ... sex characteristics and gender identity ...

It is incorrect to say that there is universal acceptance that the proposal put forward in this legislation that there is or ought be no difference when there is absolutely quite positive references by the Tasmania Law Reform Institute which investigated similar legislation in Tasmania and also the Australian government's practical guidelines that there is a difference.

The institute highlighted a range of factors determining sex, including chromosomal patterns, genital anatomy, internal reproductive organs and hormone patterns. It specifically distinguished between 'gender or gender identity' and 'sex or sex characteristics' and, while acknowledging conflicting views on maintaining that distinction, which I acknowledge as well, recommended the distinction and urged the government of Tasmania to work to eliminate discriminatory application of laws by careful and deliberate use of appropriate terms. The definitions recommended by that institute, the Tasmania Law Reform Institute, flowed through to the recently amended Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1999 in Tasmania—one of the earlier ones. The distinction is maintained and the conflation there was of concern and the Tasmania Law Reform Institute's answer was to maintain the distinction, a distinction that is maintained in several other states and territories, although not, as the Attorney has indicated, in Victoria and South Australia. It is perfectly possible and perfectly reasonable to say that there is a difference in policy, that the legislation should consider that difference in policy and have a different position, which is what we are saying.

The World Health Organization's definition of 'sex' and 'gender' provides that 'gender' is used to describe the characteristics of women and men that are socially constructed while 'sex' refers to those that are biologically determined. Similarly, in the United Kingdom 'sex' is defined as the biological aspects of an individual as determined by their anatomy which is determined by their chromosomes, their hormones and their interactions, generally male and female, and something that is assigned at birth, and 'gender' is defined as a social construction relating to behaviours and attributes based on labels of masculinity and femininity. The government of Canada in its summary report *Modernising the government of Canada's sex and gender information practices* also distinguishes between 'sex' and 'gender' where 'sex' is taken to refer to biological characteristics such as male, female or intersex and 'gender' is taken to refer to a social identity such as a man, woman, non-binary or two-spirit.

This bill that we are debating, contrary to widespread acceptance of the distinction between the terms 'sex' and 'gender', does conflate those two concepts. It does not define the terms 'gender' or 'sex' at all and provides an ambiguous definition of the term 'sex descriptor' in schedule 2 to mean—

- (a) 'male'; or
- (b) 'female'; or
- (c) any other descriptor of a sex.

Examples—

'agender', 'genderqueer', 'non-binary'

By contrast, the very same bill in its proposed amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act inserts new definitions of the terms 'gender identity' and 'sex characteristics' which are consistent with the widely accepted distinctions that I have already highlighted between the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender'. Internally it also has this inconsistency and this position regarding gender identity and the conflation of

the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender'. It is far from clear and it is far from accepted that the position in this bill is indeed the position that ought to be adopted and it is far from clear that the position in this bill is the appropriate position to adopt in all circumstances.

I want to also turn to the applications to alter records of sex which, again, are in part 5 of the bill. Notwithstanding the failure of the bill to distinguish between the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender' and the other examples that are put there of agender, genderqueer and non-binary as examples of any other descriptor of sex, the bill allows a person to apply to the registrar to alter the record of their sex.

That is an acceptable proposition for people who are over the age of 18 who can vote and who participate according to our laws in the full suite of social and civic life. However, greater concern arises in respect to children, in particular children under the age of 16 upon application to the Childrens Court if the child's parent or parents do not consent. Again I listened to what the Attorney-General said in relation to this bill not having an effect on medical procedures. I acknowledge that is correct. But this does affect in a very substantial way the legal rights of people under the age of 18 being able to change their gender, whether that is identifying, for example, for a passport, whether that is identifying for enrolment in an institution of some description or whatever might occur, and it does provide a greater level of autonomy for that child than would normally be the case.

Take, for example, children in the youth justice system where it is pushed forward that young children are less responsible for their actions because they do not understand the consequences of their actions and therefore the punishment and the severity of dealing with children under the age of 18 is treated very differently from those who are adults over the age of 18 when they commit offences because they fail to appreciate the full consequences of their actions. They are more driven by impulse. Yet here, on something that potentially changes a child forever and that has many consequences, we are giving greater agency to the child to make their decision in relation to it. That is a concern that has been raised by very many of the submissions to the committee and I think it is a concern that needs to be properly and widely addressed in society.

The effect of the alteration of a child's sex in the relevant child register is that the child becomes a person of the sex as altered for the purposes of a law of Queensland. We have significant and genuine reservations about permitting a child to alter their sex descriptor. Children under the age of 16 are often ill-equipped psychologically to make such a large and life changing alteration to their sexual identity and we should go down this path, as I said in my very early introduction, with caution and consideration. Young people suffering gender dysphoria often have complex emotional issues. It has been clearly commented on that they often fail to appreciate the long-term consequences of their actions and decisions. We have only recently seen a series of articles in national media that have highlighted the very serious concerns of parents about the effect it has on children in relation to being able to make that decision at a young age without careful thought. That is not to say—and I do not say—that people make this decision either flippantly or quickly, but there does need to be a serious amount of consideration in relation to allowing it to go ahead, particularly without parental consent for children 16 and under, because it is well documented that the brains of young people do not fully develop until they are well into their twenties.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. The member on his feet is giving a thoughtful, well-researched and reasoned contribution. In the spirit of the tone of this debate, I would ask members to listen to that contribution in silence.

Mr NICHOLLS: Children are often heavily influenced, as we know, by social media and peer pressure and can be reactionary towards parents and authority figures. Anyone who has children knows that to be the case; science and research show that to be the case. The experience of numerous clinicians at the Gender Identity Development Service at Tavistock in the United Kingdom was that many of the children accessing that service were vulnerable and distressed and that rushed assessments of their needs led to woefully inadequate care and inappropriate treatment. They found that many of these children were dealing with a multitude of other issues, including anxiety, depression, traumatic backgrounds, a high incidence of autism—and in any research of the material, concerns in relation to the high incidence of children with autism seeking to change their gender comes through—homophobic bullying—equally disgraceful—and sometimes very chaotic living conditions.


Further, the clinicians could not agree on what they were treating: were they treating children distressed because they were trans, or were they children who identified as trans because they were distressed, or a combination of both? Many of these children needed psychotherapy, but GIDS is not funded to provide that treatment. Consequently, if they met the diagnostic criteria for gender dysphoria,

which they invariably did simply by self-identifying as trans, they would proceed down the medical pathway—that is to say, they were referred for medical intervention involving puberty blockers before, in some cases, proceeding to irreversible treatment.

Again I say this bill does not deal with that aspect of the medical procedure for people who are questioning their gender identity, but it raises these issues in the minds of people who are considering the impact of this bill and it raises very clearly the significance of the provisions outlined in part 5 allowing children under 18, particularly those under 16, to go down the path of changing their identity based on a self-affirmation model.

In the United States lawsuits are now being launched by detransitioners. The *Economist* reports that in California a person, Chloe Cole, is suing a large medical provider, Kaiser Permanente, for medical negligence. Ms Cole decided at the age of 12 that she was a boy. She was put on blockers and testosterone at the age of 13 and underwent a double mastectomy at the age of 15. At the age of 16 she changed her mind and began detransitioning. Her complaint alleges that the medical provider subjected a vulnerable young girl to a 'mutilating, mimicry sex change experiment'. We can put that through the filter of the way the US legal system works and how their claims are made, but the claim is basically that they went down that medical process instead of focusing on her complex mental health needs. Ms Cole, who meets the criteria for autism spectrum disorder, says she is concerned about her fertility and pain and has been permanently disfigured for profit. It is not suggested that this bill promotes a process for medical intervention in the cases of young people wishing to change their sex, however, what the circumstances I have referred to do highlight is that young people who are confused about these issues can often have complex mental health issues and an application to change their sex descriptor must involve a more rigorous process than proposed by the bill.

The pathways to changing a sex descriptor are outlined in clauses 39 and 40. There are administrative pathways and a court pathway which allows a child between the age of 12 to 16 to apply to the court. There are also other issues in relation to safety. Other speakers will raise those issues. I completely endorse the findings that there is no evidence whatsoever that transwomen are any more likely to commit offences than other women and the studies all show that to be the case. There is no reason for fear of those things. The issue in relation to men seeking to take advantage of the laws I think is equally, while of concern to many groups, not supported by the evidence in any significant amount. There is a celebrated case in the United Kingdom in relation to a prisoner. That prisoner was relocated from a women's prison to a male prison. Others will speak about that. While the LNP desires a Queensland where people can feel safe and free from discrimination, regrettably we cannot support this bill in its current form. I believe I have highlighted why our concerns are so great in relation to those particular provisions which I have outlined.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (12.19 pm): I rise to speak to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022. In its report No. 41, tabled in this assembly on 24 February 2023, the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee recommended to the assembly that the bill be passed. The bill establishes Queensland's life event registration system and commenced on 1 February 2004 based on model law that was designed to provide nationally consistent legislation across Australian states and territories. Since 2004 there have been many changes to the social, policy and operational environment that have affected the way the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages delivers its services.

The objectives of the bill are to: strengthen the legal recognition of trans and gender-diverse people; better recognise contemporary family and parenting structures; facilitate improvements in the operations of the registry; support fraud prevention and minimise misuse of the life event system; and clarify the information collection, use and sharing powers of the registrar. The bill proposes to strengthen the legal recognition of trans and gender-diverse people, and better recognise contemporary family and parenting structures. As part of its inquiry, the committee called for and received written submissions from stakeholders, was briefed by the department and heard evidence from both individuals and organisations at our private and public hearings.


Under the act as it currently stands, for same-sex parents there is no ability to record both parents as 'mother' or both parents as 'father', nor can both be referred to as 'parent'. Instead, one person may be recorded as either 'mother' or 'father' and the other person must be recorded as 'parent'. The bill proposes to facilitate the registration of multiple combinations of parental descriptors to better reflect contemporary family structures. A number of submitters supported the proposed amendment to change the parental descriptors, including the Queensland Law Society, the Queensland Human Rights Commission, Multicultural Australia and several individual submitters. Rainbow Families Queensland stated that a birth certificate reflecting a person's biological father and biological mother 'ignores the reality' that in Queensland for some children paternity is not known for various reasons. The views from

stakeholders were diverse with some submitters raising concerns that the proposed parenting descriptors—being ‘mother’, ‘father’ and ‘parent’—would reflect something other than biological parentage on the child’s birth certificate.

Earlier this year at Brisbane’s Youth Advocacy Centre I attended an event titled ‘What’s the Story?’ The event featured Dame Quentin Bryce along with Trent Dalton and Craig Silvey. The audience heard from the speakers about creating safe spaces for transgender people. All of us here would know of Dame Quentin Bryce and most would have heard of Trent Dalton. However, for those who do not know, Craig Silvey is an acclaimed author. His third novel, *Honeybee*, which was published in 2020, was inspired by a real-life event when his brother and sister-in-law encountered a distressed transgender teen who was standing on the other side of a bridge railing. Craig’s telling of the real-life encounter was both enlightening and horrifying. Craig said—

The young person confided in my sister-in-law the reasons they were there. The truth is that they were struggling with their gender identity. They had lost their support, their family and their friends. They had been kicked out of home and found themselves in an anguished hopeless and helpless place. The police arrived and dragged them over the rail and put them in the back of an ambulance and that was that.

That was a catalyst for Craig to want to know more and to understand the challenges, the forces and the pressures that that young person, and others like them, face. Craig’s research highlighted the high incidence of pressures, anxiety and self-harm reported by young vulnerable members of the trans and gender-diverse communities. He was heartbroken by the disproportionate rates of violence and devastated by the fact that almost half of young transpeople will attempt to take their lives. That was a very sobering statistic not only for Craig but also for all of us hearing his raw emotion as he spoke about the statistics and what he had found. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.24 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill. I acknowledge the work of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee given the sensitivity not only of this legislation but also the in-depth one-on-one discussions that I am sure they had in closed sessions as well as their discussions with the stakeholders they engaged with and listened to as part of their inquiry into the bill. I acknowledge the policy decision by the government and the societal change that is reflected within the key objectives of the bill. Across our state a greater recognition of trans and gender-diverse people is important. This bill recognises and fulfils that policy intent. I also highlight the difference in the self-declaration versus the medicalisation approach to altering the record of sex. Our shadow Attorney-General has highlighted many key points when outlining the LNP’s position so I will not go over those. However, there are a few points that I want to touch on, including the committee’s findings.

I want to refer in the House to the short consultation period. The former attorney-general outlined how this approach commenced many years ago, that there has been significant public discussion in the media and that petitions have been raised. However, in my role as the shadow minister for women’s economic security, domestic violence prevention and also child protection, some groups have made representations to me that the former attorney-general and current Minister for Women did not meet with them. Those groups are predominantly women’s groups. Therefore, to say that thorough consultation was undertaken would be misleading. In the short consultation period, of all the submissions made on the bill 159 were supportive, 181 were not supportive and 140 were confidential. I think that demonstrates the real community and public interest in this bill. Given that widespread community interest, the women’s groups that I met with felt that their concerns were ignored as the former attorney-general refused to meet with them.

I raise that point and think it is very important because there is a lot of discussion about the need for inclusion and on our side of the House we definitely support that. We support the diversity of our community. We also support and agree with the government that women have the right to feel safe in the community, members of the LGBTQIA+ community have the right to feel safe in the community and, in fact, all Queenslanders have the right to feel safe in our community. We also note that all Queenslanders have the right to know that the Anti-Discrimination Act and their human rights under that act are respected. Certainly, in the LNP we believe in the right to individual freedom.

However, the point is that there is not universal support for this bill and that while some stakeholders have raised concerns they have never had the opportunity to voice their concerns or have them addressed in a way that may have been educative. That could have been done in such a way so that we could all come to better understand what is a very complex issue. I think they were denied that chance by the Minister for Women. I hope in any future reform process that those groups are engaged with, just as I was willing to meet and speak with them. I also highlight that the media plays a very

important role in the debate and discussion around these issues. Sometimes there is not enough responsible journalism that actually gets to the heart of the facts or explains the emotion that is attached to what is a very complex area of public policy.

Some of the issues that were raised, certainly with me, include that sex is an immutable biological fact. A transwoman is a transwoman; she is not a woman. A female, by definition, is an adult female human being. I do not apologise for saying that. That is my personal view. It is a definition found not just in the dictionary; it is defined in science and in biology.

That does not mean that I do not have friends from the transgender community, that I do not have family members from the LGBTI community and that I have not had at length discussions with those members either, but I do have the right to express my view as an individual woman and to represent the views of many of the silent majority of women who have contacted me personally over the course of this legislation being introduced. They did raise concerns about safety and about women's safe places. We were able to address those concerns. I think our shadow Attorney-General also addressed that. There is no evidence to suggest that through this legislation or any change that that impedes upon women's rights or safety.

I do acknowledge as part of my portfolio that the LGBTIQ+ community is actually at times at greater risk, particularly when it comes to domestic and family violence, coercive control or sexual assault. As a society it is important that we acknowledge that and acknowledge that that is unacceptable.

We also need to acknowledge the rights of women as well as the rights of trans and gender-diverse people across our community, but earlier this year a distinct threat was articulated through the media that women's agency was being challenged through this debate. I think that is something we need to be cognisant of and respectful of, because too many women in multiple generations—and I have spoken to some transwomen who also support this position—have fought hard for those rights, that recognition and that agency.

I would also like to acknowledge that there was discussion—and the Attorney outlined—of the predatory and abusive men who exist. Unfortunately, there are also predatory and abusive women across our community. Certainly, we hear of that all too sadly in the child safety area.


I refer to the rights of gender and diverse children—part 5 of the bill—particularly around gender dysphoria. This is a medical condition which we recognise has a clear diagnosis and a clear clinical response. We acknowledge that the bill does not deal with this matter, but it is convoluted in the fact that now children under the age of 16 have the rights to things that on this side of the House we would oppose in that they need to be of a more mature age. They need to be supported through changes they may make in terms of gender questioning or gender identification. We also acknowledge that gender identity can come in many forms, be it through legal, social or medical transition, and that everyone's individual path is unique. That is something that we certainly do recognise as well.

What of those who say that this bill is one-size-fits-all or that it is going to be the panacea that rules out stigma, discrimination, bullying or harm or that in fact it is going to prevent suicide? After spending six months on the Mental Health Select Committee, we know that the issues around this are far more complex when it comes to mental health or suicide prevention. While this bill outlines that that is its policy intent, I suggest with an evidence-based evaluation that it will not make too much difference when it comes to the facts at hand that contribute to the complexity with which many individuals are dealing.

What causes harm in our community is the lack of engagement, the lack of consultation and the lack of education. It is in fact one thing to announce a policy, but it is about the implementation of that policy. The reality in Queensland is that we all do live and come together with different values, perspectives, lived experiences, relationships and principles. I refer to the legal affirmation that the bill provides—and the shadow Attorney-General spoke to the downstream implications of the bill—in terms of legal recognition and medical recognition. What does that mean in navigating everyday life? What does that mean when someone's birth certificate is changed and how they identify has changed? What does that mean for the practical implications of everyday life as someone grows through the different phases of life? I think those are the issues that have not been fully explored.

The shadow Attorney-General has articulated very respectfully the difference between gender and sex and that this legislation conflates rather than defines that gender is a social construct versus sex as a biological definition. One could look at this bill as a policy position in simplifying what is clearly

a complex societal issue. I certainly urge, even in expressing my opinion, that we take individual responsibility and accountability. There is a much higher standard than at times we see in this House when it comes to respectful and sensitive debate.

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (12.34 pm): I rise to support the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill. I thought I would start with a story which goes back to my career before parliament. I was in a meeting with stakeholders and discussing issues relating to the delivery of justice services. The room included judges, lawyers, public servants and a small number of us who were there as victim advocates. A few things stand out to me about that meeting, but the one that is relevant to today's debate was a moment in the meeting where we had been discussing the importance of including victims' needs and considerations into the design of programs. As the meeting was wrapping up—and I stress that this meeting occurred probably 15 years ago—I along with the other victims' advocates were thanked for our contributions.

The comment was made that I still remember today along the lines of, 'I am so glad that we are dealing with you as professional advocates and not having to deal with actual victims of crime.' Others contributed to that discussion by saying things about how difficult victims can be, how victims' expectations can be too great and that they have no idea how the justice system works. Of course, I stood there as a victim's advocate but also as someone who had a lived experience of being a victim of crime. I knew that and the other victims' advocates in the room knew that, but obviously no-one else in the room was aware of that. I have replayed that moment in my mind. It was a moment that filled me with a lot of shame, fear, embarrassment and anger. It was just one moment but it was a really powerful moment that summoned up a whole range of emotions for me. I start with the example—and I share this—because I do not actually have to go back very far in my mind to recall a time when I felt really frightened of being found out. It was that deep, unsettling feeling of anxiety, a fear so deep that it holds you back, a fear so real that in that moment it is easier to pretend to be anyone else rather than to be yourself and, despite the internal conflict that it brings up, the shame that you feel at not being a better ally for yourself or for others, the anger, the frustration of being a circle in a world that really only celebrates squares. I am sure we all have had a moment like that where we have felt judged, humiliated, reduced or held back.

In her explanatory speech the then attorney-general emphasised the very real fear that trans people face whenever they undertake routine social tasks such as applying for a job or a rental property, or enrolling in university or joining a sporting team. The example of Emily was given who said—

I look at my birth certificate and it's wrong; it's my last remaining identity document that's in error, something that's wrong.

Whenever I must present my birth certificate, I get anxious, worried that the person reading it will think I'm a fraud, or worse, mentally ill—merely because I know I'm a female and yet my birth certificate says I'm a male.

During the public hearings into this bill I was really struck by the stories of trans people either being publicly outed or thinking the threat of that was enough to stop them from living their full life, discovering their full potential and sharing their abilities and their talents with the world. There is one example that Jeremy Wiggins, CEO of Transcend, gave to the committee during our public hearing—

... when a student is doing their NAPLAN test and they get their one-time password code to log into the system and that is projected onto the screen in front of the entire class. They have all of their names listed and they have all of their details. It was projected onto the screen—so outing a young person in front of the entire class.

It has been almost 20 years since our current births, deaths and marriages laws came into effect and, in that time, society has changed. Our awareness of LGBTIQ rights and issues has grown and our government stands on its record in delivering for all Queenslanders. This legislation will ensure that our services are in line with modern values that reflect the true diversity of our community.

The bill will strengthen the legal recognition of trans and gender-diverse Queenslanders. It introduces an accessible framework for people aged 16 years and older to apply to change their record of sex. A person will be required to include a statutory declaration that they identify as the sex specified in the application and live or seek to live as a person of that sex and to nominate a sex descriptor. Additionally, the application must include a supporting statement made by an adult who has known the person making the application for at least a year.

There are, of course, criticisms of this bill, and we have heard some of them already today. In fact, this bill, like similar bills in other jurisdictions, has been the subject of a very long, very personal and often unkind debate. For me, this bill and my vote ultimately comes down to two things: values, which I have touched on, and facts. The facts are these. Trans young people report clinically significant

depressive symptoms at more than 10 times the rate of the rest of the Australian youth population. More than 80 per cent of trans young people report having suicidal thoughts and 40 per cent of trans people do not feel safe on the street or on public transport. Amnesty found recently that transgender people can face casual discrimination up to 60 times a day.

I do not accept the opinion that this bill will suddenly lead to an influx of cisgender heteronormative people rushing out to change their birth certificate. I do not accept the opinion that male sexual predators will start to live their life as a woman, will dress and identify as a woman for 12 months, will make an application, including a statutory declaration to BDM that they identify as a woman and include a supporting statement made by an adult who has known them for at least a year, so that they can access a women's bathroom to perpetrate crimes against other women. The assumption that sex-segregated public bathrooms protect women from physical assault is completely flawed. Putting aside the idea that sexual assaults are only perpetrated by someone of the opposite sex, if someone is already willing to break the law to commit a criminal assault, it is likely that they will have no hesitation in breaking another law to enter a women's restroom.

The sad reality for women is that harm can and does happen in any and every space. A simplified system of gender recognition in no way changes this, nor does it mitigate the consequences for inappropriate or illegal behaviour. Queensland's legislation around sexual harassment, stalking, assault and abuse remains unaltered, and it applies regardless of biological sex and regardless of gender.

I do not accept the opinion that young people will now all start having gender reassignment surgery. In fact, this bill will remove the requirement to undergo sexual reassignment surgery. This is a serious and invasive surgery that not all transgender people are able or want to undergo. It is a procedure that carries a number of health risks, it is not covered by Medicare and it is not readily available in Australia.

I do not accept the opinion that female-only services will now have to reorganise their programs. The reality is that this bill will not radically alter the services being offered throughout Queensland. We heard in the public hearings from women's services, including DV services, housing services, legal services and health services that they already recognise gender identity in their service delivery. If a person identifies as a woman in Queensland then that person is already eligible to access women's policies, programs and services, regardless of their sex characteristics.


I do not accept the opinion that this bill is rushed. In fact, in the words of the Deputy Commissioner of the Queensland Human Rights Commission, Neroli Holmes—

The bill has been talked about for the last 10 years. We have been making submissions about the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act since about 2010 ... It has been an ongoing discussion.

...

It has been a very long and extensive period of consultation across the whole community. Our commission has done at least three submissions to the department of justice about this issue over the years. I think there has been an extremely long period of consultation leading up to this bill where many people have had an opportunity to try to put their point of view across to try to create the legislation that is necessary for the 21st century.

The bill is about inclusivity and recognition of the diversity of all Queenslanders, and I commend it to the House.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (12.42 pm): Ten minutes is certainly not a long time to talk about all of the issues that arise from this bill and, in particular, to address all of the concerns that were raised through the inquiry process regarding this bill. I want to make some comments about two broad categories in relation to the bill. Firstly, I will comment about the legal matters arising from the bill. I know that the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Clayfield, has addressed many of them. I want to associate myself with many of the comments he made about the bill. Secondly, I would like to make some comments about concerns and issues raised that are more of a social nature as they relate to the interaction of this bill to our broader society.

Firstly, from a legal perspective, this bill is far from ideal. In a direct manner it introduces uncertainty into many aspects of the legal system in Queensland. There were submissions made along these lines through our committee process. The most glaring part of that is the removal of the objective nature of the births registry in Queensland. For as long as I can remember, and probably for as long as records have been kept, the births, deaths and marriages registry has been a source of objective fact. That is particularly, as it relates to this bill, in relation to the sex of people whose births, deaths and marriages are registered in Queensland.

This bill removes that objectivity and introduces a subjective element to that public record for the first time, as I understand it. In that respect, the bill could be seen to be heralding in Queensland a post-truth era where the facts that have previously been recorded objectively are no longer done so and will not be done into the future upon the passage of this bill.

The member for Clayfield referenced the fact that it is recommended that there be an audit of Queensland legislation after the passage of this bill to rectify or fix any issues that need to be fixed as a result of the passage of this bill. That was something that was raised through the committee process as well. I think that audit—and this is a point I made during the committee process—should have been carried out prior to the introduction of these changes. So many issues in relation to someone's legal sex can be impacted upon through other parts of law.

One of the examples given through the committee process was in relation to the legality of searches carried out by police around the laws that they operate with. That is just one example. There were other issues raised by succession laws as well. Concerns were raised about same-sex schooling, participation in women's sport, single-sex healthcare provision and care being provided by people of a particular sex to people of a particular sex. None of these issues have been dealt with thus far, but this bill has come forward. It introduces a lot of uncertainty. That audit certainly should be undertaken. It should be undertaken before this bill is passed.

The bill suffered from a massive lack of consultation. I mean consultation with the broader community, not just the people the government consulted with. There is a massive lack of awareness in the broader community about the changes that have been proposed in this bill. Let us not beat around the bush, it is a massive change for one to be able to self-identify as another sex. As has been outlined, anyone will be able to change their legal sex on the basis of only a statutory declaration and a supporting statement from one other person that that person has been living as that sex for a period of 12 months. That is not a very high bar to reach in order to be able to change one's legal gender. This is a massive change and the awareness of that in the broader community is scant.

This bill will have consequences not foreseen in this debate or even through the committee process. There will be consequences not assented to by the community because they did not know about them. I have mentioned the health space. I also make mention of the prison space and women's participation in sport. This was the subject of submissions in the committee process by the Women's Forum Australia and Active Watchful Waiting. They stated that it would impact on the right for fair competition for women. Women's Forum Australia had similar concerns, stating that in allowing males who self-identify as females to participate in female-only sports, the bill raises concerns around fairness and safety for female athletes at all levels.

There was a response to this from the department which advised that the Anti-Discrimination Act provides specific exemption to lawfully restrict participation in sporting activities to either males or females. That is the current scenario which I assume will not be changed by this bill. What can be changed through this bill is one's identification and legal status as a male or female. Whilst there are anti-discrimination law exemptions to allow female participation in sport—and that is what has been facilitating the female-only activity in sport—when people can change their legal sex that then opens up the possibility that someone who has changed their legal sex to female will then seek to exercise their right to participate in female-only sport.


There was a response put forward by DJAG that participation in sport on the basis of sex or gender identity is about balancing competing individual rights and, furthermore, that it is a matter that needs to be dealt with by individual clubs and sporting codes, having regard to Australian Human Rights Commission guidelines. The right of those who are born female and who have been able to play in female-only sports in my view, and I think in the view of many submitters to this inquiry and those in the community, is not a right that should be balanced against any other right. We do need to protect women's sport, recognising the inherent physical differences between males and females, particularly in certain sporting activities where the participants are beyond a certain age.

The other response in relation to complying with AHRC guidelines is essentially that sporting codes will be put to the legal sword in relation to this. They will need to obtain exemptions from legal impediments to facilitating a single-sex sport. It is not as though there is not enough regulation and expense when it comes to sporting bodies. This will put up yet another expensive road block.

I have sought to raise some of the legal issues with the bill. In doing so, I have not had time to address all of the social concerns raised in the bill. There were particular concerns raised by the Women's Forum Australia that this bill further entrenches the affirmative model of care when it comes to people who identify as trans and that it would prevent other ways of treatment and that it would further

entrench the medicalisation of those individuals. There were also concerns raised about the rights of parents and the fact that there is a pathway in this bill for children to have a court order given to enable them to—

(Time expired)

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (12.52 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022. The bill repeals and replaces the existing BDMR Act to ensure registration services remain relevant, responsive and contemporary. There are four key objectives of the bill. I intend to focus on the first listed objective—to strengthen the legal recognition of trans and gender-diverse people.

Gender is such an important part of our identity as human beings. Gender identity goes beyond the way that someone outwardly presents themselves. It is the core sense of oneself. For many of us, our lives are made simpler if we identify with the gender listed on our birth certificate, consistent with our biological or sexual organs at birth, but there are many Queenslanders whose lives do not reflect this context. One of my constituents, like many Queenslanders, shared with me recently what the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Bill 2022 means to him and to our community as a whole. He said—

The current state of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act implies that the gender of a person is solely defined by physical attributes. However, the meaning of a person's gender goes far beyond this.

A person's gender identity encompasses and defines who they are. Importantly, such an identity is valid with, or without, physical and bodily changes. In simple terms, you cannot see the gender of a person, the person can only feel and resonate with their identity themselves, irrespective of any physical change.

As such, being incorrectly recognised within legal documentation is both detrimental and discouraging to a person's gender identity. Accordingly, legislation must reflect and empower people to be the best version of themselves with the identity they resonate with most.

Being yourself is a vital part of individuality. Thus, denying the gender diverse community proper legal recognition is taking away their ability to live a life where they are entirely recognised as who they are.

I experienced firsthand the reaction of my community when a local school, Citipointe Christian college, attempted to demand that parents sign an enrolment contract that insisted children only identify with the gender that God bestowed upon each person in all aspects of their life—page 15. I table, for the information of the House, that enrolment contract.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Citipointe Christian College: Contract of Enrolment' [796].

The document included a statement of faith that not only describes homosexuality as a sin but puts it alongside bestiality, incest and paedophilia. It also includes a lengthy paragraph on why the school expects children to 'identify with the gender God bestowed on them'. The message here is clear: LGBTIQ+ students are seen by the school community as an abomination in the eyes of God.

Imagine how those transgender students at this school must feel dealing with the consequences of these statements from the school leadership. As the local member and a practising Christian, I worry deeply about these students, many of whom may not have come out to their parents and peers. We know the rates of self-harm among gay and transgender people are already too high, and I hate to think of the long-term consequences of this school's actions. Thankfully, after an enormous backlash from parents, teachers, former students and the wider Mansfield electorate community, the contract has now been withdrawn.

Throughout my career as a school administrator, I have experienced discomfort over many years in having to produce student report cards using the student's pronouns consistent with their school enrolment form. Information in this legal document was drawn from a student's birth certificate. There were many instances where a student's gender listed on their birth certificate did not align with their lived gender. This created much unease and confusion for these students and their families, not to mention the embarrassment for me as an administrator knowing without any doubt that these young people and their families had journeyed a difficult path to enable these young people to live their true life.

Unlike those opposite, having supported many young people and their families as they navigated a child's gender identity, I am absolutely confident that these families ensure that they have all of the knowledge, education, research and support that they need as they embark on one of the most difficult journeys a parent can go on. I am absolutely confident that these families are making the right decision. I am absolutely confident that these families ensure that they have every bit of information they need to best support their young person as they journey on this most difficult path in life.

In every instance I have been incredibly moved by the unconditional love, compassion, empathy and support shown by parents, families, teachers and peers. My fondest memories as a principal include shaking the hands of graduating students. During these moments all I was conscious of was a happy, proud and excited young person ready to take their place in this adult world and knowing that I had done everything I possibly could every day as a leader to ensure their success. I was never conscious of the colour of a student's eyes, the colour of their skin, their gender or their sexuality, for these aspects of a young person have nothing to do with the teaching and learning process and, quite frankly, are none of my business. I would suggest that it is none of the business of those opposite what a student or a young person or a person living in Queensland identify as the gender that they feel most comfortable with.

I strongly believe that gender exists on a continuum: at one end is female and at one end is male and we all—every single member of this House—lie somewhere on that continuum. Not all transgender people will want or be able to undergo sexual reassignment surgery given its costs, limited availability and potential health and other complications. The current surgery requirement to change one's gender unnecessarily medicalises the recognition of a person's lived identity. For many transgender people, the ability to update their identity records to reflect their sex affirms their identity and supports improved wellbeing. This is the least that we can do for all transgender Queenslanders.

Several weeks ago this House was dealing with the Path to Treaty. This week this House is dealing with a bill that supports our transgender community. The Palaszczuk government never backs away from debating and confronting these most important social agendas. I am proud to be a member of this Palaszczuk government. I am proud to continue to address the contemporary and changing nature of Queensland. We are a progressive state. I look forward to seeing this bill pass tomorrow afternoon. I commend this bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms McMillan, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 pm to 2.00 pm.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

Message from Governor



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.00 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

Mr SPEAKER: The message from Her Excellency recommends the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL 2023

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

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

A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for the Legislative Assembly and parliamentary service for the financial years starting 1 July 2023 and 1 July 2024

GOVERNOR

Date: 13 June 2023

Tabled paper: Message, dated 13 June 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023 [\[797\]](#).

Introduction



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.00 pm): I present a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the Consolidated Fund for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for the financial years starting 1 July 2023 and 1 July 2024. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights.

Tabled paper: Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023 [\[798\]](#).

Tabled paper: Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023, explanatory notes [\[799\]](#).

Tabled paper: Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[800\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023. The bill provides appropriation for the 2023-24 financial year as well as interim supply for 2024-25 to allow normal operations of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service to continue until the 2024-25 Appropriation Bill receives assent. The government remains committed to the independence of the Legislative Assembly and this extends to the means by which public moneys are appropriated to ensure its continued functioning. We are therefore adhering to the current convention that the Legislative Assembly's appropriation be contained in a bill separate from the Appropriation Bill for the other activities of government.

The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2023 will provide necessary funds to ensure the continued operations of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service. These include advisory and information services to assist the parliament, its committees and members to fulfil their constitutional and parliamentary responsibilities, the services provided by the Parliamentary Library, the committee office, Parliamentary Reporting Service, Chamber and Procedural Services and Security and Attendant Services as well as the provision of accommodation, hospitality and members' entitlements.

This bill provides the necessary appropriation for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for the 2023-24 financial year as well as interim supply for 2024-25. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.02 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.

Mr SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 177, the bill is set down for its second reading.

BUDGET PAPERS

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.03 pm):
I am honoured to table the budget papers for 2023-24.

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Appropriation Bills [\[801\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Budget Speech—Budget Paper No. 1 [\[802\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Budget Strategy and Outlook—Budget Paper No. 2 [\[803\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Capital Statement—Budget Paper No. 3 [\[804\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Budget Measures—Budget Paper No. 4 [\[805\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of the Premier and Cabinet [\[806\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning [\[807\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Treasury [\[808\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Agriculture and Fisheries [\[809\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services [\[810\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Corrective Services [\[811\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Education [\[812\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Energy and Public Works [\[813\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Environment and Science [\[814\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management [\[815\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Health [\[816\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Housing [\[817\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Justice and Attorney-General [\[818\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Queensland Police Service [\[819\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water [\[820\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Resources [\[821\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport [\[822\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Transport and Main Roads [\[823\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training [\[824\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts [\[825\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Service Delivery Statements—Legislative Assembly of Queensland [\[826\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Brisbane and Redlands [\[827\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Central Queensland [\[828\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Darling Downs [\[829\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Far North Queensland [\[830\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Gold Coast [\[831\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Ipswich [\[832\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Logan [\[833\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Mackay-Whitsunday [\[834\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Moreton Bay [\[835\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Outback Queensland [\[836\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Sunshine Coast [\[837\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Townsville [\[838\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Regional Action Plan—Wide Bay [\[839\]](#).


Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Tackling the cost of living [\[840\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: At a Glance [\[841\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Budget 2023-24: Queensland Women's Budget Statement [\[842\]](#).

APPROPRIATION BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.04 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

Mr SPEAKER: The message from Her Excellency recommends the Appropriation Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

APPROPRIATION 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 authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2022, 1 July 2023 and 1 July 2024

GOVERNOR

Date: 13 June 2023

Tabled paper: Message, dated 13 June 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the Appropriation Bill 2023 [\[843\]](#).

Introduction

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.04 pm): I present a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the Consolidated Fund for departments for the financial years starting 1 July 2022, 1 July 2023 and 1 July 2024. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights.

Tabled paper: Appropriation Bill 2023 [\[844\]](#).

Tabled paper: Appropriation Bill 2023, explanatory notes [\[845\]](#).

Tabled paper: Appropriation Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[846\]](#).

All over this country, Australians are feeling cost-of-living pressures in ways they have never felt them before. On every trip to the supermarket, it seems like prices just keep going up and up. Every time Australians have to fill up the car, or pay their mortgage, or pay the phone bill, costs seem to go up. While the federal government is stepping up for many Australians, many more are still feeling the pinch. Many do not receive any federal assistance to help them.

Today, for all those Queenslanders facing cost-of-living pressures, I have a simple message: help is on the way. In this budget, our government will deliver greater and more widespread cost-of-living relief than any other government in Australia, state or federal. Through this budget, no matter who they are, Queenslanders will receive cost-of-living relief from our government through their electricity bill, and the value of that cost-of-living relief will be higher than anywhere else in Australia.

In this budget, the Palaszczuk Labor government will also step up to invest even more into building our future. This budget commits our government to the biggest building program in our state's history. Our government will deliver more hospitals, more houses, more roads, more trains and more schools, and we will support more Queenslanders with the essential government services that they deserve. Unlike some states, we will not be racking up bills on the credit card to pay for this. We will do it the Queensland way: the Labor way.

As we invest in cost-of-living relief, in our infrastructure big build and in services across the state, we will also pay down debt. We can do this because of our government's strong and effective economic management. Labor's strong economic management is demonstrated by our budget bottom line.

That is why I am pleased to announce today that for this financial year Queensland's budget surplus will be \$12.3 billion. This is the largest budget surplus ever recorded by any state or territory government, and our budget surplus is larger than all but four surpluses delivered by the government of the Commonwealth of Australia, all more than 15 years ago.

I am also pleased to announce that the funds from this double-digit surplus will pay down state debt. Because of that surplus, we will finish the forward estimates with lower net debt than previously forecast by Queensland Treasury. This will be achieved, even with our record infrastructure spend.

We can deliver our state's biggest cost-of-living program, our state's biggest building program and deliver lower debt because of one simple reason: progressive coal royalties. Our decision to take on the mining lobby, to stand our ground and to fight for the people of our state has delivered a rich reward for Queenslanders. As rich as that reward is for the people of Queensland, it is a mere fraction of the rewards being earned by big coal companies. Those coal companies will earn four times as much in revenues as Queenslanders make in royalties.

We know the mining lobby and its allies will keep fighting these progressive coal royalties. The mining lobby and its allies simply do not think the people of Queensland deserve a fair share of mining profits. That is why the mining lobby is spending \$40 million on a campaign to overturn progressive coal royalties.

Tomorrow marks 500 days until the next Queensland state election. Those 500 days will be defined by the debate over what Queenslanders deserve, and the choice is clear. Queenslanders can have progressive coal royalties, which means more cost-of-living relief, better services, infrastructure for regional Queenslanders, including hospitals, and lower debt or there can be a Queensland without progressive coal royalties, which means there will be no cost-of-living relief, cancelled infrastructure programs, cuts to services and a higher debt burden.

It is not enough for people to say that they support the projects or that they support the cost-of-living relief in this budget. To credibly support the projects in this budget, to credibly support the cost-of-living relief in this budget, then government must support keeping progressive coal royalties, permanently, and the position of the Palaszczuk Labor government could not be clearer.

For so long as there is a Labor government in this state, we will keep progressive coal royalties. I call upon those who will speak through the course of the debate on these appropriation bills to also make their position clear, without prevarication, evasion or equivocation. Do members of this House support progressive coal royalties in their entirety, and all that they deliver for Queenslanders, or not?

This budget debate will allow honourable members, and all political parties, to make a public declaration on whether they support progressive coal royalties in their entirety or not. Our government's position is clear, because we will need every dollar to continue to deliver the budget priorities for Queensland.

Cost of living

The highest priority of this budget is cost-of-living relief. That priority is to deliver cost-of-living relief, but to do so in a way that does not add to inflationary pressures. This budget delivers the strongest direct cost-of-living support package of any Australian state government. Thanks to the Albanese Labor government, many Queensland households will receive \$250 through a federal government electricity rebate, matched by another \$250 from our government. However, under the terms set by the federal government, around half of Queensland households will receive no relief from that rebate.

I am pleased to announce today that our government will deliver a major expansion of the rebate program, and we will pay for the entirety of that expansion program ourselves. As a result of our investment, every Queensland household, including those not eligible under the federal program, will receive an enhanced electricity rebate totalling at least \$550. This payment will go to every one of the 2.2 million Queensland households, and that is only right because every household in Queensland owns our electricity assets. Through our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, we intend to keep it that way as we deliver our world-leading plan to transition to clean energy.

Our government also recognises that when inflation is high, low-income households bear the brunt of cost-of-living pressures. I know that firsthand from the community I am so proud to represent in this House. When cost-of-living pressures hit, they hit electorates like Woodridge first, and they hit hard. So, on top of the \$550 payment, eligible Queensland concession holders will also continue to access their \$372 standing concession.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce that, on top of those payments, eligible Queensland concession holders will also receive an additional electricity bill rebate of \$150. Altogether, it means eligible Queensland concession holders will receive a total of \$1,072 in concessions and cost-of-living relief. That means low-income Queensland households, such as pensioners, may pay nothing for electricity next financial year. This will free up their finances for other essential purchases. Again, that is only fair.

Our government also understands the cost-of-living pressures faced by working Queensland families with young children and we understand the economic potential that is unlocked by enabling more women to get back into the workforce. That is why today I am announcing that this budget will provide \$645 million over four years to fund 15 hours each week of free kindergarten for all four-year-old Queensland children from January 2024. Over the course of a year, that means an average saving of \$4,600 for many Queensland families. Making kindy more affordable puts more money into the pockets of working Queenslanders and it gives more Queenslanders the opportunity to return to work or to take on more work, further easing pressures.

In further targeted cost-of-living relief, this budget invests \$4.8 million over two years in a new SwimStart program. Modelled on the successful FairPlay vouchers, this program will provide more than 30,000 vouchers valued at up to \$150 for eligible children under the age of five to learn to swim.

Our government also recognises the distances that some Queenslanders must travel in a state as large as ours to get to the medical care they require. That is why this budget provides \$70 million over four years to increase accommodation and fuel subsidies under the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme.

Health

More parents returning to the workforce because of free kindy is good for the Queensland economy and when more Queenslanders are healthy, that is also good for our economy. The enduring lesson of the pandemic is that a strong health response leads to a strong economy. Our government always puts health first. That is why this budget sets yet another record for health funding. Next financial year, Queensland's health budget will be a record \$25.8 billion. The 9.6 per cent increase in the health operating budget represents the largest annual increase in the health budget in Queensland history.

This budget continues the delivery of our record \$9.8 billion hospital construction program, building new or expanded hospitals across the state including in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, Toowoomba and in South-East Queensland. This is the biggest health building program of any state or territory in Australia.

Our record health funding also includes \$764 million to specifically address ambulance ramping and healthcare pressures that contribute to emergency department wait times. We are investing \$72 million for 200 more paramedics, \$28 million for new and replacement ambulances and \$22 million in a cost-of-living allowance for nursing and midwifery students in regional, rural and remote Queensland.

Housing

Across Australia, and in many parts of the world, housing shortages are a source of daily distress for those without a home or in fear of losing their home. Understandably, this housing shortage is an issue of great concern to many Queenslanders. The causes are clear: a shortage of building and construction materials caused by pandemic related supply chain issues; a shortage of tradies after stronger than expected employment growth; and a fundamental change in household composition, accelerated by the pandemic.

In 2015, the average Australian dwelling was home to 2.6 people. Today, that number has shrunk to 2.5. That small change has had a big impact. All other things being equal, it means Queensland would need an extra 77,000 homes just to keep pace with that decline in household size, but so much has changed in that time.

The pandemic also demonstrated what a great place Queensland is to live—a safe harbour, with good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle. Our government has been addressing the challenge of population growth. That is why, as Treasurer, I was proud to help create the Housing Investment Fund, which is now supporting its first tenants in homes in regional Queensland, and it is also why I am pleased to announce today an additional investment of \$1.1 billion into the housing portfolio. This investment will meet the higher costs of construction faced by the Queensland government in delivering our housing building program. Anyone who pretends governments are immune from the rapid rise in construction costs that have affected the entire industry in Australia is economically naive or seeks to deceive Queenslanders. Our investment will also see an additional \$322 million to increase our social housing target by another 500 homes.

Community safety

Every Queenslander deserves to have a home and every Queenslander deserves to be safe in that home. Our government recognises increasing community concerns about youth crime, and we are acting to address those concerns. The budget delivers additional investment of over \$440 million over five years to help boost police resources and tackle the complex causes of youth crime and support community safety. This includes \$96 million for youth co-responder teams who engage with young people to break the cycle of youth crime. It supports up to \$30 million in funding to enable seniors to be more secure in their homes.

Our government will provide \$37 million to implement the Strengthening Community Safety Act 2023, which ensures repeat offenders spend less time on remand and more time serving their sentences, and we will invest \$58.3 million over four years to implement the domestic, family and sexual violence review.

Big Build

Our government is proud to be making preparations for Queensland to host the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. We are planning for the renewable ambition of our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. As more people decide every week to become Queenslanders, we are planning for the hospitals, schools, roads and dams Queenslanders deserve right across this state.

Today I am pleased to announce that, over the four years to 2026-27, we will more than meet our \$50 billion infrastructure guarantee. Queensland's Big Build, our total capital program over those four years, is forecast to be \$89 billion. This unprecedented peak is the result of accelerated works for the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan and the Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan, and also takes into account higher prices for construction wages and materials.

Even as construction costs rise significantly across the country, continuing with these investments is a deliberate decision by our government. Government either backs these projects and accepts their higher costs or government has to walk away, and our government will never walk away from the needs of Queenslanders. The labour shortages that are driving up construction costs are also testing the depth of Queensland's skills base.

Our ability to transition to a low-carbon, more diversified and more industrialised economy will be underpinned by the resilience and flexibility of Queensland's workforce. Increased skills means increased productivity, which is the key to further wages growth. This budget supports the *Good people good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032*, which will strengthen local communities and ensure our workforce has the agility to support growth. Next financial year our government will invest more than \$1.2 billion in skills and training initiatives supporting workforce development and overcoming barriers to employment.

Transport infrastructure

The \$6.9 billion to be invested in transport infrastructure next financial year includes \$420 million towards stage 1 of the Coomera Connector. It includes \$260 million towards stage 3 of Gold Coast Light Rail. This budget will fund major upgrades to the M1 and the Bruce Highway and it will invest in the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program in Maryborough, the Gold Coast Faster Rail project and Cross River Rail.

Water infrastructure

In a state as vast as Queensland, we understand the importance of infrastructure—not just roads, but water projects as well. This budget includes more than \$150 million to complete construction of Rookwood Weir, as well as planning and early works for upgrades to the Burdekin Falls Dam, to Paradise Dam near Bundaberg and to the Awoonga Dam near Gladstone. This budget also includes over \$13 million for the Toowoomba to Warwick water pipeline and over \$548 million for the Fitzroy to Gladstone water pipeline. The Fitzroy to Gladstone water pipeline is one of many projects to be funded through our new progressive coal royalty tiers.

Education infrastructure

As our government plans for Queensland's future, we recognise that the need for new schools in new growth areas will be enduring. To that end, we will invest \$968 million over 10 years to establish the Rolling Land Fund. The focus of this fund will be the strategic acquisition of new school sites. For existing Queensland state schools, this budget invests \$358 million for new general and specialist learning spaces and this budget provides a further \$259 million over three years to expand the successful school halls program.

Regional infrastructure

As I said earlier, one of the cornerstones of this budget is the revenue generated by the coal owned by the people of Queensland. That revenue is generated in regional Queensland, so it is only right that regional Queensland stands to benefit from what that revenue provides. In each of the four budgets I have delivered, more than half of the total infrastructure investment has been outside greater Brisbane. In this budget, that proportion rises to a record 65½ per cent of capital investment outside Brisbane, or \$13.3 billion next financial year.

In this budget our government will provide an additional \$6 billion in funding to our government owned corporations for priority infrastructure projects including energy, water and ports. Much of that investment will deliver the generational transformation that is the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. That is a plan that will revolutionise Queensland's economy, and it will do so in regional Queensland.

Over the next four years, our government will deliver an equity investment of \$6 billion to Queensland Hydro to help deliver the \$14 billion Borumba pumped hydro project. Operating as a gravity fed battery, the two-gigawatt Borumba project will have the capacity to provide one-third of Queensland's current average electricity demand for a period of 24 hours.

Next financial year, significant investments through our publicly owned energy businesses include \$594 million for CopperString 2032. In the coming year, through CleanCo, we will invest \$213 million to develop wind and solar projects in Central Queensland and the Swanbank battery. We will invest \$673 million through Stanwell to develop the Wambo and Tarong West wind farms and large-scale batteries, and \$312 million through CS Energy for Central Queensland wind farms and large-scale batteries.

Across the four years to 2026-27, this budget provides \$19 billion in total capital investment to support the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. Our energy transition will not leave behind the very resource communities in regional Queensland whose toil has enabled so much wealth to be generated. As this energy transition occurs, the world will continue to need steel-making coal and other vital minerals.

This budget will ensure that Queensland will continue to be able to meet that need by working with the mining industry. We will work together to fast-track capital investments that reduce emissions through the \$500 million Low Emissions Investment Partnerships program.

Regional Queensland delivers our economic success not just through minerals resources, but through the food and fibre that is recognised around the world for its sustainable quality. Queensland's reputation for high-quality agriculture is a competitive advantage that must be maintained.

Over five years, this budget provides additional funding of \$22 million to address increasing animal biosecurity risks, including the risk of foot-and-mouth disease and lumpy skin disease, and a further \$22 million towards biosecurity preparedness for plant pests and diseases.

Other infrastructure

As our planning for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games continues on track, this budget provides \$1.9 billion over the next four years to commence delivery of venue infrastructure. Because Queenslanders know there is always a natural disaster waiting somewhere around the corner, this budget includes \$152 million to enhance Queensland's disaster recovery and resilience. This initiative is jointly funded with the Australian government, from efficiencies in Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.

Next financial year, this budget provides \$8 million to enable the Rural Fire Service to improve its capability and ensure a sustainable volunteer model across Queensland. When natural disasters strike Queensland, we rely on the invaluable role that volunteers play, because volunteering is deeply ingrained in the Queensland character, so we are providing funding of \$3 million in 2023-24 to enable the State Emergency Service to enhance its volunteer capability.

First Nations

This year, our parliament passed the historic Path to Treaty Bill, and this year Australians will vote on finally recognising our First Nations people in the Australian Constitution by enshrining an Indigenous Voice to Parliament. Accordingly, this year's budget papers seek to reflect Queensland's First Nations heritage.

I wish to acknowledge David Williams, a proud Wakka Wakka artist, who is responsible for the artwork for this year's budget papers. That artwork tells a story that begins at the heart of the state's economy and the Treasury's place of duty and responsibility. It describes Treasury's journey to connect meaningfully with communities and recognises Treasury's responsibility to recognise and celebrate First Nations cultures, contributions, and achievements—to build strong and authentic connections with First Nations people and communities wherever possible.

Our government has, of course, committed to reframing Queensland's relationship with its First Nations people. We will partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to deliver the best care for country through traditional knowledge and expertise, through co-stewardship arrangements and by recognising native title. I am proud to announce this budget will provide \$39 million over four years to ensure that we progress agreements and relationships that promote respect, culture, rights and active co-stewardship of country.

Our government is also providing increased funding of \$50 million over four years for the continuation of the expanded Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program, which has doubled ranger numbers to 200.

Environment

Across Australia, and around the world, Queensland's natural environment is renowned. As custodians of that environment, we have a solemn responsibility to protect it, but also to ensure Queenslanders and visitors have the opportunity to appreciate its majesty. This budget provides increased funding of \$38 million over four years to build new visitor trails in national parks and to revitalise existing ones. Doing so is good for our environment, it is good for tourism and it is good for regional small businesses and the employment of First Nations peoples.

Our government is also providing an additional \$5.8 million over three years for investment into infrastructure improvements in Queensland's precious World Heritage areas. To make sure as many international and domestic visitors as possible have the chance to see those World Heritage areas, this budget provides \$272 million over four years for delivery of the Towards Tourism 2032: Transforming Queensland's visitor economy future strategy.

Economic forecast and fiscal update

The strength of this year's budget gives us the ability to make the investments necessary to ensure Queensland's continued prosperity, and we can make these investments while maintaining borrowings at sustainable levels. We need to conserve Queensland's fiscal strength, because the path ahead remains uncertain.

The International Monetary Fund has downgraded its global growth outlook for calendar 2023. Russia's illegal and obscene war in Ukraine continues to inflict human misery and economic carnage every day. Around the world, economic conditions are deteriorating as interest rates rise to ward off inflation.

Queensland's economy is forecast to grow two per cent this financial year, rising to three per cent in 2023-24. By comparison, the Reserve Bank of Australia expects national economic growth to slow again, to 1½ per cent in calendar year 2024. Inflation is forecast to continue easing, down to 3¾ per cent next financial year.

To date, household spending in Queensland has proved resilient in the face of successive interest rate rises, but consumer spending growth is forecast to slow materially next financial year. High rates of capacity utilisation and a strong construction pipeline should see business investment continue to rise, while easing supply constraints are forecast to see a welcome increase in dwelling investment.

As Queensland's State Final Demand has grown faster than the rest of Australia, so too has our demand for labour. Employment growth is forecast to ease from 3¼ per cent in 2022-23 to one per cent next financial year, but unemployment will continue to remain low by historical standards, at 4¼ per cent next financial year, rising to 4½ per cent in 2024-25.

Queensland's fiscal position is easily the strongest of the major states. In 2022-23, that strength is due in large part to our progressive coal royalty tiers. Those progressive coal royalty tiers give our government the fiscal capacity to support Queenslanders in a way that no other state or territory can. At the same time, expenses for 2022-23 have been managed broadly within the forecasts provided at last year's budget.

Our government is acutely aware that the cost-of-living measures we put in place must not risk further exacerbating inflationary pressures. We can do so while improving our debt position and delivering a record surplus.

Three years ago, in my first budget, I forecast four deficits in a row. That was the prudent course of action to adopt at that time, to absorb the pain of the pandemic, and it was what Queenslanders voted for in the 2020 state election. Two of those deficits have now been erased, thanks to our fiscal management and progressive coal royalties.

The one deficit that remains, in 2023-24, is the written proof that our government puts the finances of everyday Queenslanders first. That one remaining budget deficit is the result of our deliberate decision to dig deeper than our annual revenues would otherwise allow, to support Queenslanders with cost-of-living relief.

Through our efforts, and through our commitments, we send an important message to Queensland households and families. Our government is willing to keep our budget in deficit, if it means keeping the budgets of more Queensland households and families in surplus. Our fiscal strength means we can afford to make that decision, given this budget shows a level of debt that is less than half of what was forecast just under two years ago.

Over successive budgets, revenue from coal royalties has been targeted towards fiscal recovery and a lower reliance on debt. Queensland's general government net debt-to-revenue ratio for the current financial year has been reduced from 27 per cent in the 2022-23 budget, to just seven per cent in this budget. This is below pre-pandemic expectations, with the 2019 budget forecasting a net debt-to-revenue ratio of 30 per cent in 2022-23.

As a result of our \$89 billion Big Build capital investment, the ratio of net debt to revenue is expected to increase to 55 per cent by 2026-27, but that remains far lower than the ratios of other major states, with Victoria projecting a ratio of 172 per cent in the same year and New South Wales projecting a ratio of 102 per cent by 2025-26.

There will, of course, be those who choose to deliberately ignore this measure of net debt, which is the accepted measure of debt for the Commonwealth government, and for every other state and territory. They will use the figure of \$147 billion for non-financial public sector debt by the end of the forward estimates. Some will even mistakenly compare that to net debt in other states. I will never stop correcting those errors, whoever makes them and wherever they are made. But if some decide that nowhere else can be compared to the strength of the Queensland balance sheet, so be it. If that is the number we have to wear in order to make the right decisions for Queensland, that is a number we will wear as a badge of honour.

That \$147 billion in non-financial public sector borrowings shows the strength of the balance sheets of our government owned corporations. We make no apology for using the strength of the balance sheets of our government owned corporations to build Queensland's renewable energy future, through our Energy and Jobs Plan—the pumped hydro projects, the Queensland transmission SuperGrid including 500-kilovolt transmission lines, the solar and wind farms that will transform our economy and create more low-emissions jobs in manufacturing and heavy industry.

Supplementary appropriation

This year's budget also provides for an improved level of scrutiny of appropriations. Every year, after the budget, treasurers introduce a supplementary appropriation, to deal with unforeseen expenditure that has arisen in the previous financial year. Unforeseen expenditure represents additional funding required by departments above what was provided for in the original appropriation. These additional amounts reflect expenditures related to unforeseen events like natural disasters, accelerated expenditures where programs are brought forward, decisions taken by government after the budget, as well as technical adjustments that occur throughout the year.

Rather than have the parliament wait until September or October after the financial year, this year unforeseen expenditure, up until April 2023, has been incorporated into the Appropriation Bill that I am introducing today. This is an important reform, as it means those amounts for unforeseen expenditure can be requested from the parliament at the earliest opportunity and can be scrutinised by the parliament through the estimates process. This is another example of our government's commitment to transparency and the parliamentary process, and I am sure it will be welcomed by all members.

I also note that there may still be a need for a small, supplementary appropriation to be introduced later in the year. This will reflect any unforeseen expenditure arising in May and June of this year.

Conclusion

The challenges faced by our state are significant. We face tough economic headwinds, the highest inflation in a generation, the continuing war in Europe and high interest rates, and Queensland households and families experience those headwinds through a higher cost of living. But our actions, 12 months ago, to put in place progressive coal royalties is the decision that sets up our state to take on those challenges.

Because of those coal royalties and the surplus that they have delivered, this budget delivers what the people of Queensland need: comprehensive cost-of-living relief; our state's record Big Build; new investments in health, housing and youth justice; the transformation of our energy system to clean renewable energy; and much lower debt. No other government in Australia could promise this, and no other government in Australia could deliver what this budget delivers for Queensland.

First Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.40 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.

Mr SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 177, the bill is set down for its second reading.

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.40 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

Mr SPEAKER: The message from Her Excellency the Governor recommends the Revenue 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

REVENUE 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 intitled—

A Bill for an Act to amend the Duties Act 2001, the Land Tax Act 2010, the Land Tax Regulation 2021, the Payroll Tax Act 1971 and the Taxation Administration Act 2001 for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 13 June 2023

Tabled paper: Message, dated 13 June 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 [\[847\]](#).

Introduction

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.41 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Duties Act 2001, the Land Tax Act 2010, the Land Tax Regulation 2021, the Payroll Tax Act 1971 and the Taxation Administration Act 2001 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Economics and Governance Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 [\[848\]](#).

Tabled paper: Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes [\[849\]](#).

Tabled paper: Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[850\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill includes a number of amendments to implement revenue measures I announced in the 2023-24 budget relating to land tax, additional foreign acquirer duty and payroll tax. The bill achieves these objectives by amending the Land Tax Act 2010, the Land Tax Regulation 2021, the Duties Act 2001 and the Payroll Tax Act 1971. The bill amends the Land Tax Act, the Land Tax Regulation and the Duties Act to introduce the tax concessions that I announced following the Housing Roundtable on 28 March 2023 for eligible build-to-rent developments. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

These concessions will support the delivery of rental dwellings across the state, including more affordable housing.

For land used for an eligible build to rent development, the land tax value of the land will be discounted by 50 per cent, and there will be a 100 per cent discount of the value for the land tax foreign surcharge.

A 100 per cent discount will also apply in relation to additional foreign acquirer duty.

These concessions commence from 1 July 2023 and will be available up to a maximum term of 20 years. They will be subject to timing and eligibility requirements.

In particular, developments will need to have at least 10 per cent of dwellings as affordable housing at discounted rents to be eligible.

The Payroll Tax Act currently provides a 50 per cent rebate for wages of apprentices and trainees.

The rebate expires on 30 June 2023. In the 2023-24 Budget, I announced an extension of the rebate until 30 June 2024.

The Bill amends the Payroll Tax Act to extend this rebate for return periods in the 2023-24 financial year.

The Payroll Tax Act also currently provides a 1 per cent discount on the rates of payroll tax for regional employers.

Regional employers are those whose principal place of employment is in regional Queensland and who pay at least 85 per cent of taxable wages to regional employees.

This discount expires on 30 June 2023.

In the 2023-24 Budget, I announced an extension of the discount for a further seven years, to 30 June 2030.

The Bill amends the Payroll Tax Act to give effect to this extension.

The Bill also makes a number of other amendments to revenue legislation.

As I announced in March this year, it removes the requirement for a land owner to apply for a land tax exemption in certain circumstances for property used as their home.

It preserves the operation of transitional provisions in relation to a change in the payroll tax deduction phase out rate during the 2022-23 financial year.

It also clarifies the operation of tax and royalty refund provisions.

The Land Tax Act provides for an exemption from land tax for land used as the owner's home.

Currently, land owners are required to apply for the exemption.

The Bill amends the Land Tax Act to remove this requirement where the Commissioner of State Revenue believes the exemption applies to the whole or part of the land, based on information available.

Where the Commissioner cannot form this belief, an eligible land owner can continue to access the exemption by lodging an application.

Importantly, this change to simplify land tax administration does not otherwise change the eligibility requirements for the home exemption.

A number of amendments to the Land Tax Act are also made by the Bill to support this beneficial approach to land tax administration.

This includes new or expanded obligations for a land owner to notify the Commissioner if the land owner becomes aware of an error with the Commissioner's determination of land tax liability, or if there are particular changes in the land owner's circumstances.

The Bill also amends the Payroll Tax Act to preserve current transitional arrangements for the beneficial change in the deduction phase out rate which occurred on 1 January 2023.

The transitional arrangements are currently contained in the Payroll Tax (Transitional) Regulation 2022. As this regulation will expire on 1 January 2024, the transitional arrangements will be inserted into the Payroll Tax Act.

Preserving the arrangements in the Payroll Tax Act will provide certainty for employers and support ongoing administration of payroll tax.

Finally, the Bill amends the Taxation Administration Act 2001 to clarify the operation of the tax and royalty refund provisions.

The amendment will clarify that refunds of amounts paid under a tax law are only available under the refund provisions of that Act and the revenue laws, and not under common law remedies.

CONCLUSION

Mr Speaker, this Bill delivers several important 2023-24 Budget revenue measures and makes other amendments to support the administration of Queensland's revenue laws.

I commend the Bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.42 pm):
I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Economics and Governance Committee


Mr SPEAKER: In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Economics and Governance Committee.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Declared Urgent; Cognate Debate

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.42 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—


That—

1. under the provisions of standing order 137, the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill be declared an urgent bill and not stand referred to a committee and be set down for its second reading to enable the bill to be passed through all remaining stages at this week's sitting; and
2. in accordance with standing order 172, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill, having already been treated as cognate bills under the provisions of standing order 176, be also treated as cognate with the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill for the second reading debate but with separate questions being put with regard to the second reading of (a) the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill and (b) the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (2.44 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 2.44 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Camm, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Head, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Janetzki, Kelly, King A, King S, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, Madden, Mander, Martin, McCallum, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting