



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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

Email: [hansard@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:hansard@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Phone (07) 3553 6344

## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

### Wednesday, 25 October 2023

Subject	Page
<b>SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>3181</b>
Occupational Therapy Week .....	3181
Visitors to Public Gallery.....	3181
School Group Tours.....	3181
<b>MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS</b> .....	<b>3181</b>
Bushfires .....	3181
Renewable Energy .....	3182
Vaping.....	3182
Critical Minerals .....	3183
Works for Queensland .....	3183
Bushfires; Infrastructure Projects.....	3183
Coal Industry .....	3184
Bushfires; Emergency Services Personnel.....	3185
Vaping.....	3185
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 38, 57th Parliament—Vaping: An inquiry into reducing rates of e-cigarette use in Queensland, government response.....	3185
<b>Renewable Energy</b> .....	<b>3186</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Government: Report titled 'Queensland's Clean Energy Workforce Roadmap: Delivering the workforce for our energy transformation'. .....	3186
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Queensland Government: Report titled 'Future Energy Jobs Guide'.....	3187
<b>State Schools, Renewable Energy</b> .....	<b>3187</b>
<b>Sexual Violence Awareness Month</b> .....	<b>3187</b>
<b>Renewable Energy</b> .....	<b>3188</b>
<b>Housing</b> .....	<b>3189</b>
<b>Resources Industries, Mount Isa</b> .....	<b>3189</b>
<b>NOTICE OF MOTION</b> .....	<b>3190</b>
Townsville, Youth Crime.....	3190

# Table of Contents – Wednesday, 25 October 2023

<b>QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE .....</b>	<b>3190</b>
Ambulance Ramping.....	3190
Ambulance Services .....	3191
Climate Smart Energy Savers Rebate .....	3191
Health System, Ophthalmologists.....	3192
Economy .....	3193
Health, Data Reporting.....	3193
North Queensland, Infrastructure Projects .....	3194
Health System, Radiology.....	3195
Cost of Living .....	3195
Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services, Comments .....	3196
Regional Queensland, Racing Industry .....	3197
Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services, Comments .....	3198
Health, Workforce.....	3198
UNESCO, Federal Labor Government.....	3199
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 25 May 2023, from the Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, Hon. Tanya Plibersek, to the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay, regarding Australian and Queensland government commitments for the protection of the Great Barrier Reef. ....	3199
Police Resources .....	3200
Cooloolool, Visitor Capacity Study.....	3201
Renewable Energy.....	3202
Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services .....	3202
Social and Affordable Housing.....	3202
<b>MOTIONS .....</b>	<b>3203</b>
Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders.....	3203
Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to. ....	3203
Resolved in the affirmative.....	3203
Progressive Coal Royalties .....	3203
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract, undated, of an article by Mr Henry.....	3211
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document, dated 27 June 2023, titled 'Mike Henry speech at World Mining Congress 2023'.....	3211
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to. ....	3214
Resolved in the negative.....	3215
Division: Question put—That the motion be agreed to. ....	3215
Resolved in the affirmative.....	3215
<b>EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) (EXTENSION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN REMOTE AREAS)</b>	
<b>AMENDMENT BILL.....</b>	<b>3215</b>
Introduction .....	3215
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Education (General Provisions) (Extension of Primary Schools in Remote Areas) Amendment Bill 2023. ....	3215
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Education (General Provisions) (Extension of Primary Schools in Remote Areas) Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes. ....	3215
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Education (General Provisions) (Extension of Primary Schools in Remote Areas) Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights. ....	3215
First Reading .....	3219
Referral to Education, Employment and Training Committee .....	3219
<b>CASINO CONTROL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL.....</b>	<b>3219</b>
Message from Governor .....	3219
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Message, dated 25 October 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. ....	3219
Introduction .....	3220
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.....	3220
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes. ....	3220
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights. ....	3220
First Reading .....	3222
Referral to Legal Affairs and Safety Committee .....	3222
<b>PROPERTY LAW BILL .....</b>	<b>3222</b>
Second Reading .....	3222
Consideration in Detail.....	3231
Clauses 1 to 64, as read, agreed to. ....	3231
Clause 65—.....	3231
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Property Law Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments. ....	3231
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Property Law Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments.....	3231
Amendments agreed to. ....	3231
Clause 65, as amended, agreed to. ....	3231
Clauses 66 and 67, as read, agreed to. ....	3232
Clause 68—.....	3232
Amendment agreed to.....	3232
Clause 68, as amended, agreed to. ....	3232
Clauses 69 to 79, as read, agreed to. ....	3232

## Table of Contents – Wednesday, 25 October 2023

Clause 80—	3232
Amendment agreed to	3232
Clause 80, as amended, agreed to	3232
Clauses 81 to 94, as read, agreed to	3232
Clause 95—	3232
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Property Law Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Dr Amy MacMahon's amendments	3232
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Property Law Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Dr Amy MacMahon's amendments	3232
Division: Question put—That the amendments be agreed to	3233
Resolved in the negative under standing order 106(10)	3233
Non-government amendments (Dr MacMahon) negatived	3233
Clause 95, as read, agreed to	3233
Clauses 96 to 99, as read, agreed to	3233
Insertion of new clause—	3233
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to	3234
Resolved in the negative under standing order 106(10)	3234
Non-government amendment (Dr MacMahon) negatived	3234
Clause 100—	3234
Non-government amendment (Dr MacMahon) negatived	3234
Clause 100, as read, agreed to	3234
Clause 101—	3234
Non-government amendment (Dr MacMahon) negatived	3234
Amendment agreed to	3235
Clause 101, as amended, agreed to	3235
Clause 102, as read, agreed to	3235
Clause 103—	3235
Amendments agreed to	3235
Clause 103, as amended, agreed to	3235
Clauses 104 and 105, as read, agreed to	3235
Clause 106—	3235
Amendments agreed to	3235
Clause 106, as amended, agreed to	3235
Clauses 107 to 178, as read, agreed to	3236
Insertion of new clause—	3236
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to	3236
Resolved in the negative under standing order 106(10)	3236
Non-government amendment (Dr MacMahon) negatived	3236
Clauses 179 to 190, as read, agreed to	3236
Clause 191—	3237
Amendment agreed to	3237
Clause 191, as amended, agreed to	3237
Clauses 192 to 239, as read, agreed to	3237
Insertion of new clause—	3237
Amendment agreed to	3237
Clauses 240 to 289, as read, agreed to	3237
Schedules 1 to 3, as read, agreed to	3237
<b>Third Reading</b>	<b>3237</b>
<b>Long Title</b>	<b>3238</b>
<b>TOW TRUCK BILL</b>	<b>3238</b>
<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>3238</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Transport and Resources Committee: Report No. 39, 57th Parliament—Tow Truck Bill 2023, government response	3238
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Tow Truck Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights: Erratum	3238
<b>MOTION</b>	<b>3254</b>
<b>Townsville, Youth Crime</b>	<b>3254</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract, undated, from the Twitter account of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services, Hon. Mark Bailey, in relation to comments made by Mr Ian Leavers	3256
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Document, undated, titled 'The Right Priorities for Queensland's Future'	3256
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract from media article, dated 10 June 2022, titled 'Townsville residents refuse efforts to break cycle for troubled young people'	3259
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract, undated, from a speech made by the member for Ninderry, Mr Dan Purdie MP	3260
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to	3265
Resolved in the affirmative	3266
Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to	3266
Resolved in the affirmative	3266
<b>TOW TRUCK BILL</b>	<b>3266</b>
<b>Second Reading</b>	<b>3266</b>
<b>ADJOURNMENT</b>	<b>3274</b>
<b>Kruger, Mr J</b>	<b>3274</b>
<b>Nudgee Electorate</b>	<b>3275</b>
<b>Nanango Electorate; Drought, Bushfires</b>	<b>3275</b>
<b>Mansfield Electorate, Infrastructure</b>	<b>3276</b>

## Table of Contents – Wednesday, 25 October 2023

<b>Redlands Electorate .....</b>	<b>3277</b>
<b>St Paul's School .....</b>	<b>3277</b>
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, undated, from an anonymous student regarding the decision by the Anglican Church not to renew the contract of the Principal of St Paul's School, Dr Paul Browning.....	3278
<b>Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry .....</b>	<b>3278</b>
<b>Bushfire Preparedness .....</b>	<b>3278</b>
<b>Acacia Coffee Co.; Seniors Month .....</b>	<b>3279</b>
<b>Ninderry Electorate .....</b>	<b>3280</b>
<b>ATTENDANCE .....</b>	<b>3280</b>

## WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 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.

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

#### Occupational Therapy Week



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, this week is Occupational Therapy Week and this year's theme is Unity through Community. I believe all members will appreciate the importance of the vital and dynamic roles of OTs in helping people engage with and participate in their community in whichever way is meaningful to them. Whether we are discussing occupational therapy for a child with a disability participating in their schooling, adults requiring support or any member of the community accessing their workplace, OTs are all about making people's lives more meaningful and fulfilling. On behalf of the House I would like to acknowledge the work done by occupational therapists across a broad range of areas in our communities.

#### Visitors to Public Gallery



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to acknowledge the presence in the gallery today of a number of mayors from South-East Queensland. I give a warm welcome to: Mayor Teresa Harding, Ipswich City Council; Mayor Tanya Milligan, Lockyer Valley Regional Council; Mayor Darren Power, Logan City Council; Mayor Clare Stewart, Noosa Council; Mayor Karen Williams, Redland City Council; Mayor Mark Jamieson, Sunshine Coast Council; Mayor Geoff McDonald, Toowoomba Regional Council; and last but not least, Mayor Graeme Lehmann, Somerset Regional Council.

#### School Group Tours



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we will also be joined in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from St Mark's Catholic Primary School in the electorate of Inala; St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Barcaldine, in the electorate of Gregory; Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Longreach, also in the electorate of Gregory; and, funnily enough, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Blackall, in the electorate of Gregory.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Bushfires




**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.33 am): We are learning this morning of a tragic loss of life connected to bushfires on the Western Downs. I convey my condolences and those of this House to the person's friends and family. It is a sad reminder of how dangerous conditions remain and I once again plead with everyone to take no risks and pay attention to the advice from our emergency services.

There are 24 bushfire warnings current across the state. Fire bans are in effect for most of the state. Leave immediately orders have been issued in Tara, Wieambilla, Kogan, Goranba, Weranga and Millmerran Woods with evacuation centres in operation. Police have been going door to door advising people to leave. It is very important that people who are told to leave do not return until advised by authorities that it is safe to do so.

There are 81 people in the evacuation centre at Tara, one in Chinchilla and 37 in Millmerran. Department of communities staff have been in constant contact with local councils and I am advised they are expected in these centres later today. I am also advised high to extreme fire danger ratings are expected in the central and southern interior parts today, tomorrow and Friday. Fast-moving wind-driven fires are likely from the early hours of tomorrow morning, so we need everyone to be alert.

I once again thank our firefighters, police and emergency services who are working around the clock to keep their communities safe. I urge everyone to please listen to their advice.

### Renewable Energy


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.34 am): I have said it before and I will say it again: Queensland's renewable energy transition is the opportunity of a lifetime—an opportunity to put downward pressure on household energy bills and an opportunity to create good, secure jobs for the future. We estimate this transformation will support around 100,000 new jobs by 2040. That is jobs in electrical trades, engineering, construction and new technologies. That is why today I am releasing Queensland's Clean Energy Workshop Roadmap.

This road map is backed by an initial \$30 million investment to help create a skilled, job-ready workforce. Our investment will expand the successful Gateway to Industry Schools Program to put renewable energy training into more than 30 schools for 2,000 students across Queensland. This program helps young people in our schools to access industry training, putting them on a pathway to employment. Already, students have access to aerospace, minerals and energy, hydrogen, agribusiness and advanced manufacturing. We want young people to have access to the training they need to pursue a career in the energy sector so they can help build new infrastructure like wind farms, solar farms and pumped hydro.

We will pilot mobile regional energy job hubs across our vast renewable energy zones to connect communities to job opportunities. Importantly, we want our existing workforce to take up the opportunities that emerge on this journey. It is why we are seeking to set in place the jobs guarantee for workers so they know they can reskill to continue their careers with publicly owned energy businesses or in the public sector.

Through the Clean Energy Workforce Roadmap our government is also supporting the Equal by 30 campaign. This means doing the work to establish equal pay, equal leadership and equal opportunity for women in the clean energy sector because when women and men have an equal seat at the table we can drive better solutions for all. We are well positioned to lead the clean energy revolution and I want the men and women of Queensland to be at the forefront.

### Vaping


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.36 am): Keeping Queenslanders safe is, of course, our first priority. We did it during the pandemic and we must do it now. We must continue to raise awareness of the dangers of vaping. These addictive e-cigarettes are being marketed to our youngest Queenslanders. Nearly one in five kids aged 15 to 17 have tried vaping.

In March this year we ordered an urgent parliamentary inquiry into vaping and its effects because we had no idea what people were putting into their bodies. The results were horrifying. Arsenic, lead and formaldehyde are some of the deadly chemicals that were found. On top of that, many vapes marketed as nicotine free were simply not.

Today I can update the House that the government will accept all 14 recommendations made by the parliamentary committee. I want to thank the committee for their work. These include a state and Commonwealth joint taskforce aimed at ending the illegal selling of vapes, guidelines for schools to identify and support students who vape and more resources to help Queenslanders wanting to quit. To show how serious our government is about tackling this issue, we will invest \$28.4 million into a number of initiatives about which the health minister will go into more detail, including more support for public health units to better enforce vaping laws. Just one vape is the same as 400 cigarettes. Honourable members can imagine the damage that does to a person's lungs, especially a very young child.

I also want to commend the campaign titled 'There's nothing sweet about vapes', which is targeted at young people. It is getting through. Since we introduced laws targeting illicit tobacco and vaping products, 170,000 illegal vapes have been seized. There is always more work to do but we know we are on the right path to a healthier Queensland.

## Critical Minerals


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.38 am): The Prime Minister, who is in Washington, has just announced another \$2 billion in support for mining and processing critical minerals. The investment in critical minerals facility has now been doubled to \$4 billion to support low-interest loans for mining and processing of critical minerals, supporting new trade partnerships between Australia and the United States and investments by US companies. I welcome this funding because it supports more good jobs for Queenslanders, especially in the state's north and the North West Minerals Province.

In Queensland we can supply the vanadium, high-purity alumina, cobalt, silicon and rare earths that the United States needs for both renewable energy and defence. We are backing these opportunities with the nation-leading Queensland Critical Minerals Strategy. I want to thank the resources minister for his leadership in this space. We are investing \$5 billion to deliver CopperString 2032 to connect \$500 billion of critical minerals with the largest renewable energy zone on the east coast of Australia. CopperString 2032 is the largest economic development project in Northern Australia. We have also outlined our funding towards this.

Queensland has what the world wants. Queensland companies leading the charge in Washington DC include: Alpha HPA that is providing high-purity alumina; and Queensland Pacific Metals that works to process cobalt and nickel for General Motors' electric vehicles. This is just the beginning of a new era in trade unlocking investment and jobs in North-West Queensland, Townsville and Gladstone.

Last century it would have been called a golden age; this century it is a mineral age. We are working to unlock the next mining boom to deliver more good jobs across Queensland because in Queensland our best days are truly ahead of us.

## Works for Queensland

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.40 am): I always say that we work best when we work together to create jobs and grow our communities to be the best they can. Since 2016, our government has done just that through our Works for Queensland program. It helps local councils to deliver community improving projects like new footpaths, accessible toilets and library upgrades and water treatment plant developments, and building playgrounds, staff accommodation and council houses.

In the latest round alone, we have upgraded the Mullers Lagoon bridge in Bowen. In Goondiwindi we have provided shade over the pool. We have refurbished the Horseshoe Bay Sports and Recreation Centre and air conditioned the St Paul's community hall in the Torres Strait.


**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Pine Rivers and member for Nanango, you are both warned under the standing orders for quarrelling across the chamber.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is why I proudly announced a \$100 million boost at the LGAQ conference in Gladstone last week. This means the next round will see \$300 million pumped into our regions, up from \$200 million, bringing our total funding commitment to \$1.1 billion since 2016. By June 2024, Works for Queensland is anticipated to have supported or created more than 26,000 jobs through almost 2,200 projects. These are projects that help local governments improve community safety and support growth in the regions, including residential development and livable communities. They are important in ensuring Queensland remains the best place to live, work and play. They are also important for the jobs they create. This is another great example of governments working together to deliver great outcomes for Queenslanders.

## Bushfires; Infrastructure Projects

 **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) (9.41 am): Bushfire season has started early this year, and we are already seeing dangerous fires impacting communities across Queensland. My thoughts are with the loved ones of the person who passed away in Tara overnight and all the first responders on the ground keeping Queensland communities safe. I can confirm bushfire affected residents on Queensland's Western and Darling Downs can now access assistance through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements to help them recover from these fierce fires.

In addition to those impacted by the Baffle Creek and Deepwater bushfires south of Gladstone, Queenslanders impacted by bushfires at Captains Mountain, Cypress Gardens, Forest Ridge, Millmerran Downs, Millmerran Woods, Goranba, Kogan, Tara and Wieambilla can now apply for financial assistance. The assistance provides \$180 for individuals and up to \$900 for a family of five to cover the costs of essential items such as food, clothing and medicine. Uninsured residents can also access means tested grants of up to \$5,000 per household. Queensland Reconstruction Authority CEO, Major General Jake Ellwood, will travel to the region in the coming days.

We have kicked off the biggest decade of infrastructure investment in our history and it is set to transform the Sunshine State. To date, we have delivered more than \$96 billion worth of capital investment and we have committed another \$89 billion over the next four years. We are getting on with delivering more of what our communities need, and our Big Build is going to deliver big results for all Queenslanders.

We are upgrading schools and parks and community facilities. We are building more energy infrastructure, including the Queensland SuperGrid and the CopperString 2032 transmission line. We are also expanding the services Queenslanders rely on—building more hospitals, roads and social homes. We are keeping our state moving with big investments in transport infrastructure like Cross River Rail and the Bruce Highway upgrades. Importantly, our Big Build will lead to more good jobs, more investment in Queensland and better essential services. It also means exciting new industries and stronger regions as our population continues to grow. With more people calling Queensland home, we are investing where it counts to ensure we have the infrastructure we need where we need it, to maintain our great lifestyle.

I am also pleased to share that Queensland's Big Build website is now live. The website will be a great tool for Queenslanders to understand what is being built or upgraded in their region and why. It is the benefit these projects will bring to the people and communities across our state that is so important. Queenslanders deserve access to good services, closer to home, no matter where they live. From water to transport or health to housing, the dashboard provides a one-stop view of the range of infrastructure opportunities right across the state—from the Far North to Central and Western Queensland to the Wide Bay and the south-east. Not only does it allow Queenslanders to see what is being built for them in their community; it also informs industry of the opportunities coming up, making it easier to plan, make investment decisions and participate in projects.

I encourage all members to use this website to look at what exciting infrastructure projects we are delivering in their regions and within their communities. We are in our golden decade of opportunity. The Big Build will help us make the most of it by driving economic growth and creating good jobs, better services and more of everything we love about Queensland. We are building big for Queensland's future and delivering key infrastructure that will benefit Queenslanders now and for generations to come because our very best days are ahead of us.

### Coal Industry



**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.45 am): The world is going through a renewable energy transformation and the world needs high-quality steelmaking coal from Queensland to achieve it. It needs this coal to build the wind turbines and transmission line towers and solar panels to drive this transformation. It is good news that Queensland's coalmining sector is continuing to go from strength to strength.

In fact, the industry has never been in better shape. Do not take my word for it; just ask Paul Flynn, the CEO of Whitehaven Coal. Last week, Whitehaven Coal announced it was acquiring BHP's Blackwater and Daunia coalmines. These mines were not sold in a fire sale. In November, they were valued collectively at A\$2 billion. Last week, I am pleased to advise the House, those mines were sold to Whitehaven Coal for A\$6.4 billion. That is not double the previous valuation; it is more than triple. Our government welcomes this investment by Whitehaven Coal.

It is another example of mining companies continuing to invest in Queensland's coal industry since Labor's progressive coal royalties were introduced. It highlights the mining lobby's \$40 million scare campaign against those progressive coal royalties as nothing but a sham. Our progressive coal royalties strike the right balance. Progressive coal royalty tiers give Queenslanders their fair share of the resources that belong to them, and have not harmed investment in the mining sector.

According to the *Australian Financial Review*, BHP could make a further A\$1.4 billion from Whitehaven, if coking coal prices stay above US\$159 a tonne over the next three years. What that shows is that, far from opposing progressive coal royalty tiers, BHP is imposing some tiers of its own. What we are left with is a strong investment climate for Queensland coal.



Given this, serious questions must now be asked about the Queensland Resources Council and its CEO, Ian Macfarlane, and their conduct. The \$40 million spent by the Queensland Resources Council, driven and directed by Ian Macfarlane, on letterboxed leaflets, billboards, television, radio and print advertisements has been shown to be without any foundation. Imagine if the Queensland Resources Council had invested \$40 million into one of our great mining communities. What a difference that would have made to those communities and those hardworking coalminers and their families who have generated so much wealth and opportunity for Queensland. The Queensland coal industry is too important for Queensland's and the world's renewable energy transformation to be misrepresented by any lobby group or any political party.

### **Bushfires; Emergency Services Personnel**



**Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (9.49 am): I join the Premier in expressing my condolences to the family and friends of the gentleman who has been found deceased near Tara. I know that police will conduct a thorough investigation into the circumstances. It is truly a tragedy. I also want to reinforce what the Premier said earlier about the bushfires, and it cannot be said often enough: if you are told to leave, please do not return until advised by the authorities that it is safe to do so. There are evacuation centres currently set up in Tara, Chinchilla and Millmerran and a comprehensive range of emergency hardship assistance is being made available, as announced by the Deputy Premier. I know the people fighting the fires have been unrelenting in their efforts to protect their local communities and I want to join every member of this House—in fact, every Queensland— in offering them our sincere and heartfelt thanks for their dedication and commitment to their communities and to the safety of everyone who lives in their communities.

As we are witnessing right now with the bushfires across the state, our frontline workers are critical to the safety of our communities, and that is the case every day, every night in every corner of our state. Every day police officers disrupt and prevent and respond to criminal behaviour. Every day custodial officers are keeping contraband out of prisons and managing the most dangerous people in our population. The work of police and corrections officers is vital, which is why the Palaszczuk government is working to bolster their numbers. In Queensland's police academies right now, there are currently almost 600 recruits undergoing training. In addition, there are approximately 1,400 applicants in the recruitment pipeline, including over 300 international police applicants and nearly 200 interstate and New Zealand police applicants. This is due in part to the Queensland Police Service's agile and innovative recruitment strategies which were supported by our government with a \$90 million incentive and recruitment package. I am advised by the Police Commissioner that these incentives are working, with a 152 per cent increase in the recruiting pipeline as compared to January this year.

It is also worth noting that under this government Queensland Corrective Services has become the most professional corrective services agency in Australasia. Our correctional officers are the best trained, best equipped and best paid in the nation. Like the Police Service, Queensland Corrective Services has ramped up its recruitment and attraction efforts and so far this calendar year over 400 custodial officers have graduated from the Correctional Officer Entry Program and there are another 195 currently in training and due to graduate this year. That means that Queensland Corrective Services is on track to deliver more than 600 new custodial officers this year. The Palaszczuk government will always invest in the front line, creating good and permanent jobs for Queenslanders.

### **Vaping**



**Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.52 am): I have said it before and I will say it again: our government will not stand by and let the next generation of Queenslanders become addicted to nicotine and vaping, we will not stand by and let companies profit from our children by selling them toxic chemicals in bright packaging, and we will not let our hospitals endure decades of unnecessary strain because of the impacts of vaping. Just this week we have seen the Cancer Council publish research showing that more than a third of young Australians vaped and almost three-quarters of parents suspected their child was vaping. This is why we are acting. Today I am proud to table the Palaszczuk government's response to the Health and Environment Committee's inquiry into reducing vaping in Queensland and I am proud that we are accepting all 14 of the committee's recommendations, and I thank the committee for its work.

*Tabled paper:* Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 38, 57th Parliament—Vaping: An inquiry into reducing rates of e-cigarette use in Queensland, government response [\[1738\]](#).

This response is accompanied by a \$28.4 million package to tackle the vaping crisis through stronger enforcement, better education and more support for people trying to quit. This package includes \$2 million this financial year and then \$5 million annually to improve the ability of our public health units to enforce our strict new laws on illegal tobacco.

The Cancer Council found that the accessibility of vapes was the biggest factor driving their uptake, which is why stronger enforcement action is so important. Since we passed our illicit vaping laws in May, we have already seized at least 170,000 illegal vapes here in Queensland worth millions and millions of dollars. This enforcement funding will go towards establishing a joint taskforce with the Commonwealth to better regulate and detect illegal vapes—a key recommendation from the committee's report. An initial investment of half a million dollars will be followed by \$1 million every year to expand the Quitline service, providing more support for people who are trying to quit, and we are pouring millions of dollars into co-designing and rolling out a support program for school-aged children with nicotine dependency, and I want to thank the education minister for everything she and her department have already done in this space. All of this is in addition to the work we are already doing to tackle the vaping crisis, like our advertising campaign targeted at young people which has now been viewed millions of times. I want to again thank all of the members of the Health and Environment Committee for their hard work in producing an excellent report. Thanks to them, we have a blueprint for the future of vaping regulation in Queensland.

### Renewable Energy



**Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (9.55 am): The state's clean energy transformation is well underway as Queensland moves towards our goal of 80 per cent renewable energy by 2035. Our energy transformation will support 100,000 new jobs by 2040, with workers in electrical trades, engineering, construction and technical areas already in high demand. This is great news for Queenslanders. However, if we want to meet our ambitious renewable energy targets we need to make sure we have the workforce in place to support it, and that is why today I am very proud to table Queensland's clean energy workforce road map—the first of its kind in Australia.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Government: Report titled 'Queensland's Clean Energy Workforce Roadmap: Delivering the workforce for our energy transformation' [[1739](#)].

This is the workforce plan to support the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan by outlining what jobs will be needed, where they will be needed, what skills will be required and what we need to do to make sure all of those things are in place. It builds on the strong workforce foundations set out in the Queensland workforce strategy and the more than \$1.2 billion we invest annually to continue delivering high-quality training and creating exciting career pathways for Queenslanders. In delivering the road map we consulted with more than 90 key stakeholders, with, importantly, 95 per cent of infrastructure investment and 70 per cent of employment projected to be in regional areas. We held forums across Queensland to capture the priorities of regional communities and industry to make sure the right skills are delivered in the right locations. The road map sets out \$30 million worth of initial actions to build our future workforce, and we are talking about workers currently in the workforce and how they train for the future and those who are going to be new entrants.

The plan includes mobile regional energy jobs hubs across the Queensland renewable energy zone regions; an expansion to our Gateway to Industry Schools program to make renewable energy the 12th industry sector in the program which will mean 2,000 students at over 30 schools will be looking at a career in renewable energy; regionally tailored clean energy future skills demand/supply analysis; local jobs opportunity guides; as the Premier said, endorsing the Equal by 30 campaign principles committing to improving opportunities for women in the clean energy sector which will make Queensland the first state in Australia to sign up to this global commitment; a skills academy as part of Stanwell's Future Energy Innovation and Training Hub in Rockhampton; uplifts to state owned training infrastructure; and expansion of the VET Emerging Industries initiative to develop renewable energy industry training solutions.

Today I am also releasing the *Future energy jobs* guide, which provides information on the key occupations that will deliver Queensland's clean energy transformation. The guide helps school leavers and existing skilled workers explore career opportunities in the clean energy sector and identifies pathways to get there. It builds on the strong workforce foundations set out in the Queensland workforce strategy and the hydrogen industry workforce development road map, and we were also the first in Australia to develop a hydrogen workforce road map. Together they are a great next step to deliver a

skilled, ready workforce across the state. I thank all those involved in the development of this road map and the *Future energy jobs guide*, which will help deliver cleaner, more reliable and affordable power in Queensland for generations.

*Tabled paper:* Queensland Government: Report titled 'Future Energy Jobs Guide' [\[1740\]](#).

### State Schools, Renewable Energy



**Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.59 am): The Palaszczuk government stands on its record of and commitment to creating a clean energy future. Our state schools are playing their part in creating this cleaner and greener future. I am proud to be part of a government which has made the biggest commitment to renewable energy in Australia's history through the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan.

When it comes to jobs and workers of the future, the Palaszczuk government is helping our youngest Queenslanders get the skills they need for the jobs they want through our now \$78 million Local Schools, Local Jobs program. We took this commitment to the election because we recognised how crucial it is to support the important role schools play in linking up with local industries and ensuring students can access well-paid, secure jobs based in their own communities—none more so than the hydrogen industry, which will play an increasingly important role in sustainably powering Queensland into the future. At Gladstone State High School plans are underway for a \$26 million industrial technology and design building. Work has now finished on the \$3 million new hydrogen facilities, including hydrogen training hub lab classrooms. This is a really exciting project for the school, especially given Gladstone is well and truly on the map as a world-leading hydrogen hub.

Our focus on jobs of the future has also seen projects delivered in other parts of Queensland: at Chinchilla State High School in the electorate of Callide, where a new \$3.2 million engineering building has been completed, delivering vocational training programs in Chinchilla and the greater Western Downs region; at Sunnybank State High School in the electorate of Toohey, the new \$6 million ITD lab includes specialised equipment and a smart manufacturing centre; and Rockhampton State High School in the electorate of Rockhampton has received nearly \$5 million worth of aquaculture research facilities which just last month I had the pleasure of officially opening with the members for Rockhampton and Keppel.

I am also immensely proud of our \$168 million Advancing Clean Energy Schools, ACES, program. This outstanding program is reducing energy costs across more than 900 Queensland state schools through the installation of solar panels and other energy efficiency measures. We have installed more panels at more schools than we set out to. Some 200,000 panels now sit on school roofs. That is about \$26 million of electricity savings per year. This comes on top of our Cooler Cleaner Schools Program completed in April last year, two months ahead of schedule—and six years ahead of the LNP's plan, I might add. Students are sitting in air-conditioned classrooms right now, not sweating it out until 2028. You are welcome, all of you!

**Opposition members** interjected.

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

**Ms GRACE:** They are so happy about air conditioning in their schools.

**Mr Krause** interjected.

**Ms GRACE:** I can hear the member for Scenic Rim. He absolutely loves it in his electorate. The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring our schools are places where children can learn and teachers can deliver a world-class education to provide opportunities for students to pursue the career of their choice now and into the future. They deserve nothing less.

### Sexual Violence Awareness Month



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.03 am): Each October, Queensland marks Sexual Violence Awareness Month. A few weeks ago I was honoured to join Di Macleod and the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence to launch the month with the sector. More than 20 years on, Queensland is still the only state that has a month dedicated to raising awareness around sexual violence. The month allows us to reflect on the past, to provide support and change for our communities in the present and to envision a future free from the impacts of sexual violence.

We know that sexual assault remains under-reported in Australia. It can happen in public, private or institutional settings, carried out by people known to the victim or by strangers. Without a public discourse like Sexual Violence Awareness Month, the chance to provide victim-survivors with the support they need and hold perpetrators to account can be missed.

The Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to doing everything we can, together with the dedicated and hardworking sexual violence service sector, to end sexual violence in our state and better support victims. This is reflected in our continued investment in sexual violence services and our reform agenda that addresses the sexual assault myths and stereotypes that continue to exist in our society. In the 2023-24 budget we committed over \$29 million to our specialist sexual assault services and women's health and wellbeing organisations to provide sexual violence support. Since 2015 we have increased funding to the sector by over 95 per cent.

Along with investment, our government continues to ensure our laws reflect the community's expectations of equality and mutual respect in relationships. Respect is so important. Earlier this month we saw the commencement of reforms that allow for alleged offenders of prescribed sexual offences, including rape, to be named prior to committal, except, importantly, where it could identify or lead to the identification of a victim. Now these accused will be treated just like any other defendant before the courts. It is vital that we bring these crimes out of the shadows. Responsible reporting of these cases is critical to achieving this outcome.

Last sitting week the Palaszczuk government introduced legislation to strengthen our sexual offence laws and provide additional protection for victim-survivors. Our government is committed to shifting the culture and beliefs that lead to violence against women. Everyone in society has a role to play. We must call out this behaviour wherever we see it. Whether it is in our workplace or amongst our friends or our neighbours, it cannot be accepted. We cannot turn a blind eye to this behaviour if we want to change the culture. As we continue to shine a light on sexual violence more victim-survivors will come forward. They will need support, they will need to be heard and, most importantly, they will need to be believed—and we believe them.

### Renewable Energy



**Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (10.06 am): It is clear that the world is facing a series of crises in climate change causing disasters and loss of life tragically here at home. It is one of the reasons Queensland is investing in clean energy and serious emissions reductions. Queensland job creation is another big reason. In hydrogen alone we have committed to unlocking 10,000 jobs and \$33 billion in economic activity by 2040. There are already 50 hydrogen projects underway. In Central Queensland our CQH2 project is one step closer to unlocking the great potential of Queensland's renewable energy resources. As Queensland's—in fact, Australia's—largest renewable hydrogen project progressed to this stage, CQH2 will deliver Queensland-made green hydrogen to Japan, Singapore and consumers across Australia.

Today I can announce that publicly owned Stanwell Corporation has finalised a deal with Acciona Energia to take 100 per cent of the output of the Aldoga Solar Farm to power the CQH2 project. The 380-megawatt Aldoga Solar Farm near Gladstone is a key ingredient to converting Queensland sunshine into clean power for Queensland's global trading partners. It means good Queensland jobs. Aldoga will create up to 350 construction jobs and the CQH2 project is anticipated to support 8,900 Queensland jobs. The project is well underway on front-end engineering design with Worley, an Australian engineering firm, and a commitment of \$117 million.

**Mr Butcher** interjected.

**Mr de BRENNI:** I take the interjection from the member for Gladstone. Worely is based in Gladstone in Central Queensland. This is a huge investment in the future of Queensland industry and global decarbonisation efforts. It is modelled to produce \$17.2 billion in exports. This deal today is another massive step forward for jobs, cleaner energy, more exports and cheaper power. It is Queensland's publicly owned energy companies that are making it happen. Labor is making sure Queenslanders own their future and we are training the workforce. I want to take a moment to acknowledge the work of my colleague the Minister for Employment and Training, who, along with the Premier, today released the clean energy workforce road map. We are making sure Queenslanders hold the skills and get the training they need to develop our state as a global clean energy superpower. Labor will always back Queensland workers by investing in the future of this state.

## Housing



**Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing) (10.09 am): It has been one year since the Housing Summit when we brought together more than 200 experts and stakeholders to find new ways to tackle what is a national demand for housing. It was a chance for everyone to put aside their differences to get the job done. We have taken action on a number of fronts to help Queenslanders who are doing it tough.

The Palaszczuk government has already delivered more than 4,000 new homes and by 2027 we will have commenced 10,000 more. We have established our QBuild hub at Eagle Farm to build prefabricated homes, with another centre earmarked for Cairns. We have bought or leased four former retirement villages in Clayfield, Toowoomba, Redland Bay and Rothwell along with a 23-room hotel at Hamilton specifically for young people. We have boosted the Housing Investment Fund to \$2 billion to support 5,600 social and affordable homes. We have conducted an audit of state land with more than 400 sites identified, some already in the market such as Northshore in Hamilton and Lumina in Southport. However, we have not stopped there.

We have expanded the Catalyst Infrastructure Fund to further unlock development. We have sped up approvals for emergency housing in disaster affected communities. We have implemented planning changes to allow renting of secondary dwellings such as granny flats. We have funded a \$70 million build-to-rent pilot, with three projects contracted to deliver more than 1,200 homes and brought in tax concessions to incentivise even more developments.

We have established a housing opportunities portal for Queenslanders. We have worked with local governments to deliver local housing strategies and action plans. We have implemented planning changes that will streamline approvals for new housing projects, particularly social and affordable housing projects. We have assisted more than 45,400 people through specialist homelessness services. We have arranged more than 145,000 nights of temporary accommodation through our \$54 million immediate housing response package. We have assisted more than 20,000 households in sustaining their private tenancies with our private rental assistance products and services, and so much more.

Of the outcomes agreed at the Housing Summit, the Palaszczuk government has completed 24, with the rest underway. Last week I announced plans for the government to step up and buy more homes being phased out of the National Rental Affordability Scheme, which was scrapped by the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison federal LNP government. Already we have purchased up to 456 of those homes and every home we buy will shore up affordable and social housing for Queenslanders who need that support now. This government knows that there is more to the job than just empty promises and cheap slogans; it means taking action and that is exactly what we are doing.

## Resources Industries, Mount Isa



**Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (10.11 am): For 100 years, Mount Isa has been a part of Queensland's resources heritage. A century ago, a stumble by prospector John Campbell Miles uncovered one of the world's richest deposits of copper, silver and zinc, which led to the birth of perhaps our most famous mining city. The news last week that Glencore's copper operations and Lady Loretta zinc mine are closing in 2025 is devastating and I share the pain of residents and the wider community. The Mount Isa copper operations have been at the heart of the town for more than 60 years.

I must stress that Glencore has advised it will continue to invest in Mount Isa Mines. The George Fisher Mine has a current life to 2036. I am also advised that Glencore will continue to invest in the zinc-lead concentrator and lead smelter and will continue to operate its copper smelter in Mount Isa and copper refinery in Townsville until 2030. Of course, as a government we would rather see those operations continue but that is ultimately a commercial decision that Glencore has made.

Right now our focus is on backing the workers and the Mount Isa community, which is why the Treasurer and I were in the city last week to hear directly from the community. We are looking to the future, both in how we can support workers to transition to other roles and support miners to unlock new opportunities for North-West Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is determined that Mount Isa and its residents will continue to play a pivotal part of this state's resources future.

I would like to thank the Treasurer for the \$50 million support package he unveiled last week to support workers impacted by these closures. Up to \$30 million is earmarked to accelerate the development of resource projects in the North West Minerals Province in the next five years. This builds on the Queensland Critical Minerals Strategy that the Premier unveiled earlier this year at the World Mining Congress right here in Brisbane.

The \$245 million strategy is helping to unlock new opportunities in critical minerals through a number of initiatives including: establishing Critical Minerals Queensland, a dedicated office that will be located in Townsville and will focus on the development of critical minerals projects; reducing rent to zero for mineral exploration permits for five years; establishing critical minerals zones, including around Mount Isa; and delivering the \$100 million Critical Minerals and Battery Technology Fund. This is further supported by our \$5 billion investment in CopperString 2032, which will deliver a 1,100 kilometre transmission line from Townsville to Mount Isa.

The other \$20 million of the support package will be tailored to provide support for workers and the community. I expect Glencore to match that dollar-for-dollar over and above their obligations to those workers. The Palaszczuk government will back Mount Isa and back North-West Queensland to be a key contributor to our economy now and well into the future.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Townsville, Youth Crime



**Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (10.15 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House notes:

- (a) the dramatic increase in car thefts, attacks by offenders on police officers and the growing community concern about the impact of crime throughout Townsville;
- (b) comments by the members for Townsville, Thuringowa, and Mundingburra that the government's policies to combat crime are effective despite increasing threats to the community;
- (c) notes the comments of south-east based Labor members, including the members for Capalaba, McConnel, Bundaberg and Gaven, downplaying the extent of crime;

and calls on all three Townsville members to explain to the people of their electorates why the Labor government has failed to support policies to curb the youth crime crisis in North Queensland and respond to demands to ensure community safety.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Mr SPEAKER:** Today, question time will conclude at 11.16 am.

### Ambulance Ramping



**Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.16 am): My question is to the Premier. In 2015 ambulance ramping was at 15 per cent. It had almost doubled before COVID and today it is at 45 per cent, the worst in the nation. Why has ambulance ramping skyrocketed under the Labor government?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We will check those figures. I will say very clearly that we have made the biggest investment in hospitals right throughout our state in the history of our state. There have been no cuts to services as happened under the hand of the member for Broadwater when he sat around the cabinet table. This is a government that is committed to expanding our hospital system. The opposition would have let the COVID virus into Queensland, which would have had an even more detrimental effect on our health system and the loss of life.

Across the nation everybody is absolutely aware that there are pressures around our hospital systems because, during the COVID period and following on from it, people did not go and seek the care that they required. People stayed at home. I will say very clearly that the No. 1 issue that is impacting the pressures on our emergency departments is the fact that there are not enough GPs across Queensland. We have had years and years of neglect under previous LNP national governments that failed to back primary health care across the nation. It is not just Queensland; it is across the nation. That is why the Labor Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, is more than happy to have this as the No. 1 issue when national cabinet meets before the end of the year.

**Mr Janetzki:** The cupboard is bare.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We know that what is in your cupboard is cuts. We know that the secret cupboard of cuts is waiting for Queensland.

**Mr Minnikin** interjected.

**Mr Bleijie:** 'We work best when we work together.'

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Chatsworth and member for Kawana, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The member for Kawana has never been able to work with anybody. We are committed to the biggest expense on expanding our hospitals—

*(Time expired)*

### **Ambulance Services**

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** My question is to the Premier. Severed arteries, tendons and nerves; bleeding out on the floor; no ambulance available; frantically loaded into his neighbour's ute and taken to Redland Hospital, given two bags of blood and eventually transferred under lights and sirens to the PA: that was the ramping consequences for Elliott from Alexandra Hills. Whistleblowers have provided the opposition a photo of a packed ramp at Redland Hospital on that day. How many Queenslanders like Elliott have to go to hospital in the back of a ute before the Queensland health crisis comes to an end?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I understand that the Queensland Ambulance Service have offered an apology to the family and that they have personally met with the family. It is absolutely tragic what happened there. I understand that the man was transported initially to Redland Hospital and then to the PA.

**Dr Robinson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Oodgeroo.

**Dr Robinson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Oodgeroo, I just tried to caution you and you continued to interject. You are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I also would like to extend my thanks: I understand that there was a retired paramedic who lived next door who was able to render assistance at that time—just as we saw in the chamber the other week when people were able to render assistance. That is why we have built the Redlands Satellite Hospital: to have an opportunity to reduce those pressures on our emergency departments. Seven of these satellite hospitals are being built across Queensland to make sure people are getting the treatment they need closer to home. That is a key, signature project that we have implemented, with another two satellite hospitals due to open later this year. As we have already seen, they will be able to treat Queenslanders through the minor injury and illness clinics.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr Dick** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. If the member for Broadwater was listening he would know that it relieves pressure on emergency departments. I understand that some senior personnel of the Queensland Ambulance Service have met with the family and offered their apologies.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I do give you more latitude than most, but you continue to interject. You will cease your interjections.

### **Climate Smart Energy Savers Rebate**

**Mr TANTARI:** My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. How is the Palaszczuk government's Climate Smart Energy Savers rebate helping Queenslanders?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question. Of course, we understand that cost of living is the No. 1 pressure on Queensland families across our state. We know very well that families are finding it difficult to pay their bills, to pay their mortgage or rent and to cover the rising cost of fuel. Many of these issues are beyond Queensland's control and are national issues, but where we can help we absolutely are committed to helping. That is why we announced the \$44 million rebate scheme, encouraging people to upgrade their appliances—that means it would be cheaper electricity. They are getting rebates. I thank the Minister for Energy for—

**Mr Hart:** How does that lead to cheaper electricity?

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Burleigh will cease his interjections.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The member for Burleigh would have sold the energy assets.



**Mr Hart** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Burleigh, you are warned under the standing orders. I do give guidance for a reason.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I can advise the House that, as of this week, more than 47,000 Queenslanders have applied. I was very happy to have a morning tea in my electorate just the other week. A family there was telling me how they had already received their rebate. A lot of pensioners did not know that this rebate is available. I am encouraging members to make sure that families and seniors in their electorates know about these very important rebates. Over 26,000 people have already received approval and are receiving rebates of between \$300 and \$1,000 for energy-efficient appliances. I understand that the media is also promoting this. That is fantastic, because we need to get the message out to Queenslanders. This is cost-of-living relief that they can apply for and get from our government. Our government is listening and our government is responding.

We are yet to learn whether the Leader of the Opposition will keep our cost-of-living relief. We give Queenslanders over \$9 billion in cost-of-living relief. The biggest relief we give is through people's power bills. Pensioners get over \$1,000 and families get \$550. All those opposite have committed to is maintenance, but we never know what 'maintenance' actually means. There is a very simple question: does the opposition support our cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders? There is \$9 billion provided in cost-of-living relief, making sure people get the support that they need.

*(Time expired)*

### **Health System, Ophthalmologists**

**Mr MICKELBERG:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Buderim grandfather Bill has deteriorating eyesight due to cataracts. He was referred to the Sunshine Coast health service one year ago today and triaged as needing to be seen within 90 days. Bill has still not been seen by an ophthalmologist and has been told that it will be January 2025 before he gets an initial appointment. How many Queenslanders like Bill need to go blind before something is done to fix the Queensland health crisis?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I thank the member for the question. I understand that the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service are doing absolutely all they can to recruit ophthalmologists. There is a national shortage of ophthalmologists, but I understand that they are working to fill those positions. Of course, our Workforce Attraction Incentive Scheme is working. I have already had the opportunity to meet with medical specialists who have come from overseas to work right here in Queensland for Queensland Health. We are absolutely determined to make sure we have the medical specialists we need so that locals like Bill get the care they need in a timely way. I say to the member for Buderim that I am very happy to look into Bill's case and refer that to the hospital service.

I understand that there is, as I said, a huge shortage of ophthalmologists. We know that we are seeing more people than ever before present at our emergency departments and more and more people waiting for elective surgery. I am so pleased to let the House know that we have now returned to pre-COVID levels for the amount of elective surgeries we are performing in our Queensland hospitals.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Buderim, you have asked the question.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** That is because of the enormous work of our hardworking frontline medical specialists and our doctors, because they are throwing absolutely everything at reducing those waitlists. I am also really pleased to say that we have seen a 20 per cent reduction in long-waits. These are people who have been waiting a very long time for their elective surgery.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left, I have given guidance to the House before where the minister is being responsive to the question asked. I do not believe that the minister is doing anything other than that. I would like to hear the answer.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** We know that we have more and more people in our hospitals, particularly patients waiting for aged-care places. We have over 800 long-stay patients in our hospitals waiting for aged-care places. That is the QEII three times over. That is why we are working with the federal government very closely to make sure that patients who do not need to be in our hospitals have somewhere better to be cared for.



We are also working with the federal government to increase access to GPs. People talk about the pressures on our health system. Trying to find a GP that bulk-bills is almost impossible, but come 1 November the federal government's tripling of the bulk-billing incentives will encourage more GPs to bulk-bill our pensioners and our kids. I will tell members what else really helps take the pressure off EDs and hospitals: our satellite hospitals, which are seeing thousands and thousands of Queenslanders and taking pressure off our hospitals. They say that the satellite hospitals are a sham. Shame on the LNP!

### Economy

**Mr HARPER:** My question is of the Premier. Can the Premier update the House on the strength of the Queensland economy, and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Thuringowa for the question. We are looking forward to the cabinet coming up to Townsville next week. As I said, cabinet ministers will be meeting with a range of stakeholders. I can advise the House that over 100 deputations have been received, so the ministers will be working very hard on Sunday afternoon speaking to the people of Townsville about issues that matter to them.

I am also pleased to be going to Townsville because we have a great story when it comes to our strong economic recovery. We said to Queenslanders at the last election that if we had a strong health response it would lead to a strong economic recovery, and there is no clearer example of that than Townsville. When the nickel refinery closed there was over 11 per cent unemployment and the flow-on effects from that. Today it is 2.7 per cent with 6,700 more jobs. The Queensland economy is the strongest economy in the nation, especially on the east coast, outdoing New South Wales and Victoria. We all like a good competition, and the Queensland economy is powering away.

There are now 276,000 more jobs in Queensland than in March 2020. We have lower debt than our southern states; taxes are \$551 lower per person. Is the Leader of the Opposition going to keep those low taxes or are they going to be cutting? There is still no policy from those opposite and the Leader of the Opposition when it comes to economic management in this state, but we do know they like cutting, sacking and selling. Minister Bailey and I will also be joining the Townsville members and the federal government for the opening of the Townsville Ring Road, a \$40 million joint investment—

**Mr Harper:** Four hundred jobs!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Four hundred jobs—a massive investment in the Townsville economy, and of course there is Riverway Drive. I think I heard that interjection from over there. The real question for those opposite is: will they keep our progressive coal royalties? We know that our progressive coal royalties are putting money back into our regions. The massive investment that is happening across regional Queensland is all under threat from the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the Opposition cannot hide in the cupboard on this one. He has to come out of the cupboard and say very clearly whether he supports the progressive coal royalties or not.

Finally, can I join with the Treasurer in saying that the Queensland Resources Council should have spent that \$40 million backing our resource communities.

*(Time expired)*

### Health, Data Reporting

**Ms BATES:** My question is to the Minister for Health. On 4 August the minister said that health data would be released quarterly. The latest quarterly data is now 25 days overdue. Will the minister follow through with her promise to Queenslanders, release the quarterly health data today and tell Queenslanders how close to 15 per cent the current ambulance ramping rate is?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I thank the member for the question. As the member would well know, the quarterly data is usually released around six weeks from the end of the quarter because a huge amount of work—

**Mr Crisafulli:** At least you've got it!

**Ms FENTIMAN:** Actually, I am very happy to say I do not have it. Queensland Health is preparing the data.

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Glass House, you are warned under the standing orders. Leader of the Opposition, I am cautioning you yet again.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** The data will be released as soon as it is ready. I understand that over the last two years the quarterly data has been released in early or mid-November, so I have no idea why the opposition is pursuing this line of questioning.

The member for Mudgeeraba asked about ambulance response times. The latest published data shows a huge improvement in response times for our most critical cases. This is despite a seven per cent increase in the number of code 1A incidents. I want to be very clear for members of the House that Queensland's ambulance response times are better than both New South Wales and Victoria despite these jurisdictions having far less demand.

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Mudgeeraba will cease her interjections.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I also want to say that we have the busiest ambulance service in the nation.

**A government member:** And the best!

**Ms FENTIMAN:** And the best; I take that interjection.

**Ms Grace:** And it's free.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** And it is the only one on mainland Australia that is free. That will absolutely not change under a Labor government. While we are talking about data, I do have some data about our new satellite hospitals. The opposition does not want to hear about our satellite hospitals.

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). The question was about ambulance ramping data.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my right, I could not even hear the point of order. You will cease your interjections so I can hear the member.

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). The question was about ambulance ramping data.

**Mr SPEAKER:** That is correct; it was about ambulance ramping data. The minister has been responding to that. She has briefly segued into other data, but I will ask you to come back to the question, Minister.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** Of course our satellite hospitals take pressure off our entire system. They take pressure off our hardworking paramedics and ambos and they take pressure off our EDs. I would like to remind the member for Mudgeeraba that back in 2022 she said satellite hospitals were doomed to fail. The member for Mudgeeraba said, and I quote—

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** If your point of order is about relevance again, I am paying attention.

**Mr POWELL:** It is about relevance under standing order 118(b).

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you for your point of order. Minister, you have the call.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** The member for Mudgeeraba said, 'Satellite hospitals will do very little to ease ambulance ramping and unclog our struggling EDs.' She then called them a sham. Since the Redlands Satellite Hospital has seen 2,000 locals there have been no tier 3 escalations at the Redlands Hospital. That is how you reduce ambulance ramping.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Mudgeeraba, you are skating on thin ice. Leader of the Opposition, your interjections were designed to interrupt the minister. I am not going to allow that yet again. You are warned under the standing orders.

### **North Queensland, Infrastructure Projects**

**Mr WALKER:** My question is of the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure. Could the Deputy Premier advise the House how the Big Build is a priority for North Queensland, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any other approaches?

**Dr MILES:** I thank the member for Mundingburra for his question. He knows that the Big Build is really big for North Queensland. The Big Build is our \$89 billion investment in the infrastructure that Queensland needs; the infrastructure that will allow us to unlock Queensland's potential for the future; the infrastructure that will let us deliver the homes that a growing Queensland needs; the new and

upgraded hospitals, schools and roads that a growing Queensland needs; and of course the massive game-changing investment into renewable energy, generation, transmission and storage. Now Queenslanders can use the Big Build website to see exactly how the Big Build is delivering for them and their community. They can type their address in.

When the member for Mundingburra types his address in he will see the upgrades and improvements we are making to care and services at the Townsville University Hospital. He will see the upgrades to the Townsville Connection Road and the investments in Pimlico TAFE. He will see the game-changing investment in CopperString 2032, a project that will unlock the north and the north-west. The 1,100 kilometres of transmission line from Townsville to Mount Isa will unlock a chain of renewables, mining and manufacturing job opportunities all the way along that 1,100 kilometres.

There are massive investments into North Queensland, Townsville and the north-west. We know all of that would be at risk if the LNP got their way and cut our Big Build. We know that is what they would do because they have done it before and they have already said that they will do it again. They will cut our Big Build and cut our infrastructure so that they can fund their tax cuts for multinational coal companies.

**A government member:** Shame.

**Dr MILES:** It is shameful. I take that interjection. Those cuts would affect the Townsville University Hospital. Those cuts would strike at the heart of the economy-changing CopperString 2032 project. Those cuts would affect the Haughton pipeline, which is again a project that is allowing us to use CopperString to create manufacturing jobs in Townsville. Those cuts would be to the roads and the schools that Townsville needs. Those cuts would cost jobs in Townsville and jobs for Townsville locals. Only this side of the House has a plan for a Big Build that is huge for Townsville and the state's north.

### Health System, Radiology

**Mr BOOTHMAN:** My question is to the Minister for Health. In July when concerns were raised about failing radiology services on the Gold Coast, the minister said that she was not aware of a problem at any other hospital. However, government data shows four hospitals and health services have failed to meet their targets. When did the minister become aware that radiology services are worsening under her watch?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I thank the member for the question. At the time, most of the hospitals had done an extraordinary job to get above 90 per cent, which is their target, so when I made those comments it was absolutely true. The Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service is doing an enormous amount of work. This was reported on back in July, Mr Speaker, as you remember. They have now cleared 27,000 scans in their backlog. I also want to say that Cairns, which was sitting below 80 per cent, has in the last three months now recorded over 90 per cent of all of their scans completed. Again, there is an enormous amount of work that is being done in our hospitals by very senior clinicians to get through these backlogs.

The other thing I want to say on this issue is that it is important to remember that all scans are reviewed by senior clinicians. These are additional scans that are performed, and it is really important that we do that and we have those targets for a reason—because it is important.

I want to commend the Cairns hospital and health service. By recruiting additional staff, they have made amazing progress in reporting their medical imaging examinations. As I said in August the Cairns HHS returned a reporting rate of 93 per cent—so over the target—and in September they are sitting at 98 per cent, with a target of 90 per cent. There is more work to be done, particularly on the Gold Coast, where they are struggling to recruit these specialists. They are working with the private sector and they have cleared 27,000 scans so I do want to thank them for the amazing work they are doing.

### Cost of Living

**Mrs GILBERT:** My question is of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on recent data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on how the government is supporting Queenslanders with the cost of living, and is the Treasurer aware of any other approaches?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for her question. I am able to update the House with new information on the September quarter CPI data released just moments ago from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. I am pleased to inform the House this data shows that inflation in Queensland has now

moderated for four consecutive quarters. The ABS data shows that Queensland's headline CPI growth eased to 5.2 per cent in the September quarter 2023. That is down from 6.3 per cent in the June quarter. That is an improved result on other states and is lower than the national rate of 5.4 per cent.

The really important thing for the House is why we are doing better, and that is because Queensland has delivered the biggest and most widespread energy rebates in the country. The ABS data demonstrates that clearly in black and white. Quarterly electricity prices have fallen by 10 percentage points in the September quarter. That is the biggest fall of all major states. That data shows that for Queenslanders, when it comes to cost-of-living relief, we have got their backs.

Our approach to cutting the cost of living is under threat and that threat comes from the Leader of the Opposition and the LNP because the only way we can deliver that cost-of-living relief is through progressive coal royalties. That cost-of-living relief would not be happening under the LNP—just like it did not happen when they were last in government. When the Leader of the Opposition was a leader in the Newman government, they put out a press release boasting about why they would not provide electricity relief to Queenslanders. When the LNP leader cuts progressive coal royalties, he will of course cut electricity relief for Queenslanders. We saw that last night on the news on Channel 7—

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

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

**Mr DICK:** When the political editor, Marlina Whop, asked the Leader of the Opposition directly, 'Will coal royalties stay or go?' he refused to answer. He said he would 'keep his promise'. That is just like his promise on treaty and truth-telling and reconciliation. Everybody knows that every promise the Leader of the Opposition makes is entirely worthless because he is not a man of character and he cannot hold to anything. His word is absolutely meaningless. The people of this state know one thing. Our government will protect progressive coal royalties, our government will provide electricity fee relief to Queenslanders and our government will protect every single Queenslanders from the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Opposition's cuts.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Toowoomba South, I might ask if you can please withdraw some unparliamentary language from a little earlier.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I withdraw.

### **Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services, Comments**

**Mr LAST:** My question is to the Premier. Does the Premier agree with her transport minister's Twitter comments today regarding Queensland police?

**Mr SPEAKER:** That is not an opinion, just so we are clear. It is asking if there is an agreement. It is about policy and I call the Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Let me say that I disagree with the comments that the Queensland Police Union president has said. I think they are very unhelpful comments and they are divisive comments. I think in this state what we want to do is we want to unite Queenslanders and we want to make sure that we go down the path of reconciliation. Everybody on this side of the House firmly believes in reconciliation. We firmly believe in closing the gap.

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under relevance, 118(b). The question—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members! Points of order need to be heard.

**Mr POWELL:** The question was about the Premier's transport minister's Twitter comments, not about the head of the police union's comments.

**Mr SPEAKER:** My understanding is that it is about the same issue. Premier, I will ask you at some stage to address the direct element of the question, but please continue.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As I said, these comments made by the president of the QPU I believe to be divisive.

**Mrs Gerber:** What about Minister Bailey's comments?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Currumbin, you are warned under the standing orders. You have been continually interjecting.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The minister is very passionate.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, and anyone in this House is entitled—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, the minister is not anti police. Do not put words in his mouth.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Buderim, you are now warned under the standing orders.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I said, and let me say it again: everyone on my side of government supports reconciliation.

**Mr Mander:** What about the police?

**Mr Langbroek:** He hates the police.

**Mr BAILEY:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There was an interjection about me that was deeply offensive. I ask that it be withdrawn and that the member apologise.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will ask that the member withdraw. Member for Surfers Paradise, will you withdraw?

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I did not identify that member, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We all understand the context in which all of the interjections are being made, I would suggest. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, you have one minute and 28 seconds left. Do you have anything further to add?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The minister does not agree with the comments that the president of the police union made. I do not agree with the comments that the president of the police union made.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Every single person in this House should believe in reconciliation, but those opposite do not believe in anything. They have no values. They stand for nothing—

**Mr Dick:** Promises mean nothing.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. I will take that interjection. Promises mean nothing on that side of the House.

**Mr Dick** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Treasurer will cease his interjections

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Whilst there is a lot of common ground where I do support the president of the police union in terms of extra resources to police, the rollout of training and what the police need to do their job, I do not support his words today in the *Courier-Mail*.

### **Regional Queensland, Racing Industry**

**Mr HEALY:** My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's investment in the racing industry, particularly in regional Queensland, and advise if she is aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms GRACE:** I thank the member for Cairns for the question. What a different place the racing industry is in today compared to when we came in, in 2015. I could not have enjoyed it any more than when I was in Cairns at the Cairns Amateurs.

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Ms GRACE:** I will get to the member for Mermaid Beach; it is coming. When I was in Cairns, the local member and I went to the Cairns Amateurs and sat in the brand new events centre—a \$2.5 million investment accommodating 300 people on race day. We can see that right throughout Queensland. Our regional mayors know exactly what I am talking about. One of those mayors, Mayor 'Zoro', cannot wait for Saturday when we open a new track in Charleville. I will join you, member for Warrego—no problems at all.

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

**Ms GRACE:** We are coming out there and we will enjoy opening that up, because they love the facilities that we are rolling out—no-one more than the member for Mermaid Beach. He comes out of the Gold Coast committee room and he sees the \$67 million being invested right there on the Gold Coast, and he is loving every single minute of it. Not only that, we are going to Townsville soon. There is a new training track being laid there. It is going to be fantastic. At the heart of all of it is animal welfare. At the end of the day, they are the most important part. Everything we are building has animal welfare at its heart—the tracks, the facilities, the guardrails and so on.

Today Racing Queensland is announcing a new animal care initiative, partnering with the Queensland Off-The-Track program, worth \$900,000 over three years. The partnership with Australia's largest equine charity, Save A Horse Australia, will further support racehorses that have been retired from the industry. This is a great way we are spending the levy that the previous minister introduced and that we are continuing, having animal welfare at the heart. We hear nothing from those opposite about what is happening in racing.

We have the fantastic QRIC, Queensland Racing Integrity Commission, doing great work. I remember at the time of the act the member for Toowoomba North said—

The effects will not be felt right now, but in three years time there will be no horses to run around the track, because nobody will have trained any as the prize money is so bad.

How can those opposite get it so wrong? You cannot get it any more wrong than that, because prize money is at the highest level Queensland has ever seen, there are more horses than we have ever seen and there is training and tracks. Racing is going from strength to strength. There is an absolute policy vacuum opposite.

*(Time expired)*

### **Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services, Comments**

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the Premier. The opposition has been told that police officers are distressed about Minister Mark Bailey's comments and have called for him to be sacked. Does the Premier agree with Queensland police officers, or will she again protect Minister Bailey?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As I said, I do not support what the president of the police union has said today. I support the police in our state. They put their lives at risk every single day—

**Mrs D'Ath** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. I take the Attorney's interjection that the minister's comments were directed at the QPU and were not directed at individual members of the Police Service. Let me say again: I do not support the comment. It is divisive and seeks not to unite this state after what we have seen in terms of the results of the referendum.

### **Health, Workforce**

**Mr SMITH:** My question is of the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women. Can the minister please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's commitment to backing frontline doctors and nurses is leading to better patient outcomes, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I thank the member for Bundaberg for his question. He has been a tremendous advocate for the nurses, doctors and midwives in his community and is ready to welcome the many thousands more clinicians we will need as we build a brand new hospital in Bundaberg. I say this time and time again in this chamber, but I again want to put on record the Palaszczuk government's appreciation for our amazing frontline health workers—our health heroes—who look after us in our time of need.

In this term of government we have hired more than 6,600 additional frontline health staff. We know that when the Leader of the Opposition sat around the cabinet table in the Newman government they cut 4,400 health staff, including 1,800 doctors and nurses. However, now he says that he has changed. I would call that a tall order. If any doctor or nurse picked up the so-called plan he put out on Sunday, they would see again that there is absolutely no detail and no vision.

Yesterday I went through how every dot point is something that we are already doing, including better resourcing and better triaging. I talked about that quote about world-class health care being delivered no matter where you live—stolen from Queensland Health's strategic plan, stolen from many

of us on this side. I was thinking about where else I had heard that quote. I was wracking my brain and I remembered: our very own Premier said recently that our government is committed to providing free world-class health care no matter where you live, so it seems that there is a difference.

We on this side of the House want to provide free health care for Queenslanders, but we are not sure of the LNP's policies. We are not sure whether they will sell off our satellite hospitals—whether they will privatise them and start charging people to access health care. We know that on their billion dollar infrastructure hit list, satellite hospitals are absolutely going. What are they going to do? Are they going to privatise them? Are they going to sell them off? Are they going to start charging people to access this world-class health care?

We know that the Leader of the Opposition is ideologically supportive of privatisation. He even talked about it in his maiden speech. He said that where the private sector can provide services it is done more efficiently. I think Queenslanders should be very worried about the future of our satellite hospitals program. We will always provide free, world-class health care, but it is a bit of a worry if those opposite win government.

### UNESCO, Federal Labor Government

**Mr DAMETTO:** My question is to the Premier. The Australian government is now beholden to UNESCO. This has been clearly demonstrated in a recently verified letter penned by Minister Tanya Plibersek, which I table.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 25 May 2023, from the Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, Hon. Tanya Plibersek, to the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Audrey Azoulay, regarding Australian and Queensland government commitments for the protection of the Great Barrier Reef [1741].

Will the Premier advise if she has committed Queensland to the Commonwealth's pledge to UNESCO, which will result in more draconian tree-clearing laws, further sediment and nutrient run-off regulation and commercial fishing wind backs?

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I do believe there are imputations in that question and that the statements that were made need to be authenticated.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will deal with one aspect first, Leader of the House. Imputations were not directed at a person. In this case it was discussing a position of policy. I will seek the member's assurance that those facts can be verified?

**Mr DAMETTO:** Mr Speaker, the letter was verified last week in the federal parliament through a motion which was then agreed to by the federal minister.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members, I will take advice. I do not need any guidance from any member. Member, there is a significant amount of complexity in the issues that you are raising. Those questions are normally reserved for questions on notice as opposed to questions without notice. However, I will allow the Premier to answer the question with latitude.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As we know, the state government and the federal government have been working very closely together in terms of ensuring that the Great Barrier Reef is not listed as endangered. That is why we have together undertaken measures as much as we possibly can to ensure that we protect the reef.

The federal minister, in consultation with our government, wrote to UNESCO to talk about the measures that we have taken including substantial fisheries reform, which we needed to do, accelerated action to improve water quality and strong legislated climate action. This letter very much sets out the actions of both the Commonwealth and the state in relation to saving the Great Barrier Reef.

The Great Barrier Reef generates thousands of jobs—64,000 jobs in terms of tourism and a whole range of other things—

**Dr Miles:**—including in Hinchinbrook.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—including in Hinchinbrook. These are jobs for our tourism operators. They are jobs in accommodation.

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Hinchinbrook will cease his interjections.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** There are jobs connected to the Great Barrier Reef. These measures are taken because they will bring about better quality and better outcomes for the reef. It is very iconic that Queensland along with the federal government have the Great Barrier Reef to protect and we do everything we possibly can. The member for Hinchinbrook should be supporting these issues because the measures we are taking in relation to improving water quality and stopping the run-off of sediment into the reef are making a healthier ecosystem—

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—so people will continue to come from around the world and view what Queensland and the Commonwealth proudly have, which is the Great Barrier Reef.

**Mr Dick** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is a huge economic benefit to Queensland—I take the Treasurer's interjection—and we want that to continue for many generations to come.

### Police Resources

**Mr POWER:** My question is for the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. Noting the Palaszczuk Labor government's strong support for our police officers, will the minister update the House on investments the government is making—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left, questions will be heard in silence.

**Mr POWER:** Will the minister update the House on investments the government is making to support the Queensland Police Service as a priority for the Queensland community, and is the minister aware of any other approaches?

**Mr RYAN:** I thank the member for Logan for the question. In fact, I have known a number of members for Logan in the past and I think this is the best member for Logan the Queensland parliament has ever seen. I see John Mickel is ringing me right now! The member is an outstanding member of this House. Of course, he is an outstanding member because he places a very high priority on support for police and he places a very high priority on the good work this government is doing to support police.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Members, I am having difficulty hearing the minister because there is a mutual admiration society going on. I need to hear the minister.

**Mr RYAN:** I do not think it is a breach of the standing orders to reflect on a previous Speaker of the House. The current member for Logan understands the important priority that this government places on the Queensland Police Service's role in the community and the support that this government provides the Queensland Police Service. In fact, we have made it a priority. No government in Queensland's history has shown stronger support for the Queensland Police Service than this government. There have been record budgets, one of the biggest investments in police recruitment and police growth this state has ever seen and, of course, our commitment to ensuring that the Queensland Police Service has the equipment it needs to support the work of the Queensland Police Service officers.

In fact, the rollout is going very well when it comes to those resources. There is the integrated load-bearing ballistic vests, one of the best innovations the world has seen when it comes to equipment of its type. In fact, it won an international award just recently.

**Mr Purdie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Ninderry.

**Mr RYAN:** There is the rollout of body worn cameras, making the Queensland Police Service the policing agency with one of the biggest fleets of body worn cameras in the world. We are rolling out new police vehicles and, of course, the other equipment they need such as new state-of-the-art tasers—

**Mr Purdie** interjected.

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

**Mr RYAN:**—and remotely piloted aircraft like drones. We continue to invest in the front line. It is a very important commitment and of course it is a commitment that we take very seriously. This investment is contrasted with that of those opposite.



**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Toowoomba North.

**Mr RYAN:** There have been some things said recently—in fact, just today there were some comments made by the Queensland police union president. I join the Premier in saying that I do not agree with his comments made today, and I have communicated that to the police union.

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Toowoomba North is warned under the standing orders.

**Mr RYAN:** He also said that as a result of the Newman cuts when in government we saw admin staff stripped out of the Police Service. As a result of the commitments of the Newman government, they were not fully funded. As a result of the commitments of those opposite, we would have seen a thousand fewer police officers if they had been elected. I am happy to refer them to those comments of the Queensland police union president in that regard.

*(Time expired)*

### **Cooloola, Visitor Capacity Study**

**Ms BOLTON:** My question is to the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. It has been 20 months since the Cooloola visitor capacity study was completed after five years of efforts by the Noosa community for volume reductions, turtle protections and other initiatives for better management of this unique area. Can the minister advise what will be actioned and when to address the ongoing poor behaviours and environmental impacts?

**Ms LINARD:** I thank the member for the question. I do acknowledge how popular this area is first and foremost. I think in the Cooloola Recreation Area just last year there were about 180,000 camper nights and over 98,000 vehicle permits, and those numbers have grown. We want people to go to these beautiful areas. The reason people go there is because it is so pristine. We want them to have safe and memorable experiences, but we also appreciate that it needs to be sustainable. Those very visitors want the area to be well managed so they can return and make sure we are managing it responsibly.

I know the member is very passionate about this issue. My office has met with the member a number of times. I acknowledge that conversations have been going on for some time in this area. I also acknowledge that similarly the members for Pumicestone and Hervey Bay are very passionate about the outcomes of these sustainable visitor studies. They were triggered by COVID and the increase in numbers to the areas. We did engage an external body to do these studies. They have been, I think, fairly far-reaching. The aim of the study was to look at the site's profiles, the current management program and whether we need to make changes given the significant sustained increase. The numbers are now plateauing, but they are not going down; they continue to be significant.

The studies that considered the current condition of the three areas and made recommendations—and I appreciate the member's conversations and passion for this issue have been over a protracted period—have been with me for a very short period of time. Across the three studies 115 recommendations have been made. Some of the implications of those will be short term and others will be medium and long term. I appreciate that the member wants a speedy response, as does the member for Pumicestone who is advocating on behalf of her Bribie community and the member of Hervey Bay, who is advocating in respect of K'gari. As soon as we are at a point where I can release those I will. We will keep the member in the loop about those.

I think it is important to acknowledge that over the past two years—because that study commenced at the end of 2021—DES has taken action to respond to the community concerns in respect of Cooloola. I acknowledge that additional rangers are on the ground to engage with visitors and improve compliance. I know my agency has been doing ongoing joint compliance with the QPS. It has also introduced the use of numberplate recognition. I appreciate that ANPR technology is very important in terms of how we manage compliance with vehicle permits. I also acknowledge that there are upgrades to our permit system that will allow ongoing positive change, I think, around sustainable visitor management. As we get further updates and I can release those recommendations, I will brief the member and the other two members.

*(Time expired)*

## Renewable Energy

**Mr KING:** My question is of the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement. Can the minister update the House on any progress in job creation in renewables and any alternative approaches?

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the member for Kurwongbah for the question because he knows that Queensland leads the clean energy transition and it is set to create 1,000 decent, secure jobs for Queenslanders. That is why it was so pleasing today to see the release of Queensland's Clean Energy Workforce Roadmap. I acknowledge the Minister for Training and Skills Development for making sure that Queenslanders right across the state get the training and skills they need to help us build the Queensland SuperGrid. We are seeing job creation every single day in constructing the Queensland SuperGrid and seeing the protection of jobs in the manufacturing, resources and agricultural sectors by delivering the clean energy those sectors need.

When it comes to the Big Build of clean energy projects in Queensland we have already created more than 12,800 construction jobs. Since we have been talking about our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan we have seen even more jobs. Some 2,300 jobs have been announced in conjunction with the Borumba pumped hydro project. Some 200 jobs have been announced in conjunction with the Wambo wind project. Today we announced 350 jobs as part of the Aldoga solar farm. We know all too well about the 700 construction workers who will deliver CopperString 2032 under this Labor government.

Labor has a clear plan for jobs. It is very different to the 44 pages of dot points released by the Leader of the Opposition on the weekend. We have a comprehensive plan. Why is it different? It is different because it has facts. It even has figures. It even has funding. It has actions. It has modelling. It has evidence. It has reporting. On most of the pages our words even go all the way down the page.

We are still wondering whether or not the Leader of the Opposition supports our comprehensive plan. What we do know about the member for Broadwater is that he said he would be a different leader. Blow me down, perhaps he was telling the truth about that. He said he would lead a different government to the one he was part of that cut 14,000 jobs. On the weekend we found out that, yes, he is different because now he has created some jobs—not cut 14,000 jobs but created some jobs. He has created three new jobs, and they are all sitting on the opposition benches.

We know they have a secret plan for energy, but at least we know the scale of their job creation ambition. It is three jobs for Queenslanders, and they are all jobs for themselves. Just like their big build was one big building for themselves, their big job ambition is three jobs for themselves. Campbell Newman set an incredibly low bar in this House, but still the member for Broadwater has somehow managed to walk under it.

## Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services

**Ms SIMPSON:** My question is to the Premier. I refer to a letter from the Premier's hand-picked director-general regarding the QPS telling the Premier's department about an investigation into a staff member in the police minister's office. Director-General Rachel Hunter said, 'As you would understand, the allegations were distressing for staff in the minister's office.' When making decisions to divulge operational matters, does the government prioritise the protection of domestic violence whistleblowers or is the government more concerned about the distress level of alleged offenders?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, you will have two minutes to respond.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am advised that the director-general has responded in relation to this matter and I have nothing further to add.

## Social and Affordable Housing

**Ms RICHARDS:** My question is of the Minister for Housing.

**Ms Grace** interjected.

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

**Ms RICHARDS:** Can the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is working with community housing providers to deliver more social and affordable homes, and is she aware of any other approaches?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, you have one minute to answer.

**Ms SCANLON:** We are working with community housing providers across Queensland, and I am pleased to update the House that we have increased both public and community housing in this state. We have done that because we have invested in those areas. What I thought was interesting was to hear that the former senator and LNP candidate let the cat out of the bag on the LNP's position on Sky News recently. She said—

Labor talks a lot about social housing and affordable housing. That should always ring alarm bells because that is code for swathes of homes in this country being owned by government.

We support our government owning public housing. We also support owning energy assets. This is the person the Leader of the Opposition appointed to be a candidate. What does he think about public ownership of housing? We know that he appointed the man who cut housing when they were last in government.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The period for question time has expired.

## MOTIONS

### Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.16 am): by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders:

1. the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment be permitted to immediately move a motion without notice regarding progressive coal royalties;
2. the following time limits to apply—
  - 5 minutes for the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment and Leader of the Opposition, or nominee;
  - 3 minutes for all members;
  - with the question being put after 1 hour of debate; and
3. standing order 87 is suspended for this motion.

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

**AYES, 49:**

**ALP, 49—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 37:**

**LNP, 32—**Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

**Grn, 2—**Berkman, MacMahon.

**KAP, 2—**Dametto, Knuth.

**Ind, 1—**Bolton.

Pairs: McMahon, Crandon; O'Rourke, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

### Progressive Coal Royalties



**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (11.22 am): I move—

That this House:

1. notes the ongoing demand for metallurgical coal to create steel that is essential to manufacture products like wind turbines, transmission towers, solar panels, and that this demand will continue for decades into the future;
2. notes that progressive coal royalties were introduced by the Palaszczuk Labor government on 1 July 2022;
3. notes that since the introduction of progressive coal royalties:
  - (a) the number of workers in the coal industry has increased 15.8 per cent to an all-time high of 43,972 persons;

- (b) coal exploration expenditure has increased 15.2 per cent in Queensland;
  - (c) mining capital expenditure in Queensland has increased 10.2 per cent;
  - (d) new metallurgical coalmines are going ahead at Olive Downs and Winchester South;
  - (e) Whitehaven Coal has chosen to invest \$6.4 billion into the Queensland metallurgical coal industry;
  - (f) BHP's CEO, Mike Henry, stated that he regarded his Queensland coalmines as attractive assets and promised to invest \$1 billion per year in those mines.
4. supports the continuation of progressive coal royalties on a permanent basis to support essential projects and services in regional Queensland and cost-of-living relief.
  5. condemns the Leader of the Opposition for his refusal to support the permanent retention of progressive coal royalties; and
  6. calls upon the Leader of the Opposition to explain what he will cut, and when, as a result of his refusal to support progressive coal royalties.


Last night on Channel 7 the Leader of the Opposition was asked directly whether he would retain progressive coal royalties. The Leader of the Opposition did not answer the question. There was the autobabble, the slippery word salad, the attempts to change the subject. All he would say is that he would keep his promises on revenue. The question remains: what is the LNP leader's promise on royalties? Will he keep progressive coal royalties? If that is not the member for Broadwater's promise, then that means that he will repeal progressive coal royalties and the member needs to say to this House and the people of Queensland how he will pay for that. That should not be difficult for the Leader of the Opposition. After all, the LNP leader had no hesitation at all in announcing that he would repeal the Path to Treaty Act. He has no hesitation in junking the promise he made to the First Nations people of this state. The LNP leader even managed to cobble together a plagiarised priorities document, so why cannot the Leader of the Opposition just say, 'Yes, I will keep progressive coal royalties permanently'? If the member will not say it, then at least he needs to say what will happen instead.

If the LNP leader cannot make a promise to the people of Queensland, the member for Broadwater needs to say what he has promised the coal lobby. What did the LNP leader promise to Ian Macfarlane when they met with BHP on 25 September? What undertakings were sought and what promises were made by the LNP leader? How much money will the coal lobby donate to the leader's campaign and the LNP's campaign in return for cutting progressive coal royalties? These are the questions that the LNP leader must answer today. The LNP leader says he keeps his promises, but he will not say what his promises are and who they have been made to. I think we all know the reason why the LNP leader will not provide answers to those questions. The member for Broadwater does not want to answer because he knows he will have to admit that he has a secret plan for cuts. This is exactly what Campbell Newman did in 2012 and what Adrian Schrinner is doing now. Step 1: cut taxes, creating an unfunded budget black hole. Step 2: announce cuts to jobs, services and infrastructure to fill that hole. This is in the LNP playbook and it does it all the time. The LNP always opposes revenue. It opposes taxes. It complains about debt burden, and that is the big set-up to drop the hammer on the budget, to drop the hammer on government services that workers and disadvantaged people depend upon.

Shortly I expect the Leader of the Opposition will falsely complain about a scare campaign, but the member can stop that campaign. He can put the whole thing to bed. All the LNP leader has to say is that he supports progressive coal royalties permanently and that he will not repeal or reduce them in any way and then all of this stops, but if the LNP leader cannot say that—if he will not say that—then the Leader of the Opposition should mark this day down because we know that we will tell Queenslanders about their secret plan.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Before I call the next speaker, I want to remind of members who are on a warning. We have the members for Nanango, Pine Rivers, Kawana, Oodgeroo, Burleigh, Glass House, Broadwater, Maryborough, Currumbin, Buderim, Everton, Hinchinbrook, Ninderry, Toowoomba North and McConnel.

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.27 am): That was a lot less motion and a lot more audition, that one—and let me explain the strategy. Let me explain to the House the strategy behind what happened here. The decision to move this motion was cooked up in the Premier's office because the Treasurer would have said, 'The health minister failed dreadfully last sitting. Let me at 'em!'

**An opposition member:** 'Give me a go!'

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** 'Give me a go; let me at 'em!' The Treasurer has asked whether we support it, and I think it might be appropriate for me today to give the Treasurer the comfort that he is looking for, so here goes. In 2022 we were asked that question in this very body and we supported it. We were asked the question again in the budget in 2023 and we supported it. For the benefit of the Treasurer, we do not want to get ahead of ourselves but we will have another opportunity before Queenslanders get a chance to pass judgement on this unruly mob reeking with chaos and crisis, but let me look into the future: we will support it in 2024. We will support it. Let me tell members what has happened. For two years we have had a Treasurer of this state running around Queensland desperately trying to get somebody—anybody—to report it.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! Pause the clock. I would remind members, particularly those making interjections, that we do not comment on members who are absent from the chamber. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Mr Dick** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Dick** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Treasurer! Order!

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I am trying to get the call.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You have the call.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** It was difficult with the Treasurer yelling across me, but—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will manage the chamber, Leader of the Opposition.


**Mr CRISAFULLI:** The Treasurer has not been able to buy 10 centimetres of column inches in two years on this issue. For two years he has tried to run a scare campaign and it has not worked because our voting record and our intentions have been clear to the public. Let me make a couple of points. From day one we called this out for what it was. It was a deceitful plan and it was a dishonest plan, but it was the only plan that was there. Whilst the Treasurer might not believe that a commitment is worth something by the way he conducts himself, we do and we have spent a lot of time repairing the broken relationships this Treasurer has undone.

Investors from around the globe are questioning whether or not it was them. Japanese investors, who have poured decades of investment and job creation into this state, wonder if they have done something wrong. They have had the rug pulled out from under them without the Treasurer having the decency to look them in the eye.

I can explain why these royalties were put in place. It is because this government cannot manage its projects. Sitting opposite us is a minister who presided over a \$2.4 billion overrun on one project. That is the cost of a hospital. This is a minister who cannot manage his portfolio—a minister who will never be held accountable, who can say anything he wants and who knows he is as untouchable as the youth offenders this government has created.

Let me make an observation: nothing this government says at the next election will have any ounce of credibility. The government promised 1,450 extra police. They have gone backwards. There were 202 fewer police in the last 12 months. The government promised several thousand extra teachers and now they are trying to crab walk back from that. The government promised no new or additional taxes and they have broken it time and time again. Nothing this government says has an ounce of credibility.

The opposition has been clear in our voting record and in our tone. What we will say to the people of this state at the next election is that the choice is clear: a government that will do and say anything to cling to power or an opposition that is hungry to serve the people; a government that has breached the trust of the Queensland public time and time again or an opposition that is united, focused and disciplined; a government that will continue to find every excuse to cling to power or an opposition with the right priorities for Queensland's future, and that involves ensuring Queenslanders know that this will always be the best state to live, work and invest in.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (11.33 am): We have just heard five minutes from the Leader of the Opposition, who has still refused to say whether they will support royalties post 2024. What is he going to take to the election? What is he going to say to Queenslanders after the election? He says one thing before the election, but those opposite have form on doing completely the opposite after the election.

As the health minister I am incredibly concerned, because if those opposite walk away from coal royalties, which the Leader of the Opposition is refusing to say they support, our Big Build in health, including a hospital in Biloela, is on the chopping block. Our biggest build in health is all because of our progressive coal royalties. We are delivering a new facility in Blackwater—you are welcome, member for Gregory. We are delivering a new facility in Camooweal—you are welcome, member for Traeger. We are delivering new facilities in Morven, Charleville and St George—you are welcome, member for Warrego. In case that was not enough, we recently announced that Jandowae, Laidley and Biloela have all been added to our Big Build in health because of progressive coal royalties. Let us not forget a brand new hospital for Moranbah, the heart of our mining towns in regional Queensland.


Queensland's natural resources belong to the people of Queensland. They belong to regional Queenslanders in mining towns and they are absolutely entitled to benefit from those royalties. That is what our progressive coal royalties will do: deliver beautiful, brand new, world-class facilities in some of the most rural and remote parts of our state, especially our mining communities. All of this is under threat because time and time again the Leader of the Opposition fails to commit to permanently support progressive coal royalties. That is what we are talking about. He uses a slippery word salad: 'We voted for it before', 'We will vote for it one more year,' but then what is going to happen? Post the election, one cannot trust a word the Leader of the Opposition says.

Our progressive coal royalties are not just funding wonderful facilities; they are also funding the thousands of frontline staff that are needed in these facilities. The record of those opposite is clear. They have a secret plan for cuts—not only to cut our Big Build but also to cut the frontline staff.

**Ms Bates** interjected.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** Our regional health workers, member for Mudgeeraba, are not duds. They are health heroes. All of our big builds in rural and regional towns are at risk because the Leader of the Opposition will not commit to permanently—

(Time expired)

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (11.36 am): I move the following amendment—

That all words after paragraph 4. be omitted.

It has been nearly 12 months since I first spoke about a newspaper that was circulated outside of the parliament.


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. The member for Bonney will cease using that prop. Member for Everton, do not try it either. This is a general warning to the House that we will not be using props in the manner that they have been used.

**Mr JANETZKI:** That particular newspaper that was circulated, I think by the CFMEU, was called the *Dick Daily Echo*. Does anybody remember this? It was a wonderful publication that was spread about outside the parliamentary precinct, I presume by the CFMEU. The title of this publication, the *Dick Daily Echo*, is a reminder of what we have to endure in this House every sitting week from the Treasurer. Every sitting week we hear the Treasurer talk about coal royalties and make this desperate attempt to wedge the Leader of the Opposition and, conceivably, our side of the House. I can see from those on the other side of the House even they are tired of the 'Dick daily echo' in this chamber in relation to this issue. They are sick of it because we have talked about this repeatedly.

I love this great publication. I hope that before Christmas we get a new edition of the *Dick Daily Echo*. Maybe it will be the 'Dick Pratt Advertisement for Visy'. Everybody in this House is tired of this Treasurer talking about coal royalties. This is a Treasurer who has broken his promise 26 times not to increase or introduce new taxes. Those opposite have introduced 15 new taxes in this House since the commencement of the Palaszczuk government.

This Treasurer and this government have destroyed investment certainty and confidence in this state. The Treasurer, with his broken promises relating to tax—whether it be the patient tax, the renter tax or the coal royalties tax—has brought about the utter decimation of investment confidence in this state. What an unseemly event when we have the Japanese ambassador, Shingo Yamagami, get up and say that this is damaging confidence in Queensland. We heard the Leader of the Opposition

mention it. The poor attitude of the Treasurer has put at risk not only investment and confidence in today's economy but also investment and confidence in what is to come in the hydrogen industry of the future and a range of rare earth and critical minerals investments that will come to this state. We are clear: the right priorities for Queensland's future are investment certainty and taxation certainty.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (11.39 am): There are two observations that I can make on the debate on this motion. First of all, the Leader of the Opposition had five minutes in which to tell Queenslanders what he would do in office. He had five minutes and he failed to do that. He failed to tell the truth to Queenslanders. He had five minutes to say whether he would back progressive coal royalties in office and he chose not to do it. He came up short as he does every single time. He had five minutes to come clean with Queenslanders.


The other observation that I would make is on the desperate observations that each of the members of the opposition are making on their 44-page dot point brochure as they look for some detail around what they might do in office. However, we know how scant it is on detail. There is no detail. There are no actions. There is no funding.

We are looking forward to what they have to say about this because there are a range of good reasons why Queenslanders deserve to hear the truth from the member for Broadwater. The first is that we know that progressive coal royalties are delivering the nation's largest cost-of-living relief package to Queenslanders. As the Premier said today, there is \$550 for every Queensland household and \$1,072 for the state's most vulnerable. No progressive coal royalties means no rebates.

We know that progressive coal royalties are funding emissions reduction and cost-of-living programs such as our cash back on energy efficient appliances. It is a great program that is so well supported that we decided to double it to \$44 million. That is all thanks to progressive coal royalties. There have been 46,000 applications. What is the message from the LNP today? No royalties and no cash-back programs! If only the member for Broadwater had been truthful with Queenslanders, but he chose not to be.

We know that progressive coal royalties are funding some of the largest renewable energy projects in this state. Today, the member for Kurwongbah outlined the 100,000 jobs that are being created from the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. We heard the member for Toowoomba South pandering to global fossil fuel investors while dismissing the massive interest from renewables investors. Today, the message to renewables investors from the Leader of the Opposition and member for Broadwater and his frontbench was: 'No thanks. We want to keep the fossil fuel investors in our pocket.' That says it all.

We did not see this in their 44 pages of dot points. We did not see a dot point about cancelling cost-of-living support. We did not see a dot point about cutting cash back to vulnerable Queenslanders. We did not see a dot point about their cuts to climate action and we did not see a dot point about their elimination of job opportunities for Queenslanders. It is time for the Leader of the Opposition to tell the truth.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (11.42 am): I rise to speak to the amended motion moved by the member for Toowoomba South. What do you do when you have only four bills sitting on the *Notice Paper*, one of which would have been completed by lunchtime today if business had gone ahead as it usually does? You pull a stunt because you have to waste time. That shows this government's priorities, which are completely different to those of our side. We have the right priorities. Today, we see that their priority is to waste time. This is a lazy government.

We are talking about the Treasurer's motion. On a number of occasions in this House we have seen his fixation with Ian Macfarlane, the QRC and BHP. Time and time again, he comes in here and goes off on a rant. He has done it again: he has moved this frivolous motion and left the chamber.

**Mr STEWART:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Common practice is that you do not refer to somebody who has left the chamber.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): It is custom that we do not refer to a member's attendance. I remind all members of that.

**Mr WEIR:** I suppose I had better be careful what I say now because I was going to talk about Callide. The minister is not here so I suppose I can talk about Callide.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask all members to take a seat. I am going to take some advice. Member, I had just cautioned you about that. Member, I am going to warn you for that. I had just instructed you around that and you immediately made the same statement. You are warned under the standing orders.


**Mr WEIR:** I note that the motion talks about percentages in the coal industry, such as that worker numbers have increased by 15.8 per cent et cetera. That is true. These mines are servicing now. The approvals were all done 20 years ago. It is not because of the actions of the government. These mines have been operating for many years.

Of course, one of the increases relates to the Callide Power Station where usually coal production services four generators. Two of those generators have been offline for two years so that coal has gone into the export market as well. There are a lot of reasons why the price of coal has gone up.

A comment was made about a visit to the Goonyella mine. I was very proud to visit the Goonyella mine and to see the operations there, and particularly the autonomous vehicles. I am visiting another coalmine next week. I am very proud to do that.

One of the big things that happened following the sudden increase in royalties in the budget was the blow to investor confidence. At every mine that I go to they do not talk up this Palaszczuk government, I can assure members of that. Investor confidence has been rattled and the approval process is a nightmare. Queensland is one of the worst and not just in Australia; it has a bad reputation around the world. This is not a place that business runs to invest in because of unannounced shocks.

It is because of the lack of policy that this motion is in front of the House. It is nothing more than a stunt. When you have only four bills on the *Notice Paper* and no business to put through the House, you pull a stunt just like this. We are wasting our time.

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (11.46 am): The Queensland resources sector is absolutely booming under the Palaszczuk government. Our coalmining industry and, in particular, our steelmaking coal are creating huge demand right around the world, despite what the member for Callide says. Steelmaking coal is needed to manufacture products such as wind turbines, solar panels and transmission towers that will be in demand for decades to come, because we know that you cannot make those transmission towers out of papier-mâché. To achieve our 70 per cent renewable energy target it is estimated that 2,700 wind turbines will be needed, an additional 25 million solar panels will be needed and around 7,000 battery units will be needed.


For the kids who are joining us today in the gallery, there is a bright future in the resources sector. Queensland is the place to be and Queensland is the place to invest, despite what the member for Condamine has tried to put into their heads. We know that 25.5 million tonnes of refined metals will also be needed to reach our renewable target. Steelmaking coal will be a key part of that transformation and construction too. There is absolute confidence in the industry and we saw that last week when Whitehaven Coal announced that it was investing \$6.4 million into Queensland's metallurgical coal sector by buying BMA's Daunia and Blackwater assets. If that is not attracting investment then I will fly to the moon backwards.

In Queensland, coal exploration expenditure is up 15.2 per cent. That is attracting investment. Right now, there are 43,972 workers in the coalmining industry, up 15.8 per cent. That is an all-time high. Who is not investing in Queensland? As I said, I will fly to the moon backwards. We know that the resources industry supports thousands of good jobs throughout regional Queensland and generates billions of dollars in royalties. Queenslanders deserve their fair share of royalties because the resources belong to them.

When I am talking to people in my electorate, they say three words about those royalties: 'It's about time.' Our progressive coal royalties, which the Leader of the Opposition refuses to support beyond 2024, are funding essential infrastructure in regional Queensland. Those royalties are being used to build the \$5 billion CopperString project. I know that the member for Thuringowa and the member for Mundingburra absolutely support that because they will see thousands of jobs generated through CopperString. If you talk to people on the streets of Townsville about CopperString, they will tell you how it is the next big boom for us in the north.

Our royalties are being used to deliver new and upgraded hospitals in the regions. Moranbah is a key part of our mining regions—

(Time expired)

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.49 am): I hope that all of the workers in the Isaac region are watching this debate, because I know for a fact that they have had an absolute gutful of the fact that they are not getting their fair share of the royalty pie.



**Mr STEWART:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe that the member used unparliamentary language.


**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Member, yes, that has been ruled on before. I will ask you to withdraw.

**Mr LAST:** I withdraw. The frustration and anger in that region about the fact that they continue to get breadcrumbs from this state government are palpable. I will give the chamber an example. The Treasurer comes in here and expects us to fall at his feet because he thinks he is rolling out all of these gold-plated projects and services into the Isaac region. From the last budget there was 0.29 per cent for a new hospital at Moranbah, and the Treasurer expects us to fall at his feet and be oh, so grateful. We are never going to say no to a new hospital, but 0.29 per cent of a \$15 billion budget does not cut the mustard when it comes to the Isaac region. Where is the money for unsealed roads? I will name them yet again in this place: the Mount Coolon Road, the Kilcummin Diamond Downs Road, the May Downs Road, the Suttor Developmental Road—all unsealed major arteries. We expect all of this produce and all of this wealth to pour out of the Isaac region, but it is coming out on road trains on dirt roads. It is coming out on road trains that are overturning carrying livestock.

**Mr Bailey:** Why didn't you seal them when you were in power?

**Mr LAST:** What a disgraceful comment! I take that interjection from the Minister for Transport. The minister has had nine years to pour some money back into the region and what do we have? Absolutely nothing. Last week I was driving on Peak Downs Highway. It is a goat track. It is so dangerous. Every time I go out there I have residents and business owners saying to me, 'Please, for God's sake, do something about our roads before we lose another life out here.' That is why I say: give us back our fair share of the pie. We do not want all of it; we just want our fair share of the pie.

Where is the money for the doctor at Clermont that I have been asking for for five years? Where are our multipurpose halls at Clermont, Dysart and Collinsville high schools? These are the communities where the coalmines are. These are the communities generating wealth for this state, but it is not coming back into their region. It should be. Those on the other side of the House ought to hang their heads in shame. I am proud to support the coalmining sector. I will keep standing up for those guys out there and those residents, who want their fair share.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.53 am): Last week I was at the Holland Park State High School for its annual awards night, and next week I will be at Whites Hill State College for its awards night. Both of those school communities absolutely support progressive coal royalties because of what they allow us to build in those schools—new manual arts blocks, new health hubs, wellbeing and welfare hubs, new classrooms and new admin blocks, all built with progressive coal royalties.

The week before I was at Stones Corner with the Minister for Housing inspecting 82 new social and affordable houses built with—you guessed it—progressive coal royalties. I regularly see my friends from my old workplace, the QEII Hospital—I bump into people from there and I bump into people from the PA Hospital—and I can say that they, too, support progressive coal royalties because we are using them to expand both of those hospitals. Every person in the electorate of Greenslopes who is worried about the cost of living and who opens their electricity bill to see the government's rebate supports progressive coal royalties. It is really sad that all of these measures are under threat from the Leader of the Opposition.

I take being a member of parliament extremely seriously and I take every vote I make in this place extremely seriously. As someone who has crossed the floor and voted in a different way to my party at times, I know how important the way you vote in this place is and how important it is that you go back to your community and explain yourself when you have had to make difficult decisions. It is absolutely reprehensible and disgraceful that the Leader of the Opposition just a few months ago voted to support the path to treaty legislation but now has completely and utterly backflipped on that. What does that say about the character of the Leader of the Opposition? How could you trust anything the Leader of the Opposition says—

**Ms SIMPSON:** I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. This has nothing to do with the motion. I draw your attention to the standing orders with respect to relevance.


**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Member for Greenslopes, you are starting to deviate. I will bring you back to the motion.

**Mr POWER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The opposition leader made statements about what he would support in the next two years and the member is making a point about what he would do afterwards and whether we can trust him.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I am confident that the member for Greenslopes will be able to come back to the motion.

**Mr KELLY:** The Leader of the Opposition in fact made statements in this very chamber today which, given his demonstrated pattern of behaviour in the past, call into question any decisions and anything that he may say. It is not just progressive coal royalties on which people in my community are very concerned about the position of the Leader of the Opposition and whether or not they can trust him. Tree-clearing laws are also very deeply felt in my electorate. My professional colleagues in nursing and midwifery will be extremely concerned about having a government with a potential health minister who is the only nurse in this parliament to vote against safe nurse- and midwife-to-patient ratios. We have heard outlined the fantastic introduction of the bill—

*(Time expired)*

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (11.56 am): I rise to speak in support of the Treasurer's motion. A little while ago there was a media article in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* in which one longstanding member of the LNP observed—


David is a moderate. He's also the best expert fence sitter I've seen in politics in 40 years.

I say to the Leader of the Opposition: it is really time to get off the fence. Something tells me that is not going to happen. The release of the LNP's pamphlet over the weekend generated more questions than answers about the policies of those opposite, and the biggest question was: how? They are pledging to make our community safer, but how? They are pledging easier access to health services, but how? They are talking cost-of-living relief, but how will they do that? Then they talk about 'infrastructure done right'. I do not even know what they mean. Of course, not having any actual policies is really helpful when you do not know how you will pay for them beyond 2024. The pamphlet does mention significant royalty increases, but there is no mention of whether the LNP will actually keep progressive coal royalties. They voted for them but then they have distanced themselves from this decision.

The uplift from progressive coal royalties is projected to be worth \$7.2 billion over the five years to 2026-27. We recognise that a prosperous resources sector is good for jobs and good for Queensland, but it is also important to be honest and clear with the resources industry about the future of coal royalties. Our Labor government is very clear: we will continue with our policy of progressive coal royalties. What is the LNP doing? If the LNP wish to reverse these changes after 2024, they should not just tell the mining lobby in secret corridors. They should be honest with the people of Queensland about which projects or funds they will cut to pay for this reversal.

There is \$1.06 billion for CopperString 2.0. We know that this project is already on the LNP's cuts list. They should tell the people of Mount Isa. There is \$7 billion towards state owned pumped hydro, for the Borumba and Pioneer-Burdekin projects. We know that anything state owned is off the table. There is \$550 million for the Fitzroy to Gladstone pipeline and \$440 million towards the Burdekin Falls Dam improvement and raising project. The LNP talk about water projects, but how will they fund them? What about the \$3.6 billion that we are investing in new or expanded hospitals in Moranbah and Mackay as well as in Cairns, Townsville, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay and Toowoomba? How will they be paid for?

Then we had the bizarre statement from the shadow minister for home ownership. Does he read the news? Does he pay attention to what is going on? Whitehaven Coal just gave him 6.4 billion reasons as to why he is wrong. The Leader of the Opposition and the LNP will not come clean with Queenslanders. They will continue to sit on the fence on myriad issues. That is their strategy. We know this. They will hide their true agenda by releasing glossy documents with no detail in the hope that no-one notices. Once again, will they keep progressive coal royalties or not?

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (11.59 am): I rise to speak to the amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba South, our shadow Treasurer. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to do that, and I support the addresses of the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow minister. I support the shadow Treasurer and our leader when they said that in 2022 we supported the bill, in 2023 we supported it and again in 2024 we will support it, but let's have a look at what this motion is really about. This motion is purely about Labornomics. Labor economics: when they run out of their money, they come after yours. Even Labor members know that they cannot manage money; 27 times the Treasurer said there would be no new taxes—27 times—and then announced these so-called progressive coal royalties.

Culture is all about how we do things around here. There are global investors in Queensland and they are proud people—proud like Queenslanders—and when they come to Queensland to invest in our rich resources it is very big slap in the face when they are not even spoken to. I note that in his motion the Treasurer talks about BHP CEO Mike Henry, who said certain things. I will tell you what else Mr Henry said, and I table a full transcript of his speech.

*Tabled paper:* Extract, undated, of an article by Mr Henry [1742].


*Tabled paper:* Document, dated 27 June 2023, titled 'Mike Henry speech at World Mining Congress 2023' [1743].

He talks about how it was a respectful conversation when he dealt with Chile. Yes, there were some rises in the royalties in that country, but not like Queensland. It was a complete disgrace. We had absolute silence and we saw the highest global rise in the world. That is how business in Queensland is being treated by this Labor government and it is a disgrace. As I said, these are proud people. When you treat industry and global investors in Queensland like that, then you have it wrong. You also have it wrong for Queenslanders because, unlike this government, we have been listening to Queenslanders right across this state. One of our priorities is going to be working harder for Queenslanders. We will deliver a prosperous future for our regional communities. We will deliver on the priorities that our communities want because we are listening to them. We will make sure that our responsible program going forward includes things that we will be able to deliver for our communities because they deserve a government that does deliver maternity services right across the state—

**Mr Head** interjected.


**Mr McDONALD:** I take the interjection from the member for Callide—like babies being born on the side of the highway. It is absolutely atrocious. We will make sure that we deliver services instead of wasting money like this government with their \$230 million 'Wastecamp'—

*(Time expired)*

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (12.02 pm): The reason we have an incredible resource sector, the reason globally our coal and natural resources are seen favourably, is due to the vision and passion of someone whom I care about and to whom I aspire to be compared: former minister for mines Ron Camm, my great-uncle, who served in this House as minister for mines from 1968 to 1980. As a result of the way in which he conducted himself and did business with companies like Mitsui, those relationships are still strong. When I meet with representatives from international companies they still know the way we did business in Queensland. On this side of the House, that is something we are very proud of.

What I am not proud of is the waste, crisis and chaos we have seen from this government when it comes to royalties and the way that royalties have not been invested into regional communities like mine and the member for Burdekin's. The member for Mackay should be ashamed about the lack of investment we have received, which in the last state budget is the lowest capital investment of any region in Queensland. No funding from resources royalties have come back to our region. The increasing death toll on the Bruce and Peak Downs highways is because this government fails to deliver projects. This government fails to prioritise regional communities. They promised a hospital, they promised renal dialysis in my community, Proserpine, and they promised mental health services—we are still waiting. They have not been delivered. This government continues to make announcement after announcement and waste money. There are incredible blowouts on things like Cross River Rail and Wellcamp. The way in which this government has wasted royalties in a First World nation like Australia and a First World state like Queensland is shameful.


I want to remind the Treasurer about his Labornomics and the way in which he conducts business. I am really amazed at the crystal ball those opposites have. They think that the height of a mining boom is going to continue for decades and decades to come. You really are kidding yourselves! There are many in this House who understand economics and global commodity prices, and understand how they rise and fall, and who would have invested these funds into long-term investment opportunities for this state. We could have funded the Olympics twice over with the royalties that have been delivered out of our regions.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.05 pm): I listened with interest to the Leader of the Opposition when he talked about what he is voting for, but we have already seen what he does with his vote. He very quickly got out there in the media and withdrew his vote for treaty, so we cannot trust what the Leader of the Opposition has to say. The member for Burdekin stood up and waxed lyrical about how he supports the royalties, but when he gets out there in the regions talking to mining companies he says that he is going to look at them and he is going to change them. They tell me they cannot trust what he has to say because they cannot understand what he is going on about.

If the member for Whitsunday did some work in her electorate instead of spending all of her time trying to get herself a seat down in Brisbane or the south-east corner she might have things delivered there, so look after your own backyard. We have seen how the member for Burdekin backs in his mining towns. He could not talk in favour of saving Glenden here in this House. The community of Glenden was ashamed of the fact that their member for parliament could not stand up and back them in. They were here in the gallery and I met with them afterwards when they went back to their communities to talk about how their member refused to back them in. Where does the member stand on backing in his communities? He is all words when he comes in here but he does not do anything about it.

The mining and resources industries are the lifeblood of my community. Along with agriculture, exports and tourism, they form the backbone of our community. I back in progressive coal royalties. The coal royalties are helping investment. We welcome investment from the mining companies because they are putting investment into our region and taking out some of our precious finite resources. They get their resources and the people of Queensland deserve to get their share of these precious resources because they belong to the people of Queensland.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (12.09 pm): The Treasurer has a hide to come in today to move the motion that he has moved—coming from a government that have for the past eight or nine years either bagged the mining industry or begrudgingly accepted that the mining industry is needed and have therefore tempered their language with regards to how they show their support. The biggest issue that regional Queensland has is the legacy that is left behind after the incredible revenue source that the mining industry has been, particularly last year with that \$12 billion windfall. They want to know what legacy will be left.

The member for Burdekin stated that very well. As the member for Burdekin was speaking, I was thinking about where I had read those comments before about how regions think. I remembered that I read them from 'The Right Priorities for Queensland's Future' booklet. I have been encouraged by a number of things. I have been encouraged by the fact that Labor Party members have obviously perused this document because they know it backwards and they are speaking about it all the time. Since it was released on Sunday, I have made it a nightly habit to read a couple of pages before I go to sleep because it is very enriching. I refer the House to page 33 of 'The Right Priorities for Queensland's Future', which talks about 'a prosperous future for our regional communities'. It states—

Regional Queenslanders feel ignored and disregarded.

While our regions are the economic powerhouses of Queensland's economy, they don't feel they are sharing the benefits.


The services taken for granted in cities are increasingly disappearing from regional areas under this Labor Government.

Regional Queenslanders want their government to prioritise bringing back services and jobs to their communities.

An LNP Government will value and recognise the important part regional Queensland plays in our State's future. Regional communities will not be abandoned.

Our regional communities have been built on the back of robust resource, agriculture and tourism sectors. These industries will continue to have a place in Queensland's future.


I could read on and talk more about this document. I encourage Labor government members to peruse this very closely. If they did, they would find that this document may help them understand the priorities that Queenslanders are concerned about. The one thing the Treasurer is worried about is the poll that is coming out in the *Courier-Mail* on Thursday on who is the preferred leader if the Premier is not there, and this is his audition.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (12.12 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion. They are like a Clayton's priorities over there. They are the priorities you have when you are having priorities but they are not priorities. We know that their priorities are to sack, sell and cut workers. That is what they are there to do. Progressive coal royalties are critical to our government's plan to invest in the regions. We were talking about the \$1,072 electricity rebates and I just heard the member for Callide say, 'They're gone.' We heard him say that as soon as they get into power they are going to cut them. There will be no more looking after the cost of living from them; we know where they are. We will see electricity prices go through the roof. We know where their priorities are now. The member for Callide has taken the blanket off everything and told us what is going to happen.

With the progressive coal royalties, we are seeing things happen around the Wide Bay region that those opposite only dream about. When they were in office, they cut and sold and got rid of everything from the Wide Bay. We are seeing projects like upgrades being delivered to the Maryborough and Hervey Bay hospitals. We are seeing upgrades to the Maryborough mental health unit and the Hervey Bay mental health unit. We are seeing a new hospital built in Bundaberg. This is happening right across the Wide Bay region.

We are seeing record investments in our transport and manufacturing sectors right across the Wide Bay. We are also seeing Maryborough back as the capital of train building in Australia and Queensland. That is because of the Palaszczuk Labor government. That is because of the progressive coal royalties that we cannot get a commitment on from that side. We heard today all woo hoo and sprinkles from the opposition leader. That is all we heard: woo hoo and sprinkles. We never heard a commitment after 2024.

We are going to hold him to that. My electorate is going to hold him to that every day. We know that if they get elected it will be goodbye to the train contract in Maryborough. We will see the guard's van going out of Maryborough with the train contract on it. We will see the jobs disappear from Maryborough, Hervey Bay and across the Wide Bay region. When you are driving along and you see the little red light on the back of the train as it is disappearing, that will be the train contract leaving the Wide Bay, leaving the electorate of Maryborough, going down to the Brisbane port to be taken overseas. We know that is their form. They will not commit to the progressive coal royalties because we know as soon as they get in they are going to cut them.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (12.15 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution. I want to say, first of all, that if we really want to move forward here we should remove the politics out of it and put some policy forward. I support the amended motion moved by my colleague the member for Toowoomba South that would remove the last two items out of the Treasurer's motion. Let us talk about the policy and look at what the policy has done.

What we see is a Treasurer bringing forward a policy which is all about an audition for his leadership. It is about taking other people's money and spending it because Labor cannot control their own expenditure. We have a \$2 billion blowout on Cross River Rail so they need revenue from somewhere else. We have seen this \$10 billion windfall that has come in from the resource industry. That \$10 billion has come in as a windfall yet this government still does not have enough money to fund the Toowoomba Hospital properly. It does not have enough money to fund our hospital properly. It had to cut half a billion dollars out of our hospital because they cannot control their spending.


What is the long-term effect of this policy that this Treasurer has introduced? He said that different mines are going ahead and that everything is great and rosy. With revenues coming through, mines that already have their approvals are of course going to go ahead but what we will see is a drop off. If you look at the Fraser Institute and the global ranking on the policy perception index—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr WATTS:** I hear the member for Logan saying that it is up. I refer him to the actual data rather than making it up himself. Queensland have dropped seven points in their ranking on the policy perception index. This is really important because people do not invest in a mine for a year or two years. They have global opportunities in front of them, so when these companies look at Queensland, they see us slipping down. We are now 28th, which is the worst on the mainland of Australia for ranking in the resource policy perception index. South Australia is No. 3 in the world and we are No. 28. That means the long-term investment will be missing. Whilst we might have a bit of a sugar hit right now with a \$10 billion windfall, in the future there will be people who miss their apprenticeships and who do not have the opportunity to do fly-in fly-out work. There will be a mine that does not exist and a royalty revenue stream that does not exist into the future because these guys have destroyed the confidence in investing in the resource industry in Queensland.

We need long-term relationships, long-term regulation and long-term stability. That is the way forward for the industry. That is what is required. This government have torn that down and that will hurt Queensland in the long term after they have squandered the sugar hit they have been given.

*(Time expired)*

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (12.18 pm): If ever you needed a confirmation, I think we just heard it from the member for Toowoomba North. The Leader of the Opposition has said during this debate that the LNP is united, focused and disciplined in relation to this policy. I remind the House

about how united, focused and disciplined the LNP is in relation to this policy matter. When asked on 15 June in this place by the member for Keppel whether those opposite supported progressive coal royalties, the member for Burleigh said no. He said no. He dismissed the budget coal royalties into Queensland coffers as a one-off sugar hit.

Further than that, the member for Burdekin, who is also the shadow minister, raised the possibility of consultation between the future LNP government and the mining industry over the rates. He then said—

We have given a commitment that we will sit down with the Queensland Resources Council, we will sit down with these mining companies and we will genuinely consult with them before we make any decision on coal royalty hikes and changes.

He said that at the Queensland Mining & Engineering Exhibition in Mackay on 20 July 2022.

Those opposite have given no firm commitment to permanent coal royalties here for Queenslanders to enjoy. They are in no way united on this issue, they are in no way focused on this issue and they are certainly not disciplined on this issue. The member for Callide today has called these sugar hits. The cost-of-living rebates going back into the pockets of Queensland householders they have called sugar hits.

**Mr Watts** interjected.

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

*Whereupon the honourable member for Toowoomba North withdrew from the chamber at 12.20 pm.*

**Ms BOYD:** The member for Burdekin likes to stand up and yell in this place. We did not hear much from the opposition spokesperson and local MP about saving Glenden. I refer to the comments made by the member for Mackay today, because those are comments that I was still hearing as recently as last week. He has abandoned his community. He is not standing up for local miners. He is not standing up for mining communities. All he is standing up for is big multinational corporations who donate to the LNP and, frankly—


**Mr Head** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Callide, you are warned.

**Ms BOYD:** They do not want to see these coal royalties coming back into the pockets of Queenslanders. They do not want to see the cost-of-living rebates. They do not want to see the building of regional hospitals. The member for Whitsunday called these projects disgraceful. On the record today she has called these projects disgraceful. Building, upgrading and expanding regional hospitals—disgraceful. Providing more money for LifeFlight—disgraceful, she says. An injection of funding into the Royal Flying Doctor Service—disgraceful. Increasing the—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Manager of Opposition Business, you have one minute.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (12.21 pm): Let's see if those opposite are genuine about getting an answer on coal royalties in this House today. If they are, they will support the amendment moved by the member for Toowoomba South because it maintains all of the substantial components of the Treasurer's motion around coal royalties. If they do not support our amendment, it shows the people of Queensland that this is nothing more than politics. I repeat: this is nothing more than politics. This is about condemning members of the LNP for things that have not even occurred. If they are genuine about getting an answer out of this House yet again, they will support the LNP's amendment. I suspect that they will not.

I remind those opposite that we did not support yesterday's business program motion because we knew that those opposite would pull stunts like this. Yet again we have been proven right and, therefore, we will continue to not support business program motions.

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

**AYES, 33:**

**LNP, 31—**Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Weir.

**KAP, 2—**Dametto, Katter.

**NOES, 49:**

**ALP, 49**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Palaszcuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

Pairs: McMahon, Crandon; O'Rourke, Nicholls.

Resolved in the negative.

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

**AYES, 49:**

**ALP, 49**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Palaszcuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 34:**

**LNP, 31**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Weir.


**KAP, 3**—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

Pairs: McMahon, Crandon; O'Rourke, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

## EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) (EXTENSION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN REMOTE AREAS) AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (12.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Education, Employment and Training Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Education (General Provisions) (Extension of Primary Schools in Remote Areas) Amendment Bill 2023 [\[1744\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Education (General Provisions) (Extension of Primary Schools in Remote Areas) Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes [\[1745\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Education (General Provisions) (Extension of Primary Schools in Remote Areas) Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[1746\]](#).

The primary policy objective of the education bill, as put forward by the KAP, is to address the need for increased access to designated secondary education services in remote Queensland communities, triggered by the year 7 transition that was put into this House when I was first elected—a \$900 million endeavour that left stranded a lot of communities that do not have a high school. I think we were just, as usual, an after-thought in that process when it was rolled out.

Specifically, the bill seeks to mitigate a longstanding issue impacting remote Queensland families who, as a result of living in a community where the Queensland government does not provide a high school, are left with a suite of often unsatisfactory options for their children when it comes time for them to commence senior schooling. In these cases, the options available to families include enrolling their child in a boarding school often hundreds, if not thousands, of kilometres away from their family homes and loved ones; enrolling their child in a distance education provider; or relocating to a town or city where a high school facility is available in order to keep the family unit together. That is all compounded by the lovely little factor—and I am being very sarcastic here—of the enormous costs of flights. If you are anywhere in the Traeger electorate west of, say, Hughenden and you are travelling to Mount Isa to get the Qantas flight to Brisbane, or other places, where your kids need to go for secondary schooling, you incur crippling costs associated with that.

Remote families have reported damaging impacts due to these circumstances, citing the psychological impact on these children who are very young when they are sent away from their family for the first time. Some of these kids are 12 when they are forced to move away from their home. I went to school a year early, so I would have been 11 if I had lived in one of these towns. They are sent away from their home for the first time against their will and before they are emotionally ready. There are high and sometimes unaffordable costs of boarding schools for a lot of these people. There are challenges

associated with distance education learning, including social isolation. There is also the decline of small, remote communities that suffer population drift to larger communities as a result of inadequate educational service provision.

One parent in particular from my electorate to whom I spoke last year raised concerns about the vulnerability of kids who, under the current system, are shipped off to boarding school at the age of 11 or 12. She said it is a case of either sending the kids away or moving the whole family, potentially ripping a significant cohort of people from the town. It also affects the primary school if there are younger siblings still enrolled there. This is happening time and time again and it wreaks havoc on rural schools, many of which have only a small enrolment number to begin with.

At a community meeting to discuss this issue in Ravenswood in 2022 I was informed that the local school had lost five students this year as they transitioned from year 6 to 7. This meant half the school was gone. Leading up to that, one of the people affected was Mark Pritchard and his family, from a very well-known generational family in Charters Towers. He loves the place and it broke his heart that as he chose to live at Ravenswood he was losing his kids in those earlier years when they could have stayed at home. We are talking about years 7, 8, 9 and 10. That is a lot longer for the kids to live closer to their parents and be brought up in that family environment.

It weighs heavily on me to hear multiple conversations right across the electorate like we heard in Ravenswood. That was fairly interesting. Further to that, the mine manager in Ravenswood said, 'This is actually a problem for us.' I hope the resources minister is listening to this if the government is serious about having a permanent workforce and families in these towns to fill the jobs. He said, 'This is a real problem for us. We had a few families from Townsville who said they would move to Ravenswood, but their kids were in the nine- to 10-year-old bracket and they said it's not worth it. They said, "If we bring them out here they will be here for two years, just settle into the school and then we have to send them to Townsville or Charters Towers and we will have to look at moving again ourselves. It is just not worth the disruption."' That does not encapsulate the entire problem, but it is so insidious. It affects all parts of our industry, not just our community composition.

I need not belabour how destructive the government imposed population decline—or neglect—in rural and remote communities can be. Unlike my electorate of Traeger, Brisbane, which is bursting at the seams and expects to welcome two million residents in the next 20 years, all my towns and cities are projected to go backwards. Flinders Shire Council is expecting a 20 per cent decline up to 2046; Winton, which is no longer in my electorate, 24 per cent; Barcaldine, 18 per cent; and Maranoa, 13 per cent. I notice the banners from the Cairns regional parliament depicted the projected population. I am sure a lot of members were pleased to see 10 per cent, five per cent or 20 per cent in their electorate. Mine was minus 0.9 per cent. That is for a number of reasons. It is not just that people do not like living out in the bush; it is that the opportunities are not there.

We heard references to UNESCO and gulf net-fishing bans that are going to smash Karumba, which coincidentally is one of these towns that does not have a high school and so would benefit from this bill. We are battling on every front. This is another front that we would like some help with. That is why we are introducing this bill. It is very important that this bill is passed so people in these bush towns can keep their kids at home longer.

While the issue that this bill seeks to address is long standing, the situation has become more acute and the impact on families more severe since 2015 when the year 7 transition into high school was implemented. That is when parents started actively saying, 'Hang on. Why can't we do this? I am sure there are better ways to do this.' That resulted in children as young as 11 and 12, as opposed to the previous age of 13, entering high school. In the case of remote children, their families are being forced to face these difficult circumstances. Julia Creek was one of those places. There is also Georgetown and Karumba in my electorate as well as Ravenswood, which I mentioned previously.

This bill seeks to empower those remote communities and families to seek improved local educational access where practically needed. Through the bill, powers and importantly responsibilities are provided to the relevant minister to expand up to year 10 the educational offerings of existing primary schools in relevant locations and under certain circumstances. The bill outlines that upon a written request from the local community through their local government, the minister is obligated to expand the offering of an existing primary school up to year 10. Where critical mass does not make this economically feasible—that is where there are fewer than five students seeking to enrol in years 7 to 10 in the coming year—the minister and the department must reach an agreement with the local government whereby the department facilitates the establishment of an educational learning facility



similar to the Julia Creek Learning Facility—that facility is in place already for years 7 to 10—or the Thargomindah Remote Secondary Learning Facility for years 7 to 12 in that local community where they have taken matters into their own hands.

For background, the Julia Creek Learning Facility was established in 2015 following an agreement between McKinlay Shire Council, the Department of Education, Mount Isa School of the Air and Julia Creek State School, a process that I was very much involved in at that time. At the Julia Creek Learning Facility students enrolled in years 7 to 10 are able to complete their schooling through the Mount Isa School of the Air curriculum at a designated learning space at the Julia Creek State School. The facility is staffed by a teacher aide for 30 hours a week to supervise and to assist students in their learning. The Mount Isa School of the Air principal and business manager manages this staff member, consulting with the Julia Creek State School principal as required. The costs associated with the centre are covered by the McKinlay Shire Council. It is pretty disappointing that a local government authority for a town of a few hundred people is covering the cost of education because of gaps caused by the state government. We are talking about small numbers. It is fairly modest financial support, but these poor little councils are forced to take matters into their own hands.

The Thargomindah Remote Secondary Learning Facility was established in 2012—earlier than the one in Julia Creek—and functions in the same manner. As I understand it, that council is quite well endowed financially so they are in a good position to take matters into their own hands. That facility was a result of collaboration between the Bulloo Shire Council, the Department of Education, the Charleville School of Distance Education and the Thargomindah State School. The students at this learning facility are able to access year 11 and 12 studies through the Brisbane School of Distance Education. The costs associated with the centre are covered by the Bulloo Shire Council. Neither learning facility arrangement impacts on the entitlement of state and/or federal financial support for families who choose to send their children away to undertake their secondary education at boarding school.

Let us break this down. The struggling communities that we represent in these far-flung areas of the state feel no-one cares about them and they feel they are often forgotten. They are battling with cost-of-living pressures—and try to get insurance in some of these towns or get a loan from the bank to buy a house. Now they have the added expense of trying to send their kids away to boarding school a year earlier.

A mum in Georgetown does not want to part with her kids that early. Anywhere else in Queensland the kids can walk or ride their pushbike to the nearest state school and get their education. We do not have that privilege in these areas. Some may say, 'There is the Spinifex Residential Campus in Mount Isa. You could send your kids there.' I guess that is an option, but I think it is unfair and highly inequitable to insist that that is the only option.

Parents in Georgetown say, 'There is nothing wrong with the school of distance education curriculum.' I have had a number of conversations with teachers in this space who say, 'These kids will not be disadvantaged.' We could almost say that they would gain an advantage by having the security of staying at home. A lot of these kids love their hometown of Julia Creek. They do not want to leave. They love being with their parents. They love being able to ride their motorbikes on the weekend. They love the lifestyle. That is why they move there in the first place. If we rip that away from them it is not good.

I grew up in Charters Towers but went to boarding school. It broke some of the kids' hearts being in Charters Towers away from their bush setting. Maybe it was good for some of them, but there were a lot of kids begging to be at home. There are a lot of people who live in the country who do not own stations. They are not wealthy. They cannot send their kids to expensive boarding schools. It becomes problematic for them to try to get the necessary education for their kids.

I turn to the government and say, 'Do you want to look after these impoverished people in these towns?' They are not the wealthy ones who can send their kids to boarding school. We are talking about battlers in the towns of Thargomindah, Julia Creek, Karumba, Georgetown and other remote towns. Are we going to look after these kids or are we going to throw them away like we have thrown away the industries in a lot of these country towns? Are we going to ignore that this is happening and let them fend for themselves?

People could argue that we already have the tools to do this now. Julia Creek took matters into its own hands. They should not have to. McKinlay Shire Council does not have education as part of its responsibility. Education is the responsibility of the state government. The government funds education

and takes a lot of money off taxpayers to deliver those programs. I am sure we could find a little fat somewhere in the education system, and I am sure we could find a lot of it in the south-east corner. We only need a tiny skerrick of it.

They could occupy buildings that already exists. We have been suffering from population decline in schools so the government took year 7 out of primary school. Logically, there is space in these school buildings. We are talking about only five or 10 kids, maximum. We could easily accommodate these kids in the existing buildings. I will tell members a secret; they are already doing it now in some schools. The goodwill of some teachers results in them saying, 'Let the kid do his distance education in the room and we will turn a blind eye to it.' They know that is the best outcome for the kid. It is already happening so why not endorse it and let us help ourselves.

We should not have to help ourselves. The government should be doing everything for us. We are trying to meet the government halfway by saying, 'Let the councils play a role in this'—although they should not have to. They will be using their resources. We need to empower people to look after their own kids and keep the families in town.

The ICPA have acknowledged the problem and said that most of their support is typically focused on making sure kids can get to boarding school. They acknowledge that there are some kids who do not fit that mould and do not want to go and some families that cannot afford it. We need to look after them as well.

In these little towns we have the station owners. We have someone who owns the grocery store. There will be grader drivers who have a few machines and contract to the council. A lot of the kids want to do nothing more than get on the grader that dad drove for the council and do the same. He does not need to go to boarding school to do that and nor do his parents need to spend 30 or 40 grand a year to send him to Charters Towers, Townsville or wherever when we have a cheap option to deliver his education within a competent school of the air and state school system in these towns. We have some wonderful teachers in some of these towns who could oversee this and would like nothing more than to help with this.

It can be done now, but councils should not have to take these matters into their own hands. It should never have been the case that Thargomindah funded and set this up themselves. It should never have been the case for Julia Creek either. We should not have to come on bended knee to beg, borrow and steal to come up with solutions in the community. It should come from the top down. The government is funded very well to deliver education to kids in all of Queensland and not just to those who live in a town where there is a secondary school campus.

It might not sound like much and this issue might not make the headlines, but I can assure members that it is a very painful issue for some parents. I captured a video of one parent from Einasleigh who came up to me to talk about this not knowing that the KAP had been talking about this for years. She said, 'Rob, we have to send our kids away. Can you do something about this? My boy would have to go away at 11. He is too young to be going away. We would love the opportunity to deliver the school of the air program here.' She was talking to me about something that we were already working on. I could replay that conversation probably four or five times over in the last number of years of doing this job. That is a pretty big number when representing remote communities. Other people have arrived at exactly the same conclusion.

I have had informal discussions with a number of people in the education system who have said that they could more adequately cater for the education needs of these kids. More importantly, this is very much about playing a role. That is why the KAP is strong on this issue. It is about playing a role and putting some stopgap measures in place to stop the bleed of population to the coast and the metropolitan areas.

We keep hearing the government talk about housing problems in South-East Queensland. Guess how the government could fix some of that? This is not going to fix all of it, but we need to stop people in our rural communities moving to the coast. Those rural areas already have a lot of housing that could be done up, but we need to start with the health facilities and education facilities or we are never going to be able to help with those problems and it is only going to exacerbate the issue. That does not seem to be a problem for this government because we keep coming in here every week battling for things that are killing our areas. Here is something really modest that the government could help us out with. The cost we are talking about here would help to fund one teacher aide for a handful—say, 10 or 20—schools in remote Queensland towns so that there is a teacher aide helping to deliver a school of the

air curriculum in a classroom that is already inhabited and where there would be plenty of space to expand for another five or 10 students where necessary. It is the most modest of effort that could be made by the government.

We really appeal for people to put their guns away on this issue. We can all be the father of success here and do something good for the people of rural Queensland by supporting a bill that is targeting the heart of some of these issues that are seeing that migration of people out of our rural towns to the coastal and metropolitan areas. These are the areas that we have to target to try and keep people there. I implore the committee to do a good job of taking consultation on this bill into those rural communities. All rural MPs should do their best to bring people to these hearings because it is not a great proportion of the people of Queensland but a very important proportion of the people of Queensland. It is going to be very hard to go out and find someone else to run the service station or the pub at Einasleigh if those parents move away because their kids cannot get an education or to find someone who will drive the grader for the council for critical maintenance on the roads. It will be very hard to replace them if we keep making it too hard for them to be based there and educate their kids there. It will be very hard at Ravenswood mine to get a permanent workforce and live up to the rhetoric that we want a locally based permanent workforce. None of that happens if we do not do things like this.

We are bringing this to the parliament in good faith. We hope that the government and the opposition seriously consider this bill. We implore them to have a good look at it and to do something. While it might seem like it is small, it would be something that could have a really big and deep impact in rural areas of Queensland.

### First Reading

**Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (12.51 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to Education, Employment and Training Committee

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Education, Employment and Training Committee.

## CASINO CONTROL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Message from Governor



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (12.52 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): The message from Her Excellency the Governor recommends the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

#### MESSAGE

CASINO CONTROL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2023

*Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68*

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

A Bill for an Act to amend the Casino Control Act 1982, the Casino Control Regulation 1999, the Gaming Machine Act 1991, the Gaming Machine Regulation 2002, the Keno Act 1996 and the Wagering Act 1998 for particular purposes

#### GOVERNOR

Date: 25 October 2023

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 25 October 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 [\[1747\]](#).

## Introduction



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (12.52 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Casino Control Act 1982, the Casino Control Regulation 1999, the Gaming Machine Act 1991, the Gaming Machine Regulation 2002, the Keno Act 1996 and the Wagering Act 1998 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 [\[1748\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes [\[1749\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[1750\]](#).

This is the second bill that the Palaszczuk government has introduced to deal with issues affecting the integrity of the Queensland casino sector. It follows on from the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 which was introduced and passed last year amidst public concerns about the integrity and accountability of casinos nationwide. These concerns were based on allegations of money laundering, criminal infiltration and other integrity issues against casino operators, including the Star Entertainment Group Ltd which, through subsidiaries, currently operates the Treasury Brisbane casino and the Star Gold Coast casino. Accordingly, the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 proactively enhanced the disciplinary options available to government within the casino regulatory framework and otherwise provided for increased scrutiny and oversight of Queensland casinos.

In July 2022, while this bill was still before the House, the former attorney-general appointed the Hon. Robert Gotterson AO, KC to conduct an external review of the Queensland operations of the Star Entertainment Group Ltd. In addition to inquiring into the operations of Star's Queensland properties and providing advice to inform government's concurrent suitability investigations into Star Entertainment Group Ltd, Mr Gotterson was tasked with considering whether improvements to casino legislation would enhance the integrity of casinos and restore public confidence in casino operations. Mr Gotterson made 12 recommendations to this effect and the government accepted all of these recommendations in principle as announced on 6 October 2022. The recommendation that the Casino Control Act be amended to provide for the appointment of a special manager to oversee casino operations as a disciplinary measure has already been actioned through last year's casino bill. It provided the framework within which the government appointed Mr Nicholas Weeks as special manager to Star casinos in Queensland.

The bill I introduce today provides the legislation necessary to implement Mr Gotterson's remaining 11 recommendations. These recommendations provide for important harm minimisation reforms as well as those that enhance the scrutiny and oversight of Queensland casinos. Significantly, the bill addresses Mr Gotterson's recommendation that mandatory carded play be implemented in Queensland casinos accompanied by mandatory precommitment and restrictions on the use of cash. The bill provides a regulation-making power that will allow the details of these technology-driven reforms to be defined and refined in accordance with best practice harm minimisation. The bill also provides for the use of player card data, including its use in the administration and enforcement of the Casino Control Act, and allows the chief executive to provide de-identified player card information for research purposes.

To address money laundering, casinos will be restricted from accepting more than a prescribed amount of cash from a person for gambling related transactions in a 24-hour period. Mr Gotterson recommended a \$1,000 limit and the government will consult further on this amount, noting that the limit relates only to use of cash and is separate from any default expenditure limit that may be applied under the provisions relating to mandatory precommitment. These are very important reforms that will reduce the potential for harm from casino gaming while also reducing the currently broad potential for casinos to be exploited by money launderers. The reforms are also consistent with reforms being implemented by governments in Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia in response to their inquiries into casino integrity. The bill also places controls on direct marketing by casino operators and provides that casino operators must not require a person to give consent to receiving promotional or advertising material as a condition of issuing the person a player card.

To further reflect the government's commitment to harm minimisation, the bill also changes some of the gambling terminology used in the Casino Control Act, the Gaming Machine Act, the Keno Act and the Wagering Act. In accordance with Mr Gotterson's recommendations and a commitment the Palaszczuk government has already made under the Gambling Harm Minimisation Plan for Queensland

2021-2025, the bill replaces the terms 'problem gambler' and 'responsible gambling' with more suitable wording to reduce stigma, shame and the implication of personal responsibility for gambling behaviour. The term 'problem gambler' will be replaced with 'person experiencing or at risk of experiencing harm from gambling' while the concept of 'responsible gambling' will be replaced with 'safer gambling'. The change, which will also be replicated in government communications material relating to gambling, reflects current understanding that the responsibility for a person's gambling does not rest solely with that person and that gambling providers also have a role to play in minimising harm.

Casino operators will also be required to observe a mandatory code of conduct which will be prescribed in a regulation. The code may impose obligations on casino operators and their employees and agents in respect of safer gambling in casinos. The bill provides the code may also deal with the appropriate conduct of casino operations and the implementation of appropriate practices, systems and procedures relating to the governance, accountability and integrity of casino operators.

Importantly, amendments contained in the bill will require casino operators to pay a supervision levy so that the costs of regulating casinos is borne by those who benefit from casino licences rather than the taxpayer. The bill allows the minister to set the annual value of the levy, having regard to the costs of regulating casinos and the proposed conduct of programs aimed at reducing harm from gambling in Queensland, which may also be funded from the levy. Liability for the levy will be apportioned between casino licensees as provided for in a regulation.

The bill also amends the Casino Control Act to provide for the periodic cost-recoverable reviews into each casino licence at intervals of not more than five years, unless extended to a maximum of seven years by regulation. The reviews must cover, among other things, the suitability of the casino entities associated with the casino licence, the compliance of each casino entity with casino legislation, the operation of the casino and whether it is in the public interest that the casino licence remains in force. Compliance with the mandatory code of conduct will be a consideration in suitability determinations arising from the reviews. The bill also contains enhancements to provisions dealing with the exclusion of a person from a casino, for example by compelling casino operators to share details of persons they have excluded on safety or integrity grounds due to the way the person has acted in a casino. In accordance with Mr Gotterson's recommendations, the bill will also require casino operators to proactively exclude a person if the casino operator is aware the person is banned from an interstate casino at the direction of an interstate police commissioner.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.



**Mrs D'ATH:** This bill addresses some of the undesirable behaviour identified in Mr Gotterson's report, which found that particular persons banned by police from casinos in New South Wales were encouraged to cross the border and gamble at Star's Queensland casinos.

In addition to delivering on the legislation necessary to implement Mr Gotterson's recommendations, the bill contains a number of additional reforms that are also aimed at enhancing casino integrity in Queensland. Significantly, the bill obligates the officers of a casino operator to particular duties relating to the lawful and appropriate operation of a casino. The obligations require the officer to take reasonable steps to ensure, for example, the casino operator operates the casino lawfully and properly engages with its employees in relation to matters that impact on the provision of a safer gambling environment or the integrity of casino operations. Though not a recommendation of the Gotterson review, the new obligations on officers will help build a positive and cooperative culture in Queensland casinos by ensuring those persons with ultimate responsibility for corporate conduct take proactive steps to ensure compliance.

The bill also increases the penalties for more than 60 offences across the Casino Control Act and Casino Control Regulation to ensure the penalties for specific breaches of those instruments are commensurate with the nature of the offences and the harms that may arise from a breach. The increases accord with community expectations that penalties should act as a suitable deterrent against inappropriate conduct within Queensland casinos and that penalties cannot be seen, given the profits generated by casino gaming, as an acceptable cost of doing business. It should be noted that the maximum pecuniary penalty of \$100 million, introduced through the passage of last year's casino bill and subsequently levelled to that value against Star, still applies as an option for Governor in Council when determining disciplinary action against a casino entity for significant wrongdoing.

The bill proposes other amendments that will modernise how inspectors obtain information, for example by ensuring they are not required to produce identification when requesting information by email and are able to accept information by electronic means rather than requiring it to be delivered in person. Additionally, the regulator will be provided with real-time access to the electronic systems of casino operators.

The bill also provides that an excluded person or minor who would not ordinarily be permitted to remain on casino premises may do so if they are assisting an inspector or police officer in the performance of the inspector or police officer's functions. The existing legislation does not allow excluded persons or minors to remain on the premises and, as a result, an excluded person or minor found on casino premises would have to be interviewed on the street rather than in a more appropriate and private environment such as the onsite inspectorate office located within the casino. The amendment contained in the bill addresses this issue. These reforms are important to ensuring the integrity and responsible operation of Queensland casinos. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (2.03 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to Legal Affairs and Safety Committee


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

## PROPERTY LAW BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 24 October (see p. 3174), on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (2.05 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the Property Law Bill 2023. As many contributors in this debate have already said, the changes we are debating have been introduced into this House to replace the Property Law Act 1974. The primary objective of this bill is to replace the Property Law Act with a new, modernised Property Law Act drafted broadly in accordance with the recommendations of the *Final report: Property Law Act 1974*, prepared by the Commercial and Property Law Research Centre at the Queensland University of Technology. I would like to thank the authors for their work on that report.

The Property Law Act governs many aspects of Queensland's property law, including general rules affecting property, the creation and disposition of interests in land, co-ownership, deeds, covenants, mortgages, leases, the rule against perpetuities and 'old system' land. The Property Law Act commenced in December 1975 and, while having been amended, the act itself has not been substantially redrafted since.

The bill will simplify, streamline and modernise Queensland's property legislation, better facilitate e-conveyancing and electronic transactions and remove outdated provisions as well as implement a new statutory seller disclosure scheme drafted broadly in accordance with the recommendations of the 2017 *Final report: Seller disclosure in Queensland*, also prepared by the Queensland University of Technology. In generally adopting the recommendations of the report, the bill will create a more certain, coordinated and transparent regime for the sale of freehold land in Queensland by promoting consistency and clarity of disclosure. Buyers will benefit from being in a more informed position prior to signing a contract to purchase land with a view to minimising disputes that currently arise if defects in the title are discovered after the contract is signed.

The bill largely retains the effect of many existing provisions in the Property Law Act 1974 that are well known and in other areas the bill builds upon the existing legal requirements but substantially simplifies or amends the existing requirements to address issues identified through the QUT review. The bill does not codify the law of property but instead builds on common law and equity. The significant changes to property law in the bill are: repealing outdated provisions, for example those related to 'old system' unregistered land; redrafting in modern language—effectively plain English—reflective of current drafting and property practice; providing a legal framework to recognise and facilitate electronic

dealings in property; simplifying the common-law rule without perpetuities and rules relating to covenants; simplifying and updating the rules related to leases; and updating the neighbouring property provisions to reflect modern property practice and community expectations.

As mentioned earlier, the bill will establish a statutory seller disclosure scheme for sales of freehold land as recommended by QUT. Currently there is no statutory seller disclosure scheme in Queensland and property sellers disclose information as required by a mix of legislative, common-law and contract-law obligations. The seller disclosure scheme will simplify and streamline the disclosures process and empower buyers to make informed decisions about property dealings. We all know that having a disclosure system allows the buyer to have a more open and transparent experience, allowing them to make an informed decision when buying property. This bill will make it mandatory, with some exceptions, for a seller of freehold land to disclose to the buyer, before the buyer signs the contract, relevant information in a single document with any prescribed certificates, including a body corporate certificate where relevant.

That raises the question of what happens if the seller does not comply with the disclosure obligation. Is the buyer entitled to terminate the contract at any time before the settlement including, for example, the day before settlement? This bill will allow the buyer the right to terminate the contract under the seller disclosure scheme. The buyer may choose to terminate at any time before settlement. The only exception is where the seller's failure to disclose is also a failure to comply with another piece of legislation and the other legislation provides a consequence for failing to disclose. In those circumstances, the consequences under the other legislation will apply.

The reason a buyer is entitled to terminate at any time until settlement under the seller disclosure scheme is that, where a contract provides for an extended settlement period, a buyer may delay in undertaking searches until immediately prior to settlement to ensure they rely on the most current information. Therefore, the buyer should be able to terminate the contract just before settlement once they have concluded the searches if the searches reveal nondisclosure that enlivens a termination right. However, it is important to note that the information disclosed by the seller must only be accurate at the time it is given to the buyer before signing the contract, meaning a buyer will not have a termination right simply because information has changed after the contract is signed. I note that report No. 45 of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee states—

Many stakeholders expressed their support for the introduction of a statutory seller disclosure scheme in Queensland.

The Strata Community Association Queensland (SCA) stated that an appropriate balance has been found in terms of the volume of disclosure required.

The committee also noted the broad support from stakeholders for a seller disclosure scheme for the sale of freehold land in Queensland. The committee was satisfied with the value of such a scheme, the four guiding principles for the scheme as proposed in the seller disclosure scheme report and the scheme's objectives of providing clarity, transparency, value and balance. The committee also noted that such a scheme would involve changes to the way business is done in the real estate sector and was pleased to note that the Department of Justice and Attorney-General will work with and educate stakeholders during the implementation of the scheme

This modern, up-to-date legislation is what is needed now. In our own constituencies we have all heard about cases where a buyer is put in a situation where they believe that inaccurate or incomplete information has been given to them when making a decision to buy a property or freehold land. In that instance, with the changes in this bill, they will now receive complete and accurate information before making what is for most people, and maybe only once or twice, one of the most challenging lifetime decisions and probably the biggest purchase they will ever commit themselves and their families to. It is a decision that can be life changing but that is also fraught with stress and worry given the commitment they are making. I know within my own electorate of Hervey Bay there have been instances where full disclosure has not been forthcoming with information being inaccurate or incomplete. This bill will address that concern and put buyers in a situation where they at least have the option to terminate a contract if the seller is not compliant, giving certainty to not only buyers but also sellers.


The information to be disclosed under the seller disclosure scheme will be prescribed by regulation. Disclosure can be made physically or electronically or via an agent, giving sellers flexibility to provide disclosure documents in a variety of ways.

The minister has put forward several amendments to be moved during consideration in detail. The amendments propose to correct and clarify the bill to ensure it operates as intended and to address certain issues raised during the committee process. The amendments include: clarifying the inclusion of easements in gross and certain insurance and indemnity covenants; clarifying that every party to the

contract must be joined to legal proceedings; clarifying, for avoidance of doubt, it will operate on a rolling basis; clarifying that the requirements for giving seller disclosure documents to a bidder who registers after the start of an auction only apply if the bidder has not been given the documents prior to the start of the auction; clarifying that clause 106 will apply to a prescribed certificate issued by an entity; and correcting clause 191 to ensure the common-law principle for determining priorities as between competing assignees of a debt or legal thing in action.

The property law in Queensland, with its recent shifts, is at the forefront of blending tradition with modernity. We know that property law is not just about bricks and mortar. It reflects the values of our society, ensures fairness in transactions and assists in maintaining the balance of rights amongst property owners. As a society evolves so must our laws. These changes are not merely procedural; they reflect a deeper understanding of the ever-evolving nature of property transactions. It is a testament to the Palaszczuk government's commitment to ensuring that property law remains robust, fair and reflective of contemporary needs.

I acknowledge the committee; the committee secretariat; the chair, the member for Toohey; and the Attorney-General and former attorney-general for their work. I thank all the submitters and the stakeholders who contributed to this legislation. It is a good piece of legislation that is before the House and it needs to be fully supported by this House. I understand that some on the other side might have reservations about some of the issues in it, but I think that it should be fully supported. I support the bill before the House.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.14 pm): I am pleased to rise in support of the Property Law Bill 2023. I note the significant work that occurred over a number of years to modernise Queensland's property laws. I acknowledge and thank the Attorney-General for bringing the legislation to the parliament.

Owning and dealing with property, purchasing property under a community titles scheme, signing and enforcing lease arrangements or being subject to covenants are all issues that affect many Queenslanders so it is very important that our property laws are modern and robust. The Property Law Act 1974 came into force on 1 December 1975. For some context, I was one when this act came in. At the time, it was considered one of the major property law reform projects ever undertaken in Queensland. The act was substantially a product of an extensive inquiry by the Queensland Law Reform Commission, which culminated in the publishing of a working paper in April 1972 and a final report in February 1973 containing draft legislation. It took nearly two years to enact the draft, which was keenly debated and finally adopted with some changes. Since its enactment there have been very few substantive amendments to the act and no overall review in the 40 years since that commencement. It is a credit to the legislation that it has generally served our state well for almost 50 years.

Real property law draws heavily upon historical concepts that have their roots in the 18th and 19th centuries. Consequently, many provisions of the Property Law Act 1974 were based upon the UK Law of Property Act 1925. Many sections of the current act remain in the same language as the 1925 act or in direct transcripts of the New South Wales Conveyancing Act 1919. At this point in time, such provisions are at least 90 years old. Many of the concepts from the 1925 act, such as those related to 'old system' land and conveyancing, no longer have any rational basis for retention in the Queensland context.

Through the Commercial and Property Law Research Centre at the Queensland University of Technology, there has been a significant body of work undertaken by researchers in terms of reviewing and seeking to reform legal and regulatory frameworks in the commercial and property law sector. The current bill draws on the work of the Commercial and Property Law Research Centre and, in particular, many of the recommendations of the centre's *Final report: Property Law Act 1974*. As well as replacing the current act, the bill also creates a statutory seller disclosure scheme for the sale of freehold land. This was a recommendation in the report titled *Final report: Seller disclosure in Queensland*, which was also prepared by QUT's Commercial and Property Law Research Centre.

There is a saying, 'buyer beware', which is never more important than in the purchase of property. It is most likely the most expensive purchase people will make in their lifetime. For some it may be the only big purchase in their lives whilst others may make a number of such purchases through investments. For the most part, the onus has always been on the purchaser to ensure they understand what they are paying for. Of course, the concern with this has always been around a lack of uniformity in terms of what is disclosed as, to date, there has not been a statutory seller disclosure scheme in Queensland. Currently, property sellers disclose information as required under a complex mix of common law and statutory and contractual obligations. As the parliamentary committee noted in its



inquiry on the bill, this creates a significant regulatory burden on the seller and their advisers as well as meaning that buyers can receive a variety of different disclosure documents at different stages of the sales process.

The bill proposes to create a statutory seller disclosure scheme that will apply to all sales of freehold land. Under the scheme, a seller will be required to give the buyer a disclosure statement and prescribed documents before the buyer signs the contract for sale. A statutory seller disclosure scheme is recommended in the seller disclosure scheme report. The report recommended the scheme be underpinned by four guiding principles: information to be provided by the seller to the buyer pre contract should be within the seller's knowledge or readily available by search at reasonable cost to the seller; information should be of value to a buyer in making a decision to purchase—primarily this will be information impacting on title to the property or ongoing financial liability of ownership; information should be in an accessible form, easily understood and capable of being relied upon by the buyer; and a single legal framework should be established providing consistency in the content and timing of disclosure and remedies available for a failure to comply.

Overall, stakeholders were generally supportive of the introduction of a statutory seller disclosure scheme in Queensland. It will also be helpful to the real estate sector in ensuring all agents have a clear understanding of what sellers must disclose to buyers, helping to provide greater clarity, transparency, value and balance. Certainly I have spoken to a number of local real estate agents in my electorate who welcome this new scheme.

The other topic I wish to raise relates to the sale of lots in a community titles scheme. Currently, the seller of a lot in a community titles scheme must comply with the disclosure requirements found under the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997. The bill before us omits the disclosure requirements under the BCCM Act as the new disclosure requirements for all freehold sales under the proposed Property Law Bill 2023 will include sales of community titles scheme lots. This creates better clarity, with all freehold sale disclosures found under the one act regardless of whether you are purchasing a freestanding house, an apartment, a townhouse or a unit. The requirement of a seller to also produce a copy of body corporate records will also change, with the new requirement for a body corporate certificate to be provided by the body corporate manager.

Businesses which currently provide strata search services to buyers and sellers have expressed concerns, particularly about whether this will detrimentally affect the body corporate disclosure industry operating within Queensland. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General noted in its response to the parliamentary committee that the new provisions should see most buyers receiving more useful information when deciding to purchase a property under a community titles scheme. Automation of the body corporate certificates was not seen as problematic, as long as the information provided was accurate and complied with the approved form of the certificate.


It was also noted that body corporate certificates will be required to be disclosed before entering into a contract of sale, and no concerns have been raised by the real estate or legal professions around the proposed five-day time frame under the seller disclosure scheme. Importantly, the new legislation does not prevent nor restrict sellers and buyers from being able to use search agents. Bodies corporate and search agents are also able to enter into relationships whereby a search agent is authorised to prepare body corporate certificates on behalf of bodies corporate. I note that the parliamentary report makes it clear that work is continuing with members of the Community Titles Legislation Working Group on the final format of the body corporate certificates. The department will ensure the sector is well prepared for these reforms as they are implemented.

The LGAQ did raise an important issue in relation to natural hazard risks—as has been referenced by a number of members in the House throughout this debate—in particular a property's history regarding flooding and other natural disasters. This was also a matter raised by the member for Noosa in her statement of reservation. I note the amendments proposed by the member for South Brisbane.

The draft regulation does prescribe a warning statement in the disclosure statement advising the buyer to inquire with the relevant local government about whether the property is affected by flooding or another natural hazard. Certainly I have found in both of the local government areas I represent—Ipswich and Logan—that flood mapping is high-quality and obviously quite current, given the most recent flooding events of 2022. I also appreciate that this may not always be the case for some councils in Queensland, which is so decentralised and ranges in terms of population, rate base and resources available—something that I do not think the Greens party completely understands.

The LGAQ's request for mandatory disclosure of natural hazard risks at point of sale and prior to property purchases at this point raises some practical and legal difficulties; however, I do believe it is a sound request that we should continue to work towards with all local councils and relevant flood information sources such as FloodCheck Queensland and the Australian Flood Risk Information Portal. The increased natural disasters that we are experiencing, particularly here in Queensland, means that buyers are certainly more aware than ever before of the risks associated with climate change and our changing weather patterns. The warning statement in the disclosure statement should really just be a prompt for a more thorough check of flood and natural hazard maps through the relevant local council.

I am really pleased that this bill is now before us. I appreciate that developing a brand new act is complex, takes time and requires considerable consultation with industry, stakeholders and the property law profession to ensure there are no unintended consequences. For buyers and sellers, it is an ongoing safeguard in ensuring that this most significant transaction in their life—the purchase or sale of a property—is undertaken with greater ease, with more transparency and with peace of mind. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (2.23 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the Property Law Bill 2023. As the member for Stafford said last night with regard to studying law at QUT—I acknowledge the work QUT has done with regard to reforming the—

**Ms Pugh:** A fine institution.

**Mr BROWN:** I take that interjection; it is a fine institution. I just wish this bill was around when I was studying at QUT a number of years ago, because it has simplified the matter and made it simpler. I thank them for their work.

I refer to some comments made earlier. It is important for the shadow planning minister to have an understanding of this act. I found yesterday's disclosure by the shadow planning minister, the member for Kawana, extraordinary. When talking about the Weinam Creek PDA in his matter of public interest he said—

We met with Gayle and Lindsay from Our Parking Spots in the Weinam Creek PDA.

Gayle is actually a former member of the LNP—

**Ms BATES:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b), relevance. The member is straying from the long title of the bill. I am just drawing your attention to that.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Member for Capalaba, what you are referring to occurred in another matter in the House and appears not to be relevant to the long title of the bill. I ask you to come back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr BROWN:** I do note with regard to priority development that there are common areas and freehold land involved in this process. That is where I was getting to before I was cut off. I note that the member for Kawana met with Gayle, a former LNP—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is quite obvious that the member on his feet is trying very hard to get to a point that has nothing to do with this bill and he is going against your ruling.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Capalaba, I have given you guidance. I ask you to adhere to my ruling on relevance and return to the long title of the bill.

**Mr BROWN:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will move on. A lot of members spoke about the disclosure requirements of this bill. When I bought my first apartment with my best man—we bought a little two-bedroom apartment in Bulimba—


**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr BROWN:** It was very cosy. We bought that in 2009. In 2011 there was significant flooding. Our apartment on Hawthorne Road was quite a distance from the Brisbane River. The rain event occurred and then the sun shone. Then we noticed water start to come up from the manhole out the back of the apartment complex. It continued to come up and flooded the garage of our six-unit complex to about a foot and a half. What was disclosed to us many years later, when the flood maps of Brisbane were actually updated, is that the place we bought was built effectively over a branch of Bulimba Creek. The flooding at the time also demonstrated that we were in the lowest part of Hawthorne Road at Bulimba.

I would have liked to have had the benefit of the changes included in this bill when I was in my 20s and buying my first home to ensure I was directed towards researching and understanding the flood maps so I could take them into consideration when buying. I still would have bought the place. Obviously we were able to hose out the garage. It was a great first property. These legislative amendments and the changes that come from them mean that—especially with so many people moving into South-East Queensland from interstate and from overseas—we will have a simple process which directs people towards available flood maps, especially in cities like Brisbane. This will ensure—before they buy the property—that they know what they are getting and what has happened in the past.

I note that the Greens' proposed amendment is very Brisbane-centric. It does not take into consideration rural and remote councils and their ability to effectively have those flood maps. This applies even to city councils such as Redland. I am not sure the Redland City Council flood maps have been updated since the rain events in my area in 2021. They have just gone through a process with a number of properties—identifying one-in-100-year events and one-in-1,000-year events. They are now purchasing properties in my electorate to ensure they can build flood mitigation easements through those properties.

It is important that we are flexible with regard to the legislation to ensure local councils have the ability to provide maps they have available at that stage. As I cannot get into the finer points I was trying to make about the member for Kawana and his lack of understanding when it comes to this area of law, I will have to wrap it up there and say that I support the bill wholeheartedly.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (2.30 pm), in reply: I thank the member for Capalaba and all members for their contributions. I also thank those members who acknowledged their wedding anniversaries—congratulations—and the member for Bundaberg for his very interesting and informative speech. I thank everyone for their contribution to the debate on the Property Law Bill 2023.

As indicated in my earlier speech, the bill replaces the current Property Law Act 1974 with modern property laws that will serve Queenslanders for another generation to come. As stated in my first and second reading speeches, I am very pleased with the widespread stakeholder support and engagement in developing and refining the bill and the positive improvements and clarifications the bill will make to Queensland's property laws. I note the opposition's intention to support this bill and the amendments circulated by the government.

As foreshadowed in my earlier speech, I intend to move amendments during consideration in detail that are clarifying and technical in nature. These amendments will ensure that the bill operates as intended and address the recommendations made by the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee and various concerns raised in stakeholder submissions. I will now address some of the matters raised by members during the course of this debate. I note claims by some members opposite that the property law reforms in the bill have taken too long to implement, and I am going to take some time to address this issue.

From August 2013 to January 2018, just under five years, the Commercial and Property Law Research Centre at the Queensland University of Technology conducted its review. The review involved the release of 10 papers, each dealing with different aspects of the act, and ultimately resulted in two final reports dealing with seller disclosure and the Property Law Act as well as reports on bodies corporate. The final report on the Property Law Act itself, let alone the other papers in relation to bodies corporate and other areas, comprised over 1,000 pages and 232 recommendations.

Following the receipt of this report the government undertook extensive consultation with stakeholders over 2021 and 2022 through multiple rounds of both targeted and public consultation to ensure that the drafting of this important law was right. In fact, it was noted in submissions to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee that many stakeholders, including the Queensland Law Society and the Real Estate Institute of Queensland, recognised the significant and extended consultation processes undertaken to develop the bill. This included the preparation of detailed exposure drafts for public consultation, assessing the feedback received, and redrafting where appropriate. It was noted that this was an intensive task, but it has produced a bill which will modernise property law in Queensland for the benefit of Queensland consumers. It is something that needed to be done right, so the government makes no apologies for taking the time needed to develop this once-in-a-generation rewrite of Queensland's property laws.

Despite some members' belief that seemingly nothing has happened in this space until this bill was introduced, I would also like to remind members opposite of the substantial list of property law review reforms and associated initiatives that have already been considered and implemented by this

Labor government: firstly, QUT's recommendations about reforming the system of lot entitlements under the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 were subject to extensive stakeholder consultation undertaken by government; secondly, the great majority of the 64 property law review recommendations for procedural and administrative reforms for community titles schemes were implemented as part of the 2021 reform and remake of four of the Body Corporate and Community Management Act's regulation modules and amendment of a fifth regulation module. Then the government needed to reprioritise efforts in this area as part of responding to the COVID-19 health emergency. The government took prudent and decisive action to assist owners, occupiers and bodies corporate to safely govern their schemes during the COVID-19 health emergency. In addition, government put in place measures to assist bodies corporate and owners to deal with the associated financial pressures being experienced at that time.

Late 2022 saw the government put in place a package of urgent reforms to address critical deficiencies in the Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980 and Mixed Use Development Act 1993, legislation under which several complex mixed-use developments are established and regulated in Queensland. The Community Titles Legislation Working Group has also been busy considering a broad range of key issues of particular interest to the community titles sector, including providing advice and perspectives on outstanding recommendations of the property law review. Many of the outcomes of the working group's considerations have informed the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, which is currently before the House. I look forward to parliament considering this bill in the near future. Clearly, this area has been given substantial attention by successive Labor governments.

The member for Scenic Rim queried whether the government will address the submission from Brian Noble to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee regarding the operation of clause 65 of the bill in relation to the enforceability of certain covenants in registered easements. I note that the committee's report referenced stakeholder concerns that it is potentially unclear whether the scope of the terms 'use', 'ownership' or 'maintenance' are sufficient to include covenants in modern easements that would reasonably be expected to bind successors, specifically in relation to insurance and indemnity covenants. As noted in my second reading speech, I intend to move amendments to specifically clarify that clause 65 of the bill will apply to easements in gross and clarify the list of examples in the clause to illustrate how insurance and indemnity covenants will be enforceable.

The member for Noosa noted the government's position to not support recommendation 3 of the Legal Affairs and Safety committee's report. I would like to reiterate that the standard lease terms under the bill are only implied into a lease if the parties have not agreed otherwise. It is a matter for the parties to agree on the condition of the premises at the end of the lease. However, in the event that no agreement is reached it is appropriate that the default position is to have regard to the condition of the premises at the start of the lease, as it provides a simple point of reference for both parties and avoids the need to consider the condition of the premises at historical points in time under previous lease agreements and how reasonable wear and tear should also be applied over an extended period.

The member for Nanango noted that the proposed requirement for a seller to give a buyer a community management statement for the community titles scheme was not a recommendation of the property law review and that it is opposed by some stakeholders. The community management statement is intended to be disclosed, given it contains important information impacting on the title to the property or ongoing financial liability of ownership. In particular, the by-laws in the community management statements are important for buyers to be aware of, as they will apply to the buyer—and tenants if applicable—should they choose to live in the property. From 2011 a community management statement was required to be provided by a seller to a prospective buyer of an existing lot in a community titles scheme, but this was removed in 2013 by the former government.

The views of the Community Titles Legislation Working Group regarding the disclosure of community management statements were mixed; however, some members of the working group considered it was crucial because the statement contains key information, including: by-laws relating to pets, parking, or alterations to lots, for example; exclusive use areas of common property that have been allocated to lots such as car parks or courtyards; and lot entitlements, which determine an owner's share of body corporate costs and voting rights, share of common property and lot value for calculating rates and other charges. On balance, it was determined that the disclosure of the community management statement will give effect to the guiding principles for the seller disclosure scheme because it provides information of value to a buyer in making a decision to purchase and it is readily available by search at reasonable cost to the seller.

Some stakeholders suggested that buyers instead be informed about the existence of the community management statement and how to obtain their own copy. However, the purpose of the statutory seller disclosure regime is for buyers to receive key information before they enter into the contract. The community management statement is directly relevant information for a person considering buying a lot in any community titles scheme. The body corporate certificate will include information to alert and signpost buyers to the most important information in the community management statement. The body corporate certificate is a prescribed certificate that will need to be provided by a seller of a lot in a community titles scheme and a lot in a plan under the Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980.

I note comments by some members, including the member for Noosa and the member for Surfers Paradise, raising concerns that the seller disclosure statement does not contain a simple statement of the lawful use of the land and the building drawn from the development approval given by local government under the Planning Act 2016. However, the reasons for not including this information was also discussed in detail by the member for Noosa. While information about the permitted use of lots under planning and development approvals has not been included in the body corporate certificate, to ensure there is some assistance provided on this issue, it is intended that the body corporate certificate will include general statements advising the prospective buyer to seek advice about lawful use of the lot, if that is an issue that is of interest to them, and that, if the buyer is considering purchasing the lot for short-term letting, it is important to explore any approvals needed and whether there are legal requirements prohibiting short-term letting at the property. As stated in my second reading, I have referred this matter to the Deputy Premier for consideration.

The report recommended implementing a centralised registration system to support local governments to monitor short-term rental activity, and it is understood consultation will occur with the Short-Term Residential Accommodation Industry Reference Group on this recommendation.

The member for Nanango highlighted the concerns raised by the Strata Search Agents Association about the new body corporate certificate, and in particular its generation by bodies corporate raising potential conflicts of interest. The Strata Search Agents Association has proposed a model under which a seller could obtain a certificate of inspection of body corporate records, using a search agent to inspect the records of the body corporate. This approach is not supported. The body corporate is required to keep and maintain records. Accordingly, the preferred option is for the body corporate to be the entity attesting to these records. How the body corporate reaches a point of being satisfied regarding the certificate will be a matter for them, but this could foreseeably include utilising a search agent for preparation of the certificate.

Search agents have also raised concerns that body corporate certificates may be automatically generated by bodies corporate or body corporate managers. The body corporate will not be limited in the way it completes the body corporate certificate. A body corporate, through its body corporate manager, may be able to find some efficiencies in producing body corporate certificates through automation. However, the information in the certificate will need to be accurate and bodies corporate and/or body corporate managers will need to be satisfied that the automated process is in accordance with the requirements of the legislation and the approved form of the certificate.

I note that some body corporate search agents have raised concerns about the new requirements on their businesses. Search agents may be used by existing sellers to prepare the existing disclosure statement required under the BCCM Act, which is being replaced by the new body corporate certificate. It is acknowledged the new requirements will mean some changes for the search agent industry, but it is not considered it will remove the need for the industry. The new body corporate certificate will be prepared by a body corporate or a person authorised by a body corporate for an interested person. The new seller disclosure regime does not prevent or restrict bodies corporate and search agents from entering into relationships whereby a search agent is authorised to prepare body corporate certificates on the body corporate's behalf.

I note the member for Maiwar's views that body corporate managers should be regulated given their potential involvement in preparing the new body corporate certificates for bodies corporate. The Community Titles Legislation Working Group has been considering the regulation of body corporate managers. The government will be considering the views and options on body corporate manager regulation presented by working group members.

I would also like to indicate that the government will not be supporting the amendments circulated by the member for South Brisbane. Amendments 1 to 5 circulated by the member for South Brisbane propose to specify particular information that must be disclosed by a seller to a buyer under the seller

disclosure scheme. The government will not be supporting the amendments that would require a seller to give a buyer a copy of a building management statement that applies to an existing lot being sold. A building management statement is an instrument under the Land Title Act 1994 used to regulate parts of a building with multiple owners—for example, retail on lower floors and residential scheme land owned by a community titles scheme on the upper floors.

A building management statement must contain provisions around supply of services and access to lots, rights of support and shelter and insurance. It may also contain other provisions, including those around costs, maintenance, dispute resolution and rules for common services and facilities.

In terms of community titles lots, and consistent with the guiding principles and approach of this legislation, the bill adopts a nuanced approach to building management statements depending on whether the lot being sold is a proposed lot being sold off the plan or an existing lot. In terms of proposed lots, the bill specifically amends the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 to require a seller to provide a buyer with a copy of a proposed building management statement. That is because, in the case of proposed lots, it may not be possible for a buyer to search for and obtain a copy of the proposed building management statement. While building management statements must be registered with Titles Queensland, this may not have yet occurred at the time a buyer enters into an 'off the plan' sale contract.

In terms of existing lots, new section 205AAA to be included in the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 deals with the approved form for a body corporate certificate and allows for regulations to be made prescribing matters for inclusion in the certificate. Without anticipating debate, I note the draft Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2023 tabled with the bill includes provisions for the approved form for the body corporate certificate to include whether a building management statement under the Land Title Act 1994 applies to the scheme. This will alert buyers of existing lots to the existence of a building management statement that applies to the lot so that they can make further enquiries as needed. This may include making relevant searches through Titles Queensland, which records building management statements, and seeking legal advice.

In addition, as part of implementation, consideration will be given to the most effective ways to communicate information about building management statements to buyers, including the importance of obtaining independent legal advice about potential rights and responsibilities under the statement. In developing this nuanced approach to building management statements, a relevant consideration was that building management statements can be voluminous and complex and involve a risk of buyers being overwhelmed by information. Accordingly, the government's approach is to ensure buyers of proposed lots receive proposed building management statements as they are not easily accessible, while flagging for buyers of existing lots whether a building management statement is in place and providing supporting information to help buyers and their legal advisers decide if further enquiries would be beneficial.

In her speech, the member for South Brisbane raised concerns about the fairness of provisions in building management statements which are outside the scope of body corporate legislation. The content of building management statements is governed by the Land Title Act 1994, which is within the portfolio of the Minister for Resources, Hon. Scott Stewart MP. These issues have been raised with the Minister for Resources. It is important to note that building management statements may apply to a building that includes a community titles scheme, but building management statements can apply to other buildings also.

In relation to the proposal for the seller to disclose natural disaster information that is in the knowledge of the seller, any disclosure obligation based on the knowledge of the seller raises difficulties about subjective interpretation. Unless the definition of 'natural disaster' and 'flood' are clearly defined, there will be different interpretations by sellers in complying with this requirement. Historically, it has been difficult to reach a consensus with practitioners and agencies on a definition of 'flood', and councils hold different interpretations based on their individual risk assessments.

Furthermore, a seller who has owned the property for a short time may not be aware of previous natural disaster impacts. In these circumstances, if a seller discloses that there is no natural disaster history or risk, this may give the buyer a false impression as to the true nature of the natural disaster impact. The buyer may also rely on this representation instead of conducting their own due diligence. This may have a negative impact on the consumer protection purpose of the disclosure.

As I said in my second reading speech, important work is being conducted by Queensland agencies to improve access to natural disaster risk information, in particular the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. The draft regulations are subject to ongoing stakeholder consultation, and I am committed to continuing to work with stakeholders to ensure that an appropriate balance is struck.

Finally, amendment 6 circulated by the member for South Brisbane is a proposal to introduce a new disclosure requirement for lessors under the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, which is outside the scope of the bill, and is a proposal that should be addressed in relation to that act. In any event, the same practical and legal challenges for requiring disclosure of this information under the seller disclosure scheme would also apply in these circumstances.

In conclusion, I once again thank all members for their contribution during the debate. I thank the committee members and of course all stakeholders—not just those who have been involved in the committee process but those who have worked with us over many years to see this important bill being brought before the House. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 64, as read, agreed to.

Clause 65—



**Mrs D'ATH (2.49 pm):** I move the following amendments—

**1 Clause 65 (Particular covenants in registered easements bind successors)**

Page 47, lines 12 to 13, 'for the benefit of other land'—

*omit.*

**2 Clause 65 (Particular covenants in registered easements bind successors)**

Page 47, lines 18 to 25—

*omit, insert—*

- (3) A covenant imposes an obligation in relation to the use, ownership or maintenance of the burdened land if the covenant imposes an obligation—
  - (a) to maintain or repair the burdened land; or
  - (b) to construct, maintain, repair or replace improvements or infrastructure on the burdened land used in connection with the easement; or
  - (c) to pay for or contribute to the performance of an obligation mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b); or
  - (d) to pay for or contribute to rates or taxes relating to the burdened land; or
  - (e) to indemnify a party to the easement in connection with the use of the easement; or
  - (f) to insure, pay for or contribute to insurance in connection with the use of the easement.
- (3A) Subsection (3) does not limit the covenants that may impose an obligation in relation to the use, ownership or maintenance of the burdened land.

**3 Clause 65 (Particular covenants in registered easements bind successors)**

Page 47, after line 29—

*insert—*

- (6) To remove any doubt, it is declared that a registered easement under this section includes a registered easement in gross.

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

*Tabled paper:* Property Law Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [\[1751\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Property Law Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [\[1752\]](#).

Very briefly speaking to these—I have gone to these in quite significant detail in both my second reading speech and my reply—amendments 1 to 3 clarify that clause 65 of the bill will apply to easements in gross and clarify the list of examples in subclause (3) to illustrate how insurance and indemnity covenants are enforced. This goes directly to the questions asked by the member for Scenic Rim.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 65, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 66 and 67, as read, agreed to.

Clause 68—



**Mrs D'ATH (2.50 pm):** I move the following amendment—

**4 Clause 68 (Contract containing promise for benefit of third party)**

Page 49, lines 18 and 19—

*omit, insert—*

(a) the third party must serve each party to the contract with a copy of the proceeding; and

Again, I have spoken to this at length in my second reading speech and reply, but this is the amendment that replaces the requirement in clause 68 of the bill that every party to the contract must be joined to legal proceedings with a requirement now that every party to the contract must be served with the proceedings.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 68, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 69 to 79, as read, agreed to.

Clause 80—



**Mrs D'ATH (2.51 pm):** I move the following amendment—

**5 Clause 80 (Effect of inoperative computers in particular entities on day of settlement)**

Page 59, after line 5—

*insert—*

(6A) To remove any doubt, it is declared that if, on the next business day mentioned in subsection (4), the contract again can not be settled because of the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1), this section again applies in relation to the circumstances.

This amendment removes doubt and clarifies that clause 80 of the bill will operate on a rolling basis to continue to delay settlement if computers remain inoperative on the next business day and so on. This amendment is made for the avoidance of doubt and addresses stakeholder concern. I think it was the Queensland Law Society that raised the concern that the provision may not be interpreted as intended.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 80, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 81 to 94, as read, agreed to.

Clause 95—



**Dr MacMAHON (2.52 pm):** I move the following amendments—

**1 Clause 95 (Definitions for division)**

Page 69, line 15, after 'section 99'—

*insert—*

or 99A

**2 Clause 95 (Definitions for division)**

Page 69, line 25, after 'section 99(1)(b)'—

*insert—*

and 99A(2)

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

*Tabled paper:* Property Law Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Dr Amy MacMahon's amendments [\[1753\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Property Law Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Dr Amy MacMahon's amendments [\[1754\]](#).

Amendments 1 and 2 are consequential amendments related to the disclosure to prospective buyers of building management statements for existing properties and for a statement of seller's knowledge of past natural disasters, the impacts on the property and repairs. These are straightforward additions to sellers' disclosure obligations.



To the minister's comment that providing building management statements would overwhelm buyers, buyers are going to have to engage with building management statements once they are in those properties. These statements are quite oppressive for residents in building management statement buildings.

Further, as we face further impacts of climate change, we are going to need to make sure that people are making the best decisions possible about buying properties that have been affected by natural disasters. The amendments recognise that there are inconsistencies with council mapping and information that is available to people. The amendments provided in this bill direct people back to those maps that the government has also said are inconsistent. In recognising that, our amendments provide that sellers provide a statement of their knowledge of past natural disasters.

Of course, buyers of properties will still go and find additional information, but they will be equipped with detailed information about the impacts of flood or fire and other natural disasters on a property. I would urge all members to support these amendments to make sure that buyers have the best information they need when purchasing a property.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I might summarise in relation to amendments 1 to 5 as they are similarly relating to a proposal to specify particular information that must be disclosed by a seller to a buyer under seller disclosure schemes. As I stated in my reply, we will not be supporting these amendments, which would require the seller to give a buyer a copy of a building management statement that applies to an existing lot being sold. I appreciate that the member for South Brisbane might think they are straightforward amendments, but we take a lot of advice and there has been a lot of consultation work done on developing this and trying to get the balance right in not overwhelming buyers with a significant amount of information, some of which may not be relevant specifically to their particular lot, while making sure they are still able to get information and know where to find it. As I say, I provided a detailed explanation in my reply as to why the government will not be supporting this. I will leave my comments there.

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

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

Non-government amendments (Dr MacMahon) negatived.

Clause 95, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 96 to 99, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Dr MacMAHON (3.01 pm):** I move the following amendment—

**3 After clause 99**

Page 73, after line 30—

*insert—*

**99A Additional disclosure requirements**

- (1) In addition to section 99, before a contract for the sale of a lot is signed by the buyer, the seller must give the buyer—
  - (a) if a building management statement under the *Land Title Act 1994* applies to the lot—a copy of the building management statement; and
  - (b) if the seller knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the lot has been impacted by a natural disaster—a statement describing the impacts, including, for example, when the lot was affected, the part of the lot affected, the nature of any repairs required and, in relation to a flood, the height of the flood waters.
- (2) Each of the documents mentioned in subsection (1) is taken to be a prescribed certificate applicable to the lot.

This amendment stipulates that before a contract of sale is signed a seller must provide a buyer with a copy of a building management statement and information on whether a property has been affected by natural disaster or any repairs that have been required. This clause is necessary because the additional disclosure requirements already included in the bill do not go far enough to protect prospective buyers and tenants.

Building management statements, BMSs, allow developers to retain control of body corporate schemes for up to 25 years without the knowledge or consent of residents, who are often kept in the dark. Developers are able to lock in pricey services to individual units, insurance contracts, right of access, property maintenance fees, dispute resolution processes, intrusive rules for common facilities, future changes to the building and a range of other matters. BMSs can almost wholly supersede

traditional body corporate arrangements and can render the body corporate and its legislative protection for residents largely redundant. BMSs also fall outside of the remit of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management.

Both the member for Maiwar and I have been helping constituents who have found themselves locked into building management statements, locked into pricey contracts for energy that they are not able to get out of. Prospective buyers of existing properties, not just off-the-plan properties, deserve to know what they are entering into, which are often restrictive and undemocratic schemes. In addition, we have put in a requirement for sellers to give buyers a statement of the effects of natural disasters on a property and any repairs that have taken place. This is necessary because we recognise that there are—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Sorry to interrupt, member. Member for Lockyer, we have had several discussions about this over the last two days. The Deputy Speaker made a ruling earlier, as I heard, about using props, particularly when you are in camera shot. You are warned under the standing orders. You will no longer be putting the prop up. Members, this applies to members of the government and the opposition as well as crossbenchers. I cannot be any clearer.

**Dr MacMAHON:** We recognise that there are inconsistencies in natural disaster and flood information that is available in different council areas around the state. That is why we stipulated that sellers need to provide a statement outlining the impact of a natural disaster on a property and any repairs that have taken place while we work towards a consistent approach to risk management and disaster mapping across the state. Potential buyers deserve to know what has happened to a property and what repairs have or have not taken place before they buy a property. This is only going to be more important as natural disasters get worse. We have been seeing an increased risk of flood and fires as well.

Again, these are straightforward amendments that give prospective buyers and tenants the information they need about a property before they enter into a purchase.

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

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

Non-government amendment (Dr MacMahon) negatived.

Clause 100—



**Dr MacMAHON** (3.10 pm): I move the following amendment—

**4 Clause 100 (Exceptions to requirement)**

Page 73, line 32, after 'section 99'—

*insert—*

or section 99A

This amendment is a consequential amendment that allows for the disclosure of building management statements and natural disaster impacts to prospective buyers.

Non-government amendment (Dr MacMahon) negatived.

Clause 100, as read, agreed to.

Clause 101—



**Dr MacMAHON** (3.11 pm): I move the following amendment—

**5 Clause 101 (How disclosure documents to be given)**

Page 77, line 2, after 'section 99(1)'—

*insert—*

and 99A

Amendment No. 5 is a consequential amendment which requires the disclosure of building management statements and natural disasters to prospective buyers.

Non-government amendment (Dr MacMahon) negatived.

**Mrs D'ATH** (3.11 pm): I move the following amendment—

**6 Clause 101 (How disclosure documents to be given)**

Page 77, line 13, after 'subsection (1)'—

*insert—*

before the start of the auction

I will speak collectively to amendments Nos 6 to 8. They clarify the requirements under clauses 101 and 103 of the bill that the giving of disclosure documents to a bidder who registers after the start of an auction only applies if the bidder was not previously given the disclosure documents prior to the start of the auction. This amendment reinforces the intended interpretation of the provisions as currently drafted.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 101, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 102, as read, agreed to.

Clause 103—



**Mrs D'ATH** (3.13 pm): I move the following amendments—

**7 Clause 103 (Giving of disclosure documents to buyer who is not registered as bidder until after start of auction)**

Page 80, line 8, 'auction.'—

*omit, insert—*

auction; and

**8 Clause 103 (Giving of disclosure documents to buyer who is not registered as bidder until after start of auction)**

Page 80, after line 8—

*insert—*

(c) the buyer of the lot was not given the disclosure documents under section 101(1) before the start of the auction.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 103, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 104 and 105, as read, agreed to.

Clause 106—



**Mrs D'ATH** (3.13 pm): I move the following amendments—

**9 Clause 106 (No other remedy if prescribed certificate contains inaccurate information given by statutory body or body corporate)**

Page 83, line 25, 'statutory body or'—

*omit.*

**10 Clause 106 (No other remedy if prescribed certificate contains inaccurate information given by statutory body or body corporate)**

Page 83, line 26, after 'body corporate'—

*insert—*

or other entity

**11 Clause 106 (No other remedy if prescribed certificate contains inaccurate information given by statutory body or body corporate)**

Page 84, line 3, 'statutory body'—

*omit, insert—*

other entity

**12 Clause 106 (No other remedy if prescribed certificate contains inaccurate information given by statutory body or body corporate)**

Page 84, line 5, 'statutory body'—

*omit, insert—*

other entity

Amendments Nos 9 to 12 correct clause 106 of the bill to ensure it operates as originally intended. Clause 106 provides that if a buyer is given a prescribed certificate that is inaccurate and the inaccuracy was caused by the body corporate or statutory body that issued the certificate, the only consequence for the seller is that the buyer will have termination rights under 104 of the bill or rights under another act if applicable in line with clause 104. However, the term 'statutory body' is defined in clause 95 of the bill to take its meaning from the Financial Accountability Act, which, under that act, excludes a department or a local government. Given the seller disclosure scheme proposes to require that a seller disclose prescribed certificates issued by departments or local governments, it is necessary for clause 106 to apply to those entities. Amendments Nos 9 to 12 will amend clause 106 to instead refer to prescribed certificates issued by any entity to include it has broad scope as originally intended.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 106, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 107 to 178, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Dr MacMAHON** (3.15 pm): I move the following amendment—

**6 After clause 178**

Page 133, after line 27—

insert—

**178A Disclosure requirements for residential tenancies**

- (1) This section applies if—
  - (a) a lease of premises is a residential tenancy under the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008*; and
  - (b) the lessor knows, or could reasonably be expected to know, that the premises have been impacted by a natural disaster.
- (2) Before the residential tenancy agreement is signed by the lessee, the lessor must give the lessee a statement describing the impacts, including, for example, when the premises were affected, the part of the premises affected, the nature of any repairs required and, in relation to a flood, the height of the flood waters.
- (3) If the lessor does not comply with subsection (2), the lessee may terminate the residential tenancy at any time by giving a notice to the lessor terminating the tenancy.

This is an important amendment that stipulates prospective tenants need to be alerted if a property has been affected by a natural disaster and what repairs have taken place. This is important. Renters deserve to know that the place they are going to call home—on which they are going to be spending hundreds if not thousands of dollars every week—has not been subject to flooding or natural disasters.

I will give an example from South Brisbane. Many of the properties that flooded in 2022 have been subject to extreme mould outbreaks following the floods. Recent changes to regulations stipulate that a property needs to be free of mould and the responsibility for cleaning falls to the lessor unless the mould is the result of tenants' actions. If tenants do not know if a property has flooded and there is a mould outbreak, it is very easy for a landlord or real estate agent to argue that the mould is the result of a tenants' actions. If a tenant does not have that information, if they do not have the history of the property, if they do not know what repairs have or have not taken place, they will not be able to exercise their rights under these minimum standards.

Tenants deserve to know to what extent a property has flooded in deciding whether they put their washing machine or other electrical goods under the house or on higher ground. My office and I helped so many tenants in 2022 who had no idea that the property they lived in flooded in 2021 or to what extent it had been flooded and they lost tonnes of furniture and possessions as a result.

I will give one example. Currently, 8 Flower Street in Woolloongabba is being advertised for rent. The property has flooded multiple times. The BCC flood maps show the area to be highly likely to flood and yet nowhere on any of the ads does Ray White have to mention that that property has flooded. The tenants who move into this property would not know how high the water has come up in their home. They would not know whether or not the landlord has replaced flood-affected walls and floors or whether they are at risk of a mould outbreak because they are walking over still swollen floorboards. This disclosure to tenants is straightforward, it is noncontroversial and it allows tenants the opportunity to exercise what basic rights they have.

**Mrs D'ATH:** As I stated in speech in my reply to the second reading debate, the government will not be supporting amendment No. 6 moved by the member for South Brisbane. It is a proposal to introduce a new disclosure requirement for lessors under the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008, which is outside the scope of this bill, and is a proposal that should be addressed in relation to that act. In any event, the same practical and legal challenges that I have already highlighted previously for requiring disclosure of this information under the seller disclosure scheme would also apply in these circumstances. For this reason, we will be opposing the amendment.

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

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

Non-government amendment (Dr MacMahon) negatived.

Clauses 179 to 190, as read, agreed to.

Clause 191—



**Mrs D'ATH** (3.24 pm): I move the following amendment—

**13 Clause 191 (Discharge of debt or legal thing in action when no actual notice of assignment)**

Page 148, lines 1 to 8—

*omit.*

Amendment No. 13 will ensure that the common-law principle for determining priorities as between competing assignees of a debt or legal thing in action will continue to apply by correcting an unintended override of the common-law principle under clause 191 of the bill. Amendment No. 13 will omit proposed subclauses 191(4) and (5). While those proposed subclauses were included to provide certainty for a debtor where there are subsequent assignees—for example, a chain of assignments from assignee A to assignee B to assignee C—the subclauses inadvertently override the common-law principle for determining priorities where there are competing assignees; for example, where the debt is assigned to both the assignee and assignee B at the same time. It was not intended to override the application of the common law in relation to competing assignees. Removing those subclauses will avoid this unintended outcome and the provision will still operate as intended.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 191, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 192 to 239, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Mrs D'ATH** (3.26 pm): I move the following amendment—

**14 Before clause 240**

Page 172, after line 18—

*insert—*

**239A Express references to general law of agency**

(1) This section applies if—

- (a) a repealed provision contained an express reference to the signing of a document by a lawfully authorised agent of a person; and
- (b) a corresponding provision for the repealed provision omits the express reference mentioned in paragraph (a).

*Note—*

See sections 7, 8 and 9 and the repealed Act, sections 11, 12 and 59.

(2) To remove any doubt, it is declared that the omission of the express reference mentioned in subsection (1)(a) does not limit or otherwise affect the application of the general law of agency in relation to the corresponding provision.

Amendment No. 14 inserts new clause 239A in the bill to clarify that, if a repealed provision of the current Property Law Act contained an express reference to the signing of a document by a person's authorised agent and the corresponding provision in the bill has omitted that reference, this does not limit or otherwise affect the application of the general law of agency. The bill currently relies on the general law of agency to provide authorisation for signing by a person's agent. However, I acknowledge stakeholder concerns that the equivalent sections in the Property Law Act that correspond to clauses 7 to 9 currently include express authorisations for an agent to sign a document. Therefore, this amendment will provide clarity and certainty that an authorised agent will continue to be able to sign documents under clauses 7 to 9, consistent with the current law.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 240 to 289, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

### Third Reading



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (3.27 pm): I move—

That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Question put—That the bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

### Long Title



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (3.27 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

### TOW TRUCK BILL

Resumed from 13 June (see p. 1776).

### Second Reading



**Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (3.28 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to speak again on the Tow Truck Bill 2023. I want to thank the members of the Transport and Resources Committee for their comprehensive review of the bill and for considering the views of Queensland's tow truck industry. The committee tabled its report on 1 September this year. The committee report recommended that the bill be passed and included four recommendations. I now table the government response to the committee's recommendations.

*Tabled paper:* Transport and Resources Committee: Report No. 39, 57th Parliament—Tow Truck Bill 2023, government response [\[1755\]](#).

I want to acknowledge the industry stakeholders for their submissions to the committee and thank them for their participation in the public hearing. Their general support for the amendments in the bill and advocacy on behalf of industry is to be commended. Their commitment to ensuring Queenslanders have access to regulated tow truck services in a responsive and safe way is appreciated.

The committee's second recommendation requested consideration of additional natural justice measures in the bill, in particular around whether the bill provides sufficient consideration for the rights and liberties of individuals where evidentiary provisions reverse the onus of proof. It is considered that the evidentiary provisions in the bill adequately address any natural justice concerns. The matters covered by evidentiary provisions are straightforward and rarely in dispute. These evidentiary provisions have been in place for many years and there have been no identified instances of them causing concerns related to natural justice in practical application. As such, with respect to the committee, the government did not support this recommendation.

The third recommendation asked that consideration be given to amending the statement of compatibility to provide clearer differentiation between charges and convictions. The committee also recommended giving greater importance to criminal convictions over criminal charges when making decisions. The government supports this recommendation, and Transport and Main Roads has amended the statement of compatibility to further differentiate between charges and convictions and clarify that heavier weighting will generally apply to criminal convictions than to charges when making decisions. However, it remains important that the department be able to act when serious criminal offences, such as those involving acts of violence, are alleged. In such circumstances, taking action on the basis of a charge that has not yet been finalised may still be necessary in the interest of community and public safety. Accordingly, I seek leave to table an erratum to the human rights statement of compatibility.

*Tabled paper:* Tow Truck Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights: Erratum [\[1756\]](#).

The final committee recommendation was to convene a working group of tow truck industry stakeholders to facilitate the formation of an industry peak body. In response to this, Transport and Main Roads met with industry on 17 October 2023 and will again meet with them in early 2024 to discuss the legislation changes and their implementation. Transport and Main Roads will also provide necessary support to the industry should it wish to establish a peak industry body to advocate on behalf of regulated tow truck operators.

An efficient and fair tow truck scheme is important to the Palaszczuk government. In 2018, the Palaszczuk government introduced fundamental reforms to the regulation of private property towing. The impact of these changes was found to be an effective response to the unacceptable behaviour of

some operators when removing vehicles from private property. Following the success of the reforms, the government conducted a review of the entire tow truck legislative framework. The focus of this review was to ensure that a balance is struck between protecting the interests of motorists whilst ensuring the ongoing viability of the tow truck industry. This includes ensuring that motorists who are involved in a crash and are placed in a vulnerable state are appropriately protected under the legislation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the industry for their engagement throughout this review process. Their insights and feedback have been invaluable. I would like to publicly acknowledge the 17 industry stakeholders that made submissions to the committee: Mansell Heavy Towing; Harvey's Towing Service; Knight's Heavy Towing; the Ready Towing Group; Caboolture City Towing; Clayton's Towing Service; Sunshine Coast Regional Towing Association; Border Towing; Maroochydore Towing Service; Barnes Auto Co; Bryce Steer; RACQ; David Barnbaum; Moreton Bay Regional Towing Association; and other stakeholders who wish to remain anonymous. Thank you again to these industry stakeholders for their invaluable contributions.

The tow truck industry is an essential service in our community. Currently, there are 99 regulated operators and about 1,200 drivers assisting motorists. Not only do they assist motorists who may be in a vulnerable condition following a crash—I have certainly seen that firsthand; they also ensure our roads remain clear and safe from obstructions. Their direct actions ensure motorists can get to where they need to go as safely and as efficiently as possible.

The Palaszczuk government values comprehensive consultation and engagement with industry stakeholders. Consultation with the towing industry, motoring groups and the community has been at the centre of the tow truck legislation review process over the past few years. Consultation measures included holding two tow truck industry forums, releasing a public discussion paper, an online survey and meeting with motorist advocate groups, insurance companies, the Queensland Police Service and tow truck businesses.

Queensland's tow truck legislation takes a balanced approach by only applying to those towing practices and areas where there is a clear case for government intervention. The bill will maintain this approach. The legislative framework will continue to apply to removal of vehicles after a crash, vehicles seized by the Queensland Police Service and vehicles removed from private property. It does not apply to breakdown towing or other towing services.

The framework also continues to apply only to those geographical areas of high population density, including South-East Queensland and major regional cities along the east coast. For these services in these areas the bill establishes clear objectives to facilitate best practice in the industry whilst protecting the community by ensuring safe and efficient removal of motor vehicles from our roads or private property. The bill achieves these objectives by requiring the individuals who are undertaking these towing activities to be appropriately qualified and accredited and to comply with a range of ongoing obligations.

Individuals undertaking regulated towing activities must be accredited by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. In determining whether someone is suitable to undertake towing activities, TMR ensures comprehensive checks are undertaken, including criminal history and traffic history checks. These checks aim to protect the safety of the community, which will be reinforced by an ongoing obligation on accredited persons to notify the department if they are charged or convicted of a notifiable offence.

Red tape for the industry will be reduced through the streamlining of notifiable offences that need to be reported to TMR. In addition to minimising the burden on industry, streamlining the list of notifiable offences helps to protect individual privacy. It ensures that only those offences which have direct relevance to the towing profession are required to be notified to the department. Notifiable offences will therefore include offences involving violence or abuse, theft or intimidation, as these are likely to make a person unsuitable to interact with vulnerable members of the community and their personal property.

The bill further provides for the protection of the community by prescribing clear obligations and offences that seek to manage risks that are associated with each element of the towing task. Offences and penalties continue to be a critical element of the tow truck regulatory framework. They are the mechanism through which the objectives of the bill are achieved. They make expectations on the industry clear, encourage compliance and give the community a sense of protection.

As part of the legislative review process, TMR conducted an extensive review of offences and their associated penalties to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate. Penalties must directly reflect the seriousness of the offending behaviour in order to provide a suitable deterrent to noncompliance. As a result, the bill introduces several new offences and penalties to provide further protection to

motorists and their vehicles. These offences directly encourage professionalism and integrity in the tow truck industry and will not impact those operators who are already doing the right thing. For instance, the bill makes it clear that only accredited tow truck drivers can undertake regulated towing services. This ensures motorists have assurance that the individual has been vetted by TMR and is considered suitable for undertaking this service. Similarly, it will be an offence to use unauthorised tow trucks to undertake regulated towing activities. This ensures only appropriate vehicles can be used to safely transport passengers and towed vehicles. The maximum penalties for breaching these requirements range from over \$7,400 to \$12,384, signalling the seriousness of the offences.

The bill also makes clearer requirements that only authorised holding yards are to be used to store towed vehicles. The department approves holding yards to ensure they have appropriate security measures in place. Clearer requirements will give motorists peace of mind that their vehicles and property are safe.

A very serious offence will be introduced to discourage tow truck operators from using their position to direct employees to undertake activities contrary to the law. This offence will attract a maximum penalty of almost \$25,000. This high penalty reflects the gravity of, for instance, directing someone to perform regulated towing work when they are not authorised by TMR to do so.

The bill addresses dishonesty offences, attracting a maximum penalty of \$9,288. For example, there is a specific offence for forging documents such as accreditation documents, towing authorities and private property towing consents. There is also an offence for knowingly using or directing someone else to use an accreditation document fraudulently. These documents are foundational to the effective operation of the tow truck scheme and fraudulent behaviour presents direct risk to the public as well as to the integrity of the industry.

The bill introduces a requirement for executive officers to notify their business partners within 14 days if charged or convicted of a notifiable offence. Similar notification requirements are also included for partners in a business partnership. This requirement will help protect business partners and allow them to take action to protect their business interests and ensure business continuity.

To support the operation of the revised offence and penalty provisions, the bill also provides for contemporary enforcement powers consistent with those used in other regulatory frameworks. Authorised officers will have the necessary and appropriate powers to undertake effective compliance activities, including an ability to enter business premises and seize evidence. These powers are balanced with relevant protections. For example, if an officer is exercising a general power to enter a business then they are not able to do so if it is a place at which a person resides.

The bill provides stronger grounds for amending, cancelling and suspending accreditations, including the addition of public interest grounds to refuse an accreditation application. These changes align directly with the bill's purpose of protecting the community whilst ensuring the industry has access to natural justice in the form of appeal rights for affected individuals. This further aligns the tow truck scheme with other transport industry accreditation schemes.


The review of the current legislative framework also identified an opportunity to simplify and modernise provisions. The bill clarifies some existing requirements to ensure that they can be readily understood by the industry to support their compliance. New more contemporary terminology is being introduced, with 'driver's certificate' and 'tow truck licence holder' being replaced with 'tow truck driver accreditation' and 'tow truck operator accreditation'.

A new tow truck regulation is also proposed following the passage of this bill. This regulation will complete the new regulatory framework for tow trucks by providing for the operational elements of the scheme. The bill enables the regulation to provide for a number of matters, including the department approval of temporary vehicle holding yards. It is foreseeable that emergency circumstances will arise that require vehicles to be relocated. The current legislation requires a complex exemption process in these circumstances. Under the new arrangements, temporary exemptions will be available using a more efficient and streamlined process. This change will support business continuity and the protection of vehicles in a challenging situation. This may include situations such as imminent flooding when vehicles may need temporary relocation from an existing holding yard. The new regulation, as provided for in the bill, will also prescribe the administrative processes for accreditation applications, industry conduct requirements, auditing provisions and industry fees.

This bill provides a modern legislative framework that supports a responsive, efficient and safe tow truck industry while delivering positive outcomes for the community. The bill includes a range of improvements and protections for Queenslanders, ensuring tow trucks undertaking regulated towing activities are operated safely, competently and professionally and at a reasonable cost to consumers.



The bill demonstrates the Palaszczuk government's commitment to delivering better services to the Queensland community, ensuring the integrity of our industry regulations. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.43 pm): A lot of the things that we debate and agree to pass here have a profound impact on Queenslanders and our history. While this bill may not quite fit that category, nonetheless, as the shadow minister I rise to make a contribution on the Tow Truck Bill 2023. Firstly, I would like to thank the first responders. When we think of first responders we naturally think of police, ambulance and fire officers. I think we need to also show gratitude to the tow truck industry because tow truck operators play a role. I acknowledge them up-front. I also acknowledge the work of the committee that prepared the report on this bill.

By way of background, the government states that the bill will implement the remaining recommendations from the 2018 report titled *Independent investigation into the towing industry: removal of vehicles from private property* and a comprehensive review of Queensland's tow truck scheme and governing legislation undertaken by TMR in 2019. The bill aims to deliver a more modern tow truck scheme in Queensland that is designed to improve road safety and deliver improved outcomes and protections for motorists, property owners and industry professionals.

Furthermore, the bill should be considered with recent media interest in fake fines issued by parking enforcement companies to manage noncompliance with parking restrictions on private property. This issue received prominent media coverage in the early part of this year. The minister made responses to that in, I believe, about February of this year. Those fines are being used instead of property owners engaging towing companies to remove noncomplying vehicles. Should the government restrict parking enforcement companies from accessing vehicle ownership details, it is likely that more property owners will be forced to tow vehicles from their property. The government may have introduced the bill to get in front of future community backlash from an increase in vehicles being towed. We shall see.

For the objective of modernising the existing legislation by introducing a new structure and terminology, the bill sets out to achieve a range of things. First of all, it clearly states the main purpose of the act; clarifies what is considered regulated towing; clarifies the distinction between operating a tow truck and operating a tow truck business; unifies industry members under the new designation of accreditation to replace the terms 'licence' and 'certificate'; provides appropriate regulation-making powers to ensure the legislation is flexible and remains contemporary; and, lastly, removes superfluous provisions.

For the objective of enhancing the accreditation process, including accreditation eligibility requirements, the bill clarifies matters related to accreditations including grounds for refusing to grant or renew an accreditation and the process for amending, suspending, cancelling or surrendering an accreditation. For the objective of ensuring penalties and defences are appropriate, the bill updates penalties for particular offences and introduces a number of new offences to address identified issues. For the objective of modernising enforcement powers, the bill introduces a consolidated scheme of authorised officers' powers while providing certain protections in relation to self-incrimination and safeguards for seized things.

In terms of timeliness, as outlined above, the bill implements measures that have supposedly been raised in reviews undertaken in 2018 and 2019, yet it is obvious that there is a sense that this legislation is being rushed. Within the industry there is a concern that the accompanying proposed regulations are yet to be shared. In fact, the government has not provided any justification as to why this legislation is needed and why, after sitting on those reports for years, all of a sudden these changes are needed now. It seems to be a recurring theme with bills brought before the House.

I will turn to the appropriate persons provisions. Operators have raised concerns about inconsistencies in the way that the department currently determines if a tow truck operator is an appropriate person. The lack of clearly defined criteria is indeed a barrier for entry in the industry at a time when there are workforce shortages. Concerns have also been raised about a lack of procedural fairness when suspending or cancelling a person's licence, with the potential for increasing bad behaviour in the industry. Many operators believe that the new legislation lacks provisions to deal with operator behaviour that is actually addressed in the current legislation. This includes spotters' fees, selling personal injury claims at scenes of accidents, selling personal information obtained at accident scenes and potentially bribery.

There is a particular part of the bill that I will focus on in my contribution. It relates to the area in the bill that deals with the penalties for damage to vehicles. The government is wanting to impose penalties for damage to vehicles being towed, which is of concern to operators who believe that civil liability is preferable. I will quote from one of the submissions that was received by the committee. I think the minister said that 17 different companies and representatives made submissions to the committee. One of them was Barnes Auto Co. at Coopers Plains. They wrote a very comprehensive letter that outlines their concerns with the bill. This is in relation to clauses 69, 70 and 57. The submission states—

Following on from our Witness Statement, we would like to emphasise the complexities surrounding the provision requiring towing operators to ensure all reasonable precautions to prevent damage to vehicles during towing operations. As a reputable towing company entrenched in the industry, we fully comprehend the gravity of our role, investing upwards of \$200,000 per annum in insurance alone to safeguard our clients' interests.

However, the practicalities of towing operations are far more intricate and dynamic than can be covered by a broad legislative statement. These operations frequently take place in high-stress environments, under poor lighting, adverse weather conditions, and often, at the scene of accidents with inherent risks of incidental damage.

Furthermore, we find ourselves—

Barnes Auto—

tasked with the responsibility of swiftly clearing roadways to prevent further accidents or traffic congestion, a factor that contributes to Queensland public's broader welfare. The cessation of traffic flow on major highways not only increases travel times and disrupts transportation of goods but could also lead to secondary accidents. The significant financial burden of highway closures to the government and public is another crucial aspect that should be considered while examining these clauses. ... This enormous cost is due to factors such as lost productivity, delayed deliveries, wasted fuel, environmental damage, and the cumulative impact of traffic congestion in adjacent areas.

In relation to clauses 69, 70 and 57, the points raised by Barnes Auto in their letter speak to the long title of this bill when we consider that congestion is already a problem for the people of Queensland, no matter where they live. In fact, an article in the *Sunday Mail* of Sunday, 17 September with the headline 'Special congestion report: it's a road to ruin' states—

The congestion chokehold on South East Queensland roads is causing more crashes and delays than ever as industry chiefs warn upgrades are critical before the 2032 Olympics.

This is the reason for Barnes Auto's statements. There are a couple of other articles: 'Locked in a battle of the bottleneck' and 'SEQ in traffic chaos, and we have til 2032 to kick out the jams'. There were also reports in the *Courier-Mail* in April this year talking about the fact that we in this state already have traffic congestion which is pretty much at critical levels.

**Mr KELLY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Member for Chatsworth, I was listening closely. I have given you a bit of latitude, but I ask that you come back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** The reality is that concerns were raised by Barnes Auto in its submission in relation to operators being too risk averse, which will actually lead to tow truck companies taking longer than they would like to clear the scenes of accidents. That was covered very comprehensively in the Barnes Auto submission, which speaks directly to the long title of this bill.

Another thing picked up in the submission of the RACQ related to a lack of detailed consultation. There were concerns that this legislation was introduced without proper consultation with the tow truck industry itself, particularly the smaller tow truck operators. It should also be noted that RACQ was the only insurance provider to make a submission. The RACQ stated that they 'understand other insurers were unaware of the inquiry or provided with sufficient time to make submissions'. There are also concerns that the associated regulations, which take over some of the functionality of the existing legislation, have not been circulated widely for consultation.


The committee recommended that the legislation be passed but did make recommendations regarding certain parts of the bill, including the establishment of a working group with operators; the reversal of the onus of proof in certain clauses; and Human Rights Act conflicts arising from the power to remove a person's accreditation based on untested charges rather than convictions. Submissions were largely from tow truck operators, with feedback along the lines of the issues I have outlined already. Some submitters highlighted the limited time for submissions which prevented them from making a fully considered contribution. This seems to be a recurring theme with a lot of bills that have been brought to this House in the last few months—in particular, that complete lack of industry stakeholder consultation. With the Tow Truck Bill 2023, yet again the feedback is coming directly from key stakeholders' submissions, which are all part of tabled documents as part of the committee report.

We will not be opposing the passing of the bill, but I want to use my time as the shadow minister to highlight some of these concerns. It begs some questions. Why is the government making these changes right now? The review on which these changes are based was undertaken roughly five years ago. Why has the Minister for Transport and Main Roads been simply sitting on this, or is there something the minister is not telling us? What is going on? The minister has made it very clear in relation to towing, parking and people being on private property. Six months later this legislation has been brought to the House, yet for five years it simply did not have the interest of the minister. It really does raise a lot of concerns. I have said already that the lack of consultation is concerning. Many submissions to the committee noted the short amount of time given to make a submission and to have proper, meaningful dialogue and consultation with key industry groups.

The industry opposed penalties being imposed for damage to vehicles, as insurance can be used to protect consumers. This was a particular issue of the RACQ. This may increase accident clearing times as operators take extra care when moving damaged vehicles. This is incredulous—operators taking due care to clear from the scene of accidents vehicles that have been materially wrecked already, conscious of being accused of causing additional damage. If it currently takes a quarter of an hour to clear an accident, given the onerousness of these particular clauses—we can assume that tow truck operators will have to use kid gloves to remove vehicles from the scene of accidents—it is pretty obvious that in the future it will take longer. That was the very point raised in Barnes Auto's submission. That was the very point of the articles in the media to which I already have referred. We already have a huge issue with congestion. I believe that if this goes through the reality will be that congestion potentially lasts longer where, sadly, there are large traffic accidents to be cleared.

At the end of the day, I thank the committee for its work. I thank the 17 submitters. I echo their concerns that, yet again, this seems to have been done without a great deal of consultation with the industry. There is one issue that has come out of this which surprised me. As shadow minister for transport and main roads, like the minister, I tend to receive contact from a lot of peak representative lobby groups, whether it be for trucks or taxis—you name it. It was surprising that, when the committee and other people came to this result, there never seemed to be a peak tow truck industry group or body. I would hope that that is something positive that comes out of the process of this bill becoming an act. I think that would hold the industry in good stead.

I end on the most important note. That is, we have a huge issue with congestion right now. I just hope that the passage of this bill does not add to it. To be quite frank, the people of not just South-East Queensland but also throughout the state have had enough of it.

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (3.59 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Tow Truck Bill 2023. This bill was brought about to help modernise the tow truck industry and bring it in line with modern standards. As the existing Tow Truck Act was enacted in 1973, that means it is 50 years old. I would say it is probably due for an update. I think we would all agree.

When anyone looks at the tow truck industry and towing, you may have had an accident and you see a tow truck on the side of the road towing the car or whatever. With my enthusiasm for old cars I probably use tilt trays a bit more than most here. As we heard from the previous member, there are some commendable efforts going on in the heavy towing industry. I happened to jump on 7Plus and I saw an Aussie show called *Heavy Tow Trucks Down Under* which illustrates some of the work these guys do. You have to commend them for that. In a previous life, you can just imagine watching five prime movers towing a transformer to a substation. I have seen that sort of thing quite often. If one of these things is involved in an incident, clearing that is a mammoth effort. I want it to be noted that these guys are not just on the side of the road with a tilt tray.

When our Transport and Resources Committee looked into this bill we did find issues raised by stakeholders. The issues that largely came were with regard to accreditation, offences and DTMR's consultation. The committee made four recommendations, and the first one was obviously that the bill be passed. We also asked the minister to consider what extra natural justice safeguards could be provided to ensure that part 6, division 2 of the bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals with respect to the reverse onus of proof provisions contained within it. The minister's outline in the government response to the committee report stated that the evidentiary provisions already incorporate sufficient safeguards. These evidentiary provisions have been in place for many years, and we were told there have been no identified instances of them causing concerns relating to natural justice in a practical application. We also recommended that the minister consider amending the statement of compatibility to better clarify the difference between charges and convictions in contemplation of sections 31 and 32 of the Human Rights Act 2019 and to further clarify that heavier weighting should

apply in the chief executive's decision-making process in part 1, division 3 of the bill to the existence of a criminal conviction rather than to an untested criminal charge. The minister has agreed and followed this recommendation.

We also recommended that the minister convene a working group of all interested tow truck industry stakeholders consisting, at a minimum, of all industry reps who made written or oral submissions to the inquiry. This is to support the establishment of an industry peak body with whom government can consult about the implementation of the new act, including in the development of the revised regulation. We heard from some stakeholders who said they did not know about the legislation; we heard from others who were all over the proposed changes. It leads me to believe they do need a representative body to speak to government for all of them. I would call that a union, and I commend them if they are able to form one or another body of sorts. The minister has agreed to this, and TMR has met with tow truck industry stakeholders to discuss the new legislation. This engagement will continue as the implementation of the legislation is progressed. Hopefully, they can work on a permanent body to engage between industry and government in the future.

I would like to speak a bit more about the concerns raised around accreditation. The immediate suspension of an accreditation based solely on vexatious complaints was a concern. TMR was able to provide us with information to assure stakeholders that sufficient measures are in place to provide industry members with natural justice. Further, a criminal and traffic history check is undertaken for all operators and drivers who apply to be accredited under the scheme. Given the very nature of criminal and traffic histories, each application for accreditation is assessed on its own merits.

In relation to the conversation about offences, to minimise the burden on industry offences with no direct correlation to towing have been removed from the list of relevant offences considered at the time of the application. This ensures that offences relevant to the towing profession are taken into account. Offences that are likely to make a person unsuitable for a towing role include, but are not limited to, those involving violence, abuse, theft or intimidation. We heard from stakeholders that some clients have felt intimidated into choosing a certain operator, so these changes should help Queenslanders feel more secure. If you have had an accident and you are a bit on edge, you do not want to be intimidated or feel threatened into taking a certain operator, so I hope that helps.


We heard concerns from stakeholders about the bill making changes with regard to vehicles that get damaged while being towed. It is understandable that, sometimes to clear a road quickly or make a situation safe, there could be damage done to a vehicle. We heard from heavy vehicle towing stakeholders that sometimes with a rolled heavy vehicle there may be concerns about damage to the load while the vehicle is being removed. As the previous member mentioned, they may be rushing to try to get them moved, you could have the police there, it could be raining, you could have a line of traffic, and there is a certain amount of pressure to get the road cleared. You have to take into account many factors; for example, what if it is full of fuel or livestock? You have to take each situation into account individually, and those people should be given the time and have the expertise to complete that removal safely.

The existing tow truck legislation already requires operators to take certain precautions to prevent damage to vehicles they are towing, and the requirement is maintained in this bill. It is acknowledged that sometimes a vehicle will sustain unavoidable damage due to the nature and complexity of the towing task. In order to satisfy legislative obligations, the operator only needs to demonstrate that reasonable efforts have been made to avoid or reduce this. Operators, drivers and assistants must be trained appropriately, but otherwise this clause already exists. It is acknowledged that the great majority of operators will always take appropriate precautions to prevent damage to towed vehicles; however, the maintenance of this requirement will ensure that the motoring community continues to be protected.

Returning to the issue of intimidation, we heard from many stakeholders both anecdotally and in other ways that some people feel intimidated when they have an accident and tow trucks appear from everywhere. Someone said they are like the seagulls of the highway. I do not think that myself; I think they are there to do a safe job. They are there to clear our roads and they are professionals. I just have to say that they are more like the heroes of the highway. When I heard that I thought it was a little bit unfair, because they are out there doing a job and they are trying to keep us safe and get us home safe.

I would like to, as always, thank the members of the Transport and Resources Committee for their work on this bill. We did hear from a lot of people and we discussed it at length before we drafted our report. I see that the deputy chair is ready to speak next, and he is just as excited about this as I am. It is an exciting topic. Those of you who are not on the Transport and Resources Committee do not

get it. It is very exciting stuff. I would also like to thank our committee secretariat, as I do every time. Jodhi, who worked on this bill, is no longer on the committee, but I thank her in particular for her hard work. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (4.08 pm): In rising to make a comment on this bill I extend my thanks to my colleagues on the Transport and Resources Committee, committee staff, officials from the Department of Transport and Main Roads who assisted us, and all of the submitters who shared their knowledge and suggestions with us.

I must firstly note that the LNP members of the Transport and Resources Committee published a statement of reservation as part of the committee report. We did this because of the number of concerns that emerged during the committee's investigation, which I will address in detail in a moment; however, my first concern was the lack of consultation with industry stakeholders. Nevertheless, I was disappointed to discover that the proposed regulations that will accompany the bill and which will translate the bill into real world actions are yet to be shared with the industry properly.

That is the only explanation I can see to explain why this legislation has been rushed to parliament after the reviews it addressed have been sat on for years. It is not just me feeling that this bill is a rushed job. Committee members heard that not only had industry not seen the proposed regulations; they also believed that the public consultation period on the bill was too short. This would explain why we heard from only a limited number of tow truck operators. This would explain why we heard from only one motor vehicle insurance company.

I am particularly concerned that we did not hear from many smaller businesses and those businesses operating in Queensland's rural and regional areas. These small businesses perform an absolutely vital service in a state as big as Queensland. These are the tow truck operators called in to clear accidents so highways and key transport links can be quickly reopened after an accident. This is often difficult, dangerous and traumatic work. In my part of the world these tow truck operators are the people who come to the aid of stranded motorists, often travelling considerable distances to do so. Members would be surprised how many drive tourists have to be rescued from the Simpson Desert, for instance.

It was very disappointing not to be able to hear from the whole range of the industry, and the government has not provided any justification why, after sitting on these reports, these changes must be rushed through now. As the member for Gregory, I can tell the House that these tow truck operators are struggling with workforce shortages. It is a very real issue. Accreditation requirements under the existing legislation already delay the hiring of employees. While this bill is intended to modernise the existing legislation, operators told the committee that they already have concerns around the existing accreditation process and the impact it has on hiring. They fear that the new legislation does not sufficiently address these existing problems.

In particular, operators raised inconsistencies in the way the department currently determines if a tow truck operator is an 'appropriate person'. The lack of clearly defined criteria around the 'appropriate person' requirements makes it very difficult for operators to know where they stand and how to comply. This new bill does not resolve this issue, nor does it resolve issues of procedural fairness when the person has their accreditation suspended or cancelled.

The bill essentially reverses the burden of the onus of proof. If someone makes a false allegation to the department against a tow truck operator, it will fall onto the tow truck operator to disprove the allegation or lose their accreditation. The committee is concerned that this denies them procedural fairness and puts the legislation in direct conflict with the Human Rights Act because it allows the department to remove a person's accreditation and thereby their livelihood based solely on untested accusations rather than convictions. This is a serious criticism of a bill that the minister has said will modernise Queensland's tow truck industry.

The bill also overreaches in trying to solve an issue which does not exist. I refer of course to the new government imposed penalties for damage to vehicles being towed. This is of special concern at a time when the minister is talking up the adoption of electric motor vehicles, or EVs. EVs vary from make to make, but they are all vulnerable to damage if incorrectly towed. Many people are unaware that EVs cannot be towed in the same way that a lot of petrol or diesel vehicles can be. This is because electric vehicles generate power when the wheels are spinning so they must be towed on a flatbed truck. They cannot be dolly towed at all. It is vital that the wheels not spin or the tyres touch the ground. Even winching is risky.

After an accident or a breakdown, getting your stranded EV from the side of the road onto a flatbed truck still has to be accomplished. The current advice is to follow your manufacturer's guidelines when mounting your EV onto a tow truck. If the tow truck operator does not fully understand those guidelines, he will face not just an insurance claim but large government imposed penalties. What will this achieve for anyone caught in such a situation? Such penalties seem to serve no purpose except revenue raising. The moneys raised will not go to the owner of the damaged vehicle. It will go straight to consolidated revenue. It solves no issues for the vehicle owners.

Secondly, tow truck operators already have a civil liability for damage caused to vehicles being towed. They carry insurance for that reason and the moneys paid by the insurer go directly to the vehicle owner for repairs or replacement. Imposing additional government penalties on top of that is likely to make tow truck operators risk averse and unwilling to attend to any vehicles involved in a complex accident or stranded in a difficult situation. In particular, introducing government imposed penalties at this time is likely to discourage tow truck operators from attending stranded EVs and will see extra costs incurred and extra time required, with motorists stranded for longer on the side of the road waiting for assistance. This is a terrible outcome for a supposedly modernising bill, and it will impact owners of both conventional and electric vehicles as well as the tow truck operators.

As deputy chair of the committee, I would have liked to have heard more on this and other aspects of the bill from insurance companies. After all, they are also the ones who will be paying the towing fees. Only one motor vehicle insurer made a submission to the committee and that was the RACQ. It should be noted that they told the committee they understand other insurers were unaware of the inquiry and were not provided with sufficient time to make a submission. If the insurers were unaware of the committee inquiry, they were also completely unaware of the bill and the proposed changes. This is just not good enough. Lack of transparency and consultation can only result in poor legislation. With such poor consultation, it is not surprising that many operators believe this new legislation lacks provisions to deal with operator misbehaviour that the current legislation actually does address. They believe the bill we are debating today is inadequate by comparison and opens the doors to spotters fees, selling personal injury claims at the scene of accidents, the selling of personal information obtained at accident scenes and bribery. This is very disappointing as these were offences relegated to history by the very legislation this bill is replacing. I am so concerned that I think as legislators we must consider actively monitoring the outcomes of the bill.

The committee recommended that the bill be passed despite these reservations. Similarly, the LNP supports the intent of the bill. However, I want to stress that the committee also made recommendations regarding multiple parts of the bill, including the establishment of a working group with operators, the reversal of onus of proof in certain clauses and the human rights conflicts arising from the powers to remove a person's accreditation on the basis of unproven allegations. If the minister wants to demonstrate his good faith to the industry and to Queensland motorists, he can do so by addressing the committee's recommendations during this debate. As extra motivation, perhaps the minister should remember that tragedies can happen to motorists stranded on the roadside on dark, wet nights. As a father of three young women, it is the stuff of nightmares. It is our tow truck operators who attend 24 hours a day, seven days a week, rain, hail or shine. They certainly deserve better.

Finally, I want to again reiterate the consultation process. I found it quite concerning that out of all the tow truck operators who appeared before the committee only one had been briefed on this legislation. The others turned up and had only found out a week prior that this bill had been sent to the Transport and Resources Committee. They had not been consulted by the department, the minister or the government.

This is an important industry. As the shadow minister for transport said, these people are first responders. They play an important role. They turn up to very tragic circumstances sometimes and they need to be able to work efficiently and quickly to remove the damaged vehicle from the road. You can only imagine what happens when there is an accident on the highway from the Sunshine Coast to Brisbane on a wet, summer Sunday afternoon. The vehicles need to be removed as quickly as possible because people who are trying to get home get banked up from Burpengary to Caloundra. We have to make sure that our tow truck operators have the right to be able to do their job efficiently and properly and as easily as possible—

**Mr Minnikin:** Without burden.

**Mr MILLAR:** I take that interjection from the shadow minister for transport. They need to be able to work without burden because they deserve better. I hope the government will consult with the tow truck operators more seriously next time.



**Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (4.18 pm): I rise today to speak to the Tow Truck Bill 2023. This bill represents a significant step forward in the Palaszczuk government's ongoing commitment to supporting vulnerable motorists and the tow truck industry. We have already heard many in the House talk about how vital this industry is in ensuring safety and efficiency on our roads. It is crucial to recognise the pivotal role that tow truck service providers play in clearing accidents and helping drivers and their vehicles return to safety. No doubt many South-East Queensland commuters would see tow trucks on the busy roads during peak hour. They are ensuring that traffic can flow freely by removing broken down vehicles or vehicles involved in incidents. This enables everyone to get to where they need to be on time.

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge Adam Lipke from Lipke Motors Smash Repairs. Adam is so much more than just a tow truck operator. Adam and his darling wife, Kylie, are very proud supporters and sponsors of the Wynnum Manly Juniors Rugby League Football Club, and Adam and his family have given many years of service to the club and have seen the club go from strength to strength. I would like to thank Adam for not only his work supporting local clubs but also the great work he does in the towing space.

Road traffic incidents are traumatic experiences and they can happen to anyone, regardless of their driving skills or precautions taken. We all rely on first responders in our time of need. I acknowledge the great work of the Queensland Ambulance and QFES people, but we should also take a moment to acknowledge tow truck drivers because they are also very often the first on the scene. It is in these moments of vulnerability that we must make sure our regulations offer maximum protection and support for anyone who is in that position.

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of Queensland road users and the efficiency of our transport system is an extremely important role of government. The Tow Truck Bill 2023 is designed to strike a balance between public and road safety while also delivering improved outcomes and protections for motorists. This bill focuses on regulated towing services which involve the removal of vehicles damaged in crashes, vehicles seized by the police and vehicles from private properties in specific Queensland areas. These areas primarily cover high-population density regions, including South-East Queensland and major regional cities such as Cairns, Mackay, Bundaberg, Townsville and Rockhampton. In these locations, quick removal of vehicles involved in accidents is essential to restore normal traffic flow promptly. The tow truck system currently includes 97 tow truck business operators with around 1,200 drivers, 70 assistants and 670 tow trucks. They are pretty amazing numbers. The importance of a modern and efficient tow truck scheme cannot be understated.

In 2017, the Palaszczuk government initiated an independent investigation into the tow truck industry due to rising concerns about unfair and sometimes intimidatory practices regarding the removal of vehicles parked on private property. Subsequent reforms were introduced in 2018 to address these issues. However, the overall legislative framework governing tow trucks has remained largely unchanged for decades. To ensure our legislation aligns with the evolving needs of the industry and public safety, the Department of Transport and Main Roads conducted a comprehensive review which aimed to simplify, clarify and target the legislation appropriately. The Tow Truck Bill 2023 is the result of this review. It seeks to protect the public by ensuring tow truck operators, in regulated towing, are safe, competent, professional and cost efficient for consumers. I know that that is what the public of Queensland wants and expects. This is achieved through various mechanisms such as criminal history checks, checks for scheme members before accreditation, clear requirements for each stage of the towing process and modernising terminology to refer to scheme members.

The bill also empowers authorised officers with necessary enforcement powers to ensure compliance, including entry into business premises when required. To balance these powers, the bill contains safeguards for accredited persons when compliance may lead to self-incrimination. The introduction of offences and penalties is a crucial aspect of the tow truck scheme as it deters noncompliance, clarifies undesirable behaviours and provides consequences for unlawful actions. These penalties also reflect the seriousness of the offences, ensuring best practice within the industry.


The Tow Truck Bill 2023 introduces new offences and penalties to provide further protection to vulnerable motorists. This includes making it an offence to use unauthorised tow trucks to tow vehicles, protecting passengers and their property. Additionally, there are specific offences for forging documents integral to the scheme and for using accreditation documents fraudulently. The bill also expands the list of notifiable offences that accredited persons must report to the chief executive, ensuring relevant offences are included while respecting privacy. Executive officers and partners within a partnership are also obligated to notify each other in the event of changes or convictions for notifiable offences.

Furthermore, the bill provides grounds for ending, cancelling or suspending an accreditation, aligning it with other transport industry accreditation schemes and protecting the community. These provisions offer increased community protection without imposing unnecessary burdens on the industry.

In addition to strengthening regulations and penalties, the Tow Truck Bill 2023 streamlines administrative processes to make the industry more efficient. For example, it allows for temporary approvals of holding yards in an emergency situation, such as a flooding event, which will reduce the administrative burden on businesses during such times of crisis.

To support the new legislation, a tow truck regulation will be developed following the bill's passage to provide detailed operational requirements, ensuring flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and to modernise operations.

This bill reflects the Palaszczuk government's dedication to delivering better services to the Queensland community, ensuring the integrity of our regulatory frameworks and ensuring people at a time of need are not going to be exploited and are well taken care of. It will establish a modern tow truck scheme that is responsive and safe and that ultimately delivers improved community outcomes. I commend the Tow Truck Bill to the House.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (4.25 pm): I rise to speak to the Tow Truck Bill 2023. As we all know, in the modern world many things have changed in so many ways, in so many services and industries, due to changing technology and the need to be more adaptable and accountable and to meet community expectations. The tow truck sector is no different, and there is a need for the industry to be accountable as a service provider to the consumer of these services, be it a vehicle owner, police or the insurance sector. The accountabilities are required in several areas, and I will touch on some of those.

The 1973 act currently provides a framework for the towing, in regulated areas of Queensland, of motor vehicles involved in crashes, seized by police from off-street regulated parking areas or towed from private property in certain circumstances. It also provides an important framework for the subsequent storage and handling of those vehicles, the management of confidential information, offence provisions, enforcement provisions and administrative review provisions. All other towing, like trade towing, breakdown towing services and compliance towing, are not covered by this legislative framework.

The 1973 act had been revised in 1997 to incorporate the police seizure powers and again in 2018 to include private towing. As at April this year there were about 98 tow truck licence holders, 1,173 tow truck drivers and 72 tow truck assistants approved to operate under the Queensland tow truck scheme, so it is important for this bill to be passed by this House to improve services and accountabilities.

How does this bill do that? There have been new offences added to address potential offending behaviour in the tow truck sector and a large increase in maximum penalty units that can be applied to several offences. The current penalty unit as at 1 July 2023 is \$154.80. The penalty unit may change in July each year. An accredited tow truck driver who tows a vehicle from the scene of an accident or a location of a seizure without obtaining the necessary towing authority—part 4, division 3, proposed new section 64 of the bill—will incur a penalty increase from 20 penalty units to 60 penalty units. That is a 200 per cent increase for that offence. With the current penalty unit at \$154.80, that equates to a fine of \$9,288, a serious penalty. There is an increase to the number penalty units from 50 penalty units to 60 penalty units for conducting private property towing without the appropriate private property towing consent. That is a 20 per cent increase and is contained in part 4 division 3 in proposed new section 65 of the bill.

One of the biggest penalty increases in this bill is for an operator failing to comply with the alternative requirements while an exemption is in effect. That is in part 7, division 1 in proposed new section 135 of this bill. This will be increased from 20 penalty units to 80 penalty units, a 400 per cent increase for that offence and potentially a maximum penalty of \$12,384 with today's penalty unit being \$154.80. That is a huge penalty for the offence. These are only some of the penalty unit increases.

Some new offences have been included in the Tow Truck Bill 2023 and I will mention some of them. Part 4, division 2 of the Tow Truck Bill 2023 is titled 'Offences relating to holders of operator accreditations and employees' and proposed new section 55 is titled 'Only authorised tow trucks may be used'. Under this proposed new section, in simple terms, tow trucks must be inspected by a departmental officer to ensure safety and compliance with regulatory requirements. The bill under this



proposed new section introduces an offence for the holder of an operator accreditation if a person operates an unauthorised tow truck to carry out regulated towing under the accreditation. A maximum penalty of 50 penalty units will apply.


Under proposed new section 56, 'Storing towed motor vehicles and moveable property', in simple terms, holding yards must be inspected by a departmental officer and meet requirements before an application for the operator accreditation can be approved to ensure the safety and security of the vehicles and their contents. The bill includes a new offence which provides that towed vehicles can only be stored at premises nominated in a towing authority or at an authorised towing yard for the accreditation. Failure to comply with this requirement carries a maximum penalty of 80 penalty units. This gives more clarity about what is required by an accredited operator and gives the consumer more confidence about the management of their property.

Under part 4, division 6 of the Tow Truck Bill 2023, proposed new section 78, titled 'Obtaining or attempting to obtain private towing authorities', the bill introduces a new offence for a person who does not hold a driver's accreditation to obtain or attempt to obtain a towing authority. A person who commits this offence is liable to a maximum of 60 penalty units. Part 4, division 6 of the Tow Truck Bill 2023, proposed new section 80, 'False or misleading information', and proposed new section 81, 'Offences of dishonesty and coercion', in simple terms, relate to dishonest behaviours. These include forging an accreditation document, private property towing consent or towing authority with intent to defraud and knowingly using an accreditation fraudulently or knowingly directing another person to fraudulently use an accreditation. The maximum penalty for this offence is 60 penalty units.

I want to refer to part 7, division 4, proposed new section 138 of this bill titled 'Chief executive may obtain particular information from the police commissioner'. The bill provides that the chief executive may ask the Police Commissioner for a criminal history report to decide if an applicant is an appropriate person to hold or continue to hold an accreditation or if a corporation of which the person is an executive officer is an appropriate person to hold or continue to hold an accreditation. Part 4, division 4, proposed new section 139 of this bill provides that the Police Commissioner may notify the chief executive of changes in an accreditation holder's criminal history. The term 'criminal history' is defined in schedule 3 of this bill and includes charges and spent convictions. The Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986 allows for the consideration of a person's entire criminal history when specifically allowed for under the act.

The Tow Truck Act 1973 will be replaced by the Tow Truck Bill 2023. As I said earlier, it will modernise the tow truck industry in Queensland and address emerging operational concerns. It also improves the tow truck industry's safety and public safety. There will also be other improvements for motorists, property owners, industry professionals and the broader community. That is what Queenslanders expect and deserve.

In general, this bill will bring us into line with other states. The Tow Truck Bill 2023 will meet the ever-changing needs of the motor vehicle towing sector. It must modernise and engage in best practice to use the ever-changing technologies that have advanced the modern-day motor vehicle. We also need to meet consumer needs and address community and industry safety along the way. That is what this bill will do. That is why I commend the Tow Truck Bill 2023 to the House.

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (4.34 pm): I rise to support the Tow Truck Bill 2023. The bill will deliver a modern tow truck scheme in Queensland that is responsive to emerging operational concerns, improve road and public safety, and deliver improved outcomes for motorists, property owners, industry professionals and the community.

The bill makes amendments to the Photo Identification Card Act 2008, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the State Penalties Enforcement Act, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act. It also repeals the Tow Truck Act 1973. I say thank you to all of the individuals and organisations who made written submissions on the bill as well as those who appeared before the Transport and Resources Committee.

The tow truck industry in Queensland provides two vital services: firstly, clearing our roads to keep traffic flowing smoothly and, secondly, getting drivers and their cars back to where they need to be. I echo the words of the member for Kurwongbah, who described these frontline workers as heroes of the highway. They certainly are frontline workers, and on this side of the House we are always happy to support frontline workers, and these workers often respond to some pretty awful situations.

I am confident that this bill strikes the right balance between supporting the tow truck industry to deliver efficient and effective services as well as improved outcomes and protections for motorists. The bill will continue to regulate the towing of motor vehicles involved in crashes, police seizures from off-street regulated parking areas and the towing of vehicles from private property.

Changes to technology, vehicle movement, administrative practices and legislative drafting have highlighted the need for a more modern legislative framework to support the tow truck industry. 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 those issues were successfully introduced in 2018. Aside from those reforms, the legislative framework for tow trucks has remained largely unchanged for several decades.

There is no doubt that our state is growing rapidly and the high population density in our cities requires the facilitation of the quick removal of vehicles involved in crashes so that traffic can flow smoothly. The Department of Transport and Main Roads has undertaken a review of the framework to ensure that the legislation for tow trucks provides a valuable service for Queensland motorists. That review sought to make sure that the legislative framework was simple, precise, accessible and appropriately targeted. The bill has been developed based on the outcomes of the review. The bill will modernise the legislation by introducing a new structure and terminology to improve consistency across accreditations administered by the Department of Transport and Main Roads.

It will provide appropriate regulation-making powers to ensure the legislation is flexible and remains contemporary. It will modernise enforcement powers to ensure authorised officers have suitable compliance powers while providing certain protections for accredited persons. The bill introduces new offences and updates penalties to address identified issues of predatory behaviour, ensuring that the penalties reflect the seriousness of offences and also strengthening compliance and enforcement outcomes.

Consultation with the towing industry, motoring groups and the community has been at the centre of the tow truck legislation review process. This input was critical to ensure the legislation balances the viability of the towing industry and the need to protect consumers whilst also maintaining the efficiency of our road network. Consultation measures included holding two tow truck industry forums; releasing a public discussion paper and an online survey; and meeting motorists and advocate groups, insurance companies, the Queensland Police Service and tow truck businesses.

As part of the comprehensive consultation undertaken on the new legislation, the community and the towing industry were asked if they supported tow truck companies using incentives to secure motorists' approval to tow their crashed vehicle. Over three-quarters of the responses from industry and the community did not support the use of incentives and inducements as they believed that that practice may lead to coercion in what is already a stressful situation for any motorist involved in an accident.

In view of this feedback, the existing bribery protections in the legislation will be maintained and indeed strengthened. The viability of the towing industry is crucial as it is an essential service provider in our community. To remain viable they need to charge reasonable fees for their services; however, motorists are often at their most vulnerable after a crash, and the government has a role in ensuring that they are protected from unscrupulous or predatory practices in those circumstances. To achieve this, the bill makes provision for the regulation of a number of towing fees. Those include regulating the maximum fees for towing a vehicle from a crash scene and also for towing a vehicle from a private property.

The fee for towing a vehicle from a crash scene includes loading the vehicle onto the tow truck, cleaning the scene—which is often done under difficult circumstances with traffic backed up and waiting—and towing for the first 50 kilometres from the scene to a holding yard or other location chosen by the motorist. The maximum fee ensures that the motorists are paying a fair amount and do not need to consider competing quotes at, as I mentioned, what could be a very stressful time.

The issue of vehicle storage fees came up during the committee inquiry. In terms of the vehicle storage fees, the new regulation will retain the requirement that a customer must be advised of the storage charges to be applied at least 48 hours before the charges are due to commence. This gives the customer the opportunity to explore their options and have their vehicle transferred to another location if they so choose. The industry can therefore continue to charge reasonable fees for vehicle storage, which is a necessary function of the towing industry, and consumers will continue to have the ability to choose where their vehicles are stored.

One of the key aspects of the legislation is the assessment of a person's suitability for accreditation to be an authorisation tow truck business, driver or assistant. Checks are in place to ensure those operating within the scheme are suitable for the inevitable interactions they will have with vulnerable members of the community. A criminal traffic history check is undertaken for all operators and drivers who apply to be accredited under this scheme. TMR also ensures that the prospective tow truck drivers hold an appropriate driver's licence for a tow truck. Given the varied nature of criminal and traffic histories, each application for accreditation is assessed on its merits. Offences that are likely to make a person unsuitable for towing include, but are not limited to, those involving violence, abuse, theft or intimidation. To ensure equity, transparency and accountability, accreditation decisions are reviewable on request and further appeals are available through QCAT, which is consistent with other administrative decisions in Queensland.

As mentioned, the tow truck industry plays a crucial role in the safe and efficient removal of vehicles from the road network, improving traffic flow and ensuring the safety of motorists. This bill introduces a range of reforms that will assist the industry with the efficient operation of their business. Red tape will also be reduced through the streamlining of notifiable offences that need to be reported to TMR. Notifiable offences under the legislation will now only include offences that are directly relevant to the towing profession.

While enforcement powers have been strengthened, safeguards for accredited individuals have also been included by providing rights against self-incrimination. Authorised officers will also have a clear duty to provide warnings and an explanation of an individual's rights. As such, the enforcement provisions strike a balance between effective enforcement and protecting the rights of accredited industry members. The industry submissions to the parliamentary committee requested that the bill address dishonest and illegal practices that are sometimes observed in the industry.

The bill provides explicit offences for a range of unacceptable activities—for example, using an unauthorised tow truck to carry out regulated towing activities or using an unauthorised holding yard to store vehicles towed as a result of regulated towing activities, and accredited operators directing an unaccredited person in their employment to carry out regulated towing tasks. The objective of this is to stamp out unwelcome practices and ensure that only compliant operators can continue to operate in the scheme, which is ultimately a benefit to the industry and the community as a whole.

The bill provides for a regulation to be made that will prescribe more operational aspects of the scheme, which ensures a framework can be more responsive to the needs of the industry and the community. The regulation is currently in development, with the intention that it commence simultaneously with the bill, subject to its passage. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (4.44 pm): I am certainly happy to speak to the Tow Truck Bill that was before the Transport and Resources Committee, of which I am a member. Firstly, I thank all members of the committee and secretariat for their efforts in listening to submitters, going through the submissions and putting the committee report together. I thank the deputy chair for his efforts in that regard. I wish him all the very best following his announcement that he will not be contesting next year's election.

I will follow on from the comments of the deputy chair and the shadow minister for transport, the member for Chatsworth. I note that the review conducted for this bill was done about five years ago. It was flagged five years ago that this legislation needed some updating. It has taken until 2023 before we have seen this bill before the House. The intention of this bill is to tidy up some otherwise convoluted legislation. Some of the submitters certainly suggested that having a more streamlined bill and more streamlined processes as part of that are welcome.

It does beg the question: what was the Minister for Transport doing during all that time and where were his priorities as minister? I wish his priorities were delivering projects on time and on budget, which they absolutely could not have been because there are not many that have been delivered on time and on budget in Queensland. If the minister cannot deliver projects on time and on budget maybe he could push some of this legislation along and in the process actually go and talk to some stakeholders. The committee heard that there was limited consultation across the industry. I note that fellow committee members talked about what the transport department had done, but a lot of the towing companies that spoke to us said that they did not know much about the bill until basically the parliamentary committee had reached out to them and asked them to make a submission.

There were four committee recommendations, as the chair has already touched on. The committee recommended that the Tow Truck Bill be passed. Recommendation 2 states—

That the Minister consider what extra natural justice safeguards could be provided to ensure Part 6, Division 2 of the Bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals in respect of the reversal of the onus of proof provisions contained therein.

I understand that some of that has been addressed in the member's comments. Recommendation 3 states—

That the Minister consider amending the statement of compatibility to better clarify the difference between charges and convictions in contemplation of Sections 31 and 32 of the Human Rights Act 2019, and further clarify that heavier weighting should apply in the chief executive's decision-making process in Part 1, Division 3 of the Bill to the existence of a criminal conviction than to an untested criminal charge.

Recommendation 4 is something that I think would be quite helpful in terms of regulation change or legislation change for the towing industry going forward. It states—

The Minister convene a working group of all interested tow truck industry stakeholders ...

If that had been done in some capacity ahead of time, then a few more of the kinks in this legislation could have perhaps been ironed out.

The shadow minister for transport and other members have thanked our tow truck drivers for the hard work they do. They are often first responders. As has been said, they are the heroes of the highway in cleaning up a lot of the incidents that happen. When people are out on the road and trying to get places, the last thing they want is to be sitting in traffic congestion or going on significant detours. It is the tow truck operators who get in and clean up after those incidents.

When it comes to congestion on Callide roads, there are six traffic lights in my electorate now, so it is becoming a metropolis seat at this rate. When there are incidents and road closures, there are significant detours that motorists have to use along very bad and poorly maintained roads. Again, if the Minister for Transport was more proactive in delivering projects on time and on budget, the Monto Mount Perry Road would be fully sealed. If motorists have to divert onto Kerwee Road and there was an incident and a road closure on that requiring the services of a tow truck company, traffic would have to divert along an unsealed road that the minister promised to seal a number of years ago but we have not seen that promise delivered upon.

I thank the 17 submitters on this bill for their efforts in going through the process, some of them at very short notice. Members of the opposition put in a statement of reservation as well where we outlined some of the concerns that we had about this bill, specifically the lack of consultation whilst at the same time the fact that the government has taken five years for this legislation to mysteriously appear. One concern that was widespread is how the department currently determines if a tow truck operator is an appropriate person, and I want to touch on that issue in the submission from Harvey's Towing Service. It put a lot of effort into its submission and I again thank it for that. However, its concerns relate to clauses 13 and 14 of the bill. In its submission it states—

HTS acknowledge the significance of the powers that the chief executive must possess to make decisions around accreditation applications however the current approach appears to be inconsistent with unpredictable and contradictory outcomes, in addition HTS do not believe that the proposed approach resolves the issue. Our industry is facing some of the toughest times in recruiting and one of the major difficulties our industry faces is when a potential driver is denied a driver's certificate after being deemed not an 'appropriate person'.

It gave an example of how this has already impacted its business in that it has missed out on a potential employee. It hired a driver and upon applying for his driver's certificate his application was declined due to his traffic history. Fair enough. If that is the case, move on. However, this same driver has then left its employment and gone to work for another tow truck company where he was successful in obtaining his driver's certificate under their employment. Under one company that person could not get a driver's certificate but when that same person went to another company they were able to get their driver's certificate, so that suggests that there are significant inconsistencies in the way an appropriate person is defined and that certainly needs to be cleared up for the industry.

There was another key concern that was raised across the board and in particular raised by Moreton Bay Regional Towing. In its submission it talked about its concerns with regard to the need to prevent damage to towed motor vehicles, something that it already absolutely keeps in mind, but towies are under a lot of pressure, especially on some of our major highways or when a road is completely closed, until they get the road cleared. They are trying to move a vehicle out of the way so everyone else can get on their way and get back to their day, whether they are going on a holiday or moving freight around the country. These companies are now going to be fined if they further damage that vehicle on top of any civil matters that may already proceed. We heard from many submitters that the

civil matters are more than adequate to deal with and the government should be staying out of this, so perhaps this is another example where government is not needed but the Labor government cannot help itself as it likes getting in the way. These submitters asked for more clarity on that and its submission notes that—

... we cannot see any benefit to the industry other than adding a greater cost to businesses and operators. If damages occur to a vehicle during a tow or recovery, often when time constraints or difficult conditions involved, opening beyond the normal recourse of dealing with damage costs, to also be possibly fined is not fair or reasonable.


**Mr Minnikin:** Exactly.

**Mr HEAD:** I take that interjection from the shadow minister for transport. He has been working very hard in going through this legislation. I am sure that if he was the Minister for Transport we would not have been waiting five years for some legislation to come forward on this issue after he had a—

**Mr Minnikin:** It would have been on time.

**Mr HEAD:** I take that interjection and I am sure that he will absolutely be able to build projects on time and on budget because that is a priority of the LNP. We want to work harder for Queenslanders every day because Queenslanders deserve better and we are going to save them paying more for Labor's failures.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Member for Maryborough, you have about 5½ minutes.

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (4.54 pm): I love speaking after the member for Callide because it makes me look good. I wish he would speak every day and I would follow him every day. If that is the talent on that side of the House I would hate to see the reserves list, because those on the main team are not real good.

**Mr Minnikin** interjected.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I hear the shadow minister, the member for Chatsworth, interrupting and talking about how good he is. If he gets to become transport minister, I think I will ride a pushbike. That is all I will say, but I will be riding a pushbike.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Member for Maryborough, you are now 35 seconds in and you have not referred to the bill yet, so I would bring you back to it, please.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** Thank you for that guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker, but there is so much on that side to throw fun at. The Tow Truck Bill 2023 will replace the Tow Truck Act 1973. Those over there are like a worn tyre—thump, thump, thump, thump going on the highway. That is all we hear from them. I want to thank the committee chair and the deputy chair, and we know that the deputy chair is retiring. This is a good opportunity for a new career because of what he has done about the tow trucks. When he gets out of the parliament he could become a tow truck operator in Gregory. He knows all the roads and he knows all the people.

I thank the minister for the legislation. It is good legislation talking about bribery and incentives to gain information about crash scenes to secure a tow, practices that are not supported by the towing industry or the Queensland government. The existing bribery protections in the legislation will be maintained and in some instances strengthened. It is proposed that a new tow truck regulation currently in development will address this behaviour by making it an offence for towing accreditation holders to offer inducements to vehicle owners and accreditation holders to offer inducements to other persons in exchange for providing information about an incident such as a crash and a person receiving a benefit in exchange for information about such instances, that is, using crash spotters. There has been consultation with the stakeholders involved in this. The penalties for these offences are proposed to be consistent with similar offences that exist in the current act.

**Mr KING:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Buderim is waving around a prop and there have been several times today when we have heard how wrong that is.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Kurwongbah. I did not see that and I would just reiterate the advice given by the Deputy Speaker and Speaker in earlier parts of the day about the use of props to all members.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** In line with the committee's recommendations on the bill, TMR will also support the industry to establish a tow truck industry peak body. The viability of the towing industry is crucial as an essential service provider to our community. To remain viable, they need to charge a reasonable fee for their services. The tow truck industry plays a crucial role in the safe and efficient removal of vehicles from the road network, improving traffic flow and ensuring the safety of motorists. I think all of us in this House have at some time or other used tow truck operators. I want to give a big shout-out—

**Ms Boyd:** Particularly you.

**Mr SAUNDERS:** I will not take that interjection from the member for Pine Rivers. I want to give a shout-out to my mate Paul, who is a towie in Maryborough—a very good mate of mine. I know that Paul is out in his tow truck quite often. He is a very good friend, a very honourable man, and he works very hard in his tow truck. I will honour what the chair of the committee said—that is, they are first responders and they are highway traffic heroes because they work in many dangerous situations picking up cars to tow. I know that they have picked me up on the freeway a few times when my car has broken down. In all, this bill is a good bill and the committee has worked hard.

We heard from the member for Callide that there was not enough consultation during the committee hearing. I have talked to a few tow truck operators that I know and they were quite happy with the consultation and they are glad that this legislation is before the parliament. I thank the minister, his staff and TMR for this legislation. A good government makes sure that legislation is good—and this is very good legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Saunders, adjourned.

## MOTION

### Townsville, Youth Crime



**Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.00 pm): I move—

That this House notes:

- (a) the dramatic increase in car thefts, attacks by offenders on police officers and the growing community concern about the impact of crime throughout Townsville;
- (b) comments by the members for Townsville, Thuringowa, and Mundingburra that the government's policies to combat crime are effective despite increasing threats to the community;
- (c) notes the comments of south-east based Labor members, including the members for Capalaba, McConnel, Bundaberg and Gaven, downplaying the extent of crime;

and calls on all three Townsville members to explain to the people of their electorates why the Labor government has failed to support policies to curb the youth crime crisis in North Queensland and respond to demands to ensure community safety.

Just when we thought the crime problem in the north could not get any worse, we have the events that unfolded in that community over the last week: stolen cars driving at police vehicles at high speed; elderly residents assaulted in their own home and their vehicle stolen; and, would members believe, last night the Townsville Civic Theatre locked down because of a stolen vehicle hooning around the front. It is out of control. One asks the question: where does it stop? More importantly, where are the members for Townsville, Mundingburra and Thuringowa? In Thuringowa last night a stolen ute collided with a motorcycle. It drove over the rider of that motorcycle. Three juvenile offenders—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Resume your seat while I take some advice. Member, firstly, I would like you to assure the House that the matters you are referring to are not sub judice. I would also like you to reflect upon the advice I gave when I was Acting Speaker about mentioning matters that have occurred where it is likely that a charge will be laid but before that charge has been laid.

**Mr LAST:** I will move on. Townsville is ground zero again. QPS figures to the end of August paint a horrifying picture for that particular community. In the last year the number of juveniles charged for assault, serious assault, unlawful entry and unlawful use of a motor vehicle is the highest in 22 years—and it is not changing. In the last 30 days in that community, five cars have been stolen every day; more than 11 homes and businesses have been broken into every day; and more than nine people have been assaulted every single day. Stolen cars are chasing police vehicles. We have images of stolen vehicles being driven past the police watch house and, today, being driven past the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. These young offenders are getting more brazen.

**Ms Richards** interjected.

**Mr McDonald** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members for Redlands and Lockyer!

**Mr LAST:** Then today we had the bombshell revelation that the cupboard is bare. When it comes to how the government is going to deal with this juvenile crime problem, the cupboard is bare.

**Mr McDonald** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Lockyer, you are under a warning. I would ask you to leave the chamber for an hour.


*Whereupon the honourable member for Lockyer withdrew from the chamber at 5.03 pm.*

**Mr LAST:** That this government has run out of ideas should be ringing alarm bells for Queenslanders. What hope does that give them moving forward? What hope does that give the victims in this state who are having their homes broken into and their cars stolen?

This weekend there are community meetings being held by the Premier and her cabinet ministers. I certainly hope that Townsville residents take the opportunity to go along and tell their stories and demand some answers. They are not getting any answers and they are not getting any action from their three local members, you can be sure of that. I cannot wait for the contribution from the member for Thuringowa. The government would have us believe that it is on top of crime, but the figures do not lie. The figures are there in black and white. As we say on this side, there needs to be consequences for actions. These offenders need to be held to account because there is genuine fear in that community for their personal safety.

As I like to say, you cannot buy your way out of this problem. The Premier has stood up in this place on a number of occasions and talked about the investment this government is making in this space. Still we are seeing crime spiralling out of control. Still we are seeing houses being broken into, cars being stolen and people's lives being put at risk. That has to stop. We have a business in Townsville today that outlaid millions of dollars to buy a parcel of land on which to house their vehicles because they fear that their vehicles are going to be stolen. Families have been in my office and have made the decision to sell their family home and move out of fear for their safety. These are the repercussions of this crime wave that is going on in that community.

Our police are burnt out. We know that there are fewer police on the street under the watch of this police minister. The city of Townsville and Queensland as a whole deserve better. They deserve to have a government that is going to ensure their safety. They deserve a government that is going to hold these offenders to account. In 12 months time Queensland will vote.

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (5.06 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'notes' be omitted and the following inserted:

- '(a) the impacts of crime on the people of Queensland and police officers;
- (b) the Palaszczuk government's continued support for victims of crime, including over \$200 million boost to enhance support for victims of crime in Queensland;
- (c) the Palaszczuk government's \$446.4 million investment to target serious repeat youth offenders, tackle the complex causes of crime and enhance community safety;
- (d) the strong advocacy of the members for Townsville, Mundingburra and Thuringowa has seen:
  - (i) for the first time in Queensland's history breach of bail condition is an offence for young offenders under the Bail Act;
  - (ii) a new serious repeat offender sentencing framework;
  - (iii) the establishment of a street university in Townsville;
  - (iv) record investments in community safety in Townsville, including the Townsville Stronger Communities initiative.
- (e) the strong advocacy of all government members for stronger laws for community safety; and
- (f) the opposition's failure to produce a detailed crime plan, despite promising one over 1,000 days ago.'

In response to this topic, which comes up quite often and is a topic that we take very seriously, community members find it quite frustrating that those opposite seek to—

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr RYAN:** No, wait a moment—paint the picture that we do not take this seriously. There is a very genuine desire by everyone to ensure community safety. It is not something exclusively held by one side of politics over the other. Everyone has a genuine commitment to community safety and everyone wants to do everything they can to deliver community safety outcomes. There may be arguments about policy and how to achieve that, but to suggest for one moment that members of this House do not care about community safety—that is what we just heard from the member for Burdekin—is misleading at best. Everyone cares about it. That is why the members for Thuringowa, Townsville and Mundingburra are strong advocates on this issue. That is why members of the government, members of the opposition and members of the crossbench are strong advocates for action. No-one has a monopoly on wanting a safe community.

The government's response has been one which is considered, serious and focused on achieving what we hope will enhance community safety: strengthening laws to target serious repeat offenders and enhance consequences for action and strengthening resources for partner agencies to intervene early. We announced one of those just recently with Bullyproof and Jeff Horn. Last week I was in Townsville with the member for Thuringowa, visiting the Street University. We are continuing to do everything we can. We are boosting resources for the Queensland Police Service and supporting them in their recruitment efforts through the government's historic and record investment in the Queensland Police Service. We all have a commitment to community safety. We want to work together with everyone to ensure that we get good outcomes for communities.

Those opposite have had opportunities to put forward their plans. In fact, the member for Burdekin promised a plan 1,020 days ago. In recent times he was reported as saying that he is still working on it. The government continues to put plans forward. The government continues to make investments. The government continues to do everything it can to enhance community safety. This is something that we all take very seriously.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge those people who have been impacted by crime. It is traumatic and we all acknowledge that. We all want to ensure that those people are supported. That is why, in recent times, we have also increased victims support and we have enhanced opportunities for victims to feed into government policy. This is an important issue. It is one that we should be working on together and not trying to grandstand by saying which one is better than the other.



**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (5.10 pm): I rise to speak on the motion before the House, moved by the member for Burdekin. It is no secret that Queensland is in the grip of a youth crime crisis. Families are living in fear in their own homes. They worry about being burgled while they are away. They worry about their cars being stolen, trashed, dumped and burned. As we have heard from the member for Burdekin, Townsville is no exception. Queensland Police Service data reveals that in the last seven days in Townsville there were a total of 590 offences, the majority being theft and unlawful entry. Queenslanders are being forced to make hard choices such as whether they leave their car keys at the front door so that thieves will find them and leave or hide their keys and risk having criminals rummage through their homes and bedrooms whilst they and their children are asleep in their beds. Across Queensland, there is an increase in the installation of security systems and private security firms being employed.

Whilst Townsville Labor members were out proclaiming that Brisbane Labor's crime policies are working, we have heard about the incidents that occurred last night. I will not offend standing order 233 by referring to one of them, but I will refer to an incident where no-one was apprehended. Last night, the Royal Czech Ballet performed at the Townsville Civic Theatre. Police had to direct patrons attending that event to remain inside as two stolen cars were spotted driving dangerously around the car park. One of the stolen cars crashed into a parked car before both stolen cars fled the scene. Imagine that: you go out for a night of culture in Townsville and end up in that situation when you try to leave the theatre.

My question about local Townsville members of parliament is this: are they standing with local residents or do they stand with the Labor government? They are putting their own communities at risk to protect Brisbane Labor's inadequate policies. As we have already heard, all Queenslanders are facing higher insurance costs as Queensland is now the car theft capital of the nation. Do these members of parliament agree with the transport minister's assessment of police? I am referring to the minister's tweet from earlier in the day when he referred to 'racism, misogyny & sexism in the force'. I table a copy of that tweet.

*Tabled paper:* Extract, undated, from the Twitter account of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services, Hon. Mark Bailey, in relation to comments made by Mr Ian Leavers [\[1757\]](#).

Do the Labor members of parliament accept that the LNP has the right priorities for Queensland's future? Our document says, at page 9, that police do not feel supported. I table a copy of that.

*Tabled paper:* Document, undated, titled 'The Right Priorities for Queensland's Future' [\[1758\]](#).


The LNP's support for our hardworking police is proven. Our candidate for Mundingburra, Janelle Poole, is a renowned Townsville resident and long-serving police officer. She has spent her career serving her community. She has worked as a school-based police officer with the child protection unit and as a crime prevention coordinator. She has seen firsthand how weaker laws and fewer police on the beat have led to the youth crime crisis across her city and across our state. On our side, we stand by our police. We appreciate them. We appreciate how they perform their duties and the sacrifices they



make on behalf of all decent citizens whether in Townsville, on the Gold Coast or anywhere else across regional and metropolitan Queensland. What a contrast that is with the current member for Mundingburra who, on Police Remembrance Day, gave police a book entitled *Forensics for dummies*.

It is not just central Brisbane or Townsville where Labor is out of touch. Last week the housing minister, the member for Gaven, showed how out of touch Labor is when she said, 'The number of juveniles offending has reduced so early intervention programs are working.' That is the official Labor Party view. We have heard it now from two ministers, the transport minister and the housing minister. The Premier and two of her ministers are completely at odds with the police minister and the 17,000 members of the Police Service. They should tell that to the Townsville people who are the victims of Labor's failed policies. On 12 September 2023, the member for McConnel said, 'The crises are in their heads', referring to us and to citizens.

I refer to an article in the *Daily Mail* from 4 October 2023 in which a fed up father in a crime-ridden town unleashed a brutal message after his partner and babies were surrounded by teens. We have concerns being raised by local citizens. We want safety restored in our neighbourhoods and our communities across Queensland. Ignoring it is proof positive that the Labor government have not learned the lessons that we taught in 2013 when we had the bikie riot and issues in Broadbeach on the Gold Coast. We have just had the 10th anniversary of that. At that time the then police minister and deputy premier said there was no problem. We proved them wrong. We fixed the problem and we will do it again.

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (5.15 pm): I rise to support the amended motion. I have never been silent on how this issue affects the people of Townsville and I will always advocate for more to be done. Of course I understand the concerns people have when it comes to some of the brazen and disgusting behaviour that we have seen from a small group of people. However, the community, this government and I will never stop looking for ways to combat this issue.

I am proud to be in a government that has listened and is acting. We have reversed the presumption of bail, which is making a real difference. Senior police in Townsville have said that publicly and it is the feedback I have received. We have expanded the number of offences with a presumption against bail. Those who are passengers in stolen vehicles, commit burglary or enter a premises to commit an indictable offence will now have a presumption against bail. They must prove to the courts why they should get bail. That is an important distinction. This year, for the first time in Queensland's history, breach of bail is actually an offence for young offenders under the Bail Act. Those opposite also voted for these laws.

Let us put the facts on the table: more people are being held accountable when they break the law. That is the truth, whether those opposite like it or not. In Townsville we have seen important results from the ongoing extreme high visibility police operation, Operation Victor Unison.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, members! I will start warning people.

**Mr STEWART:** I am advised there have been 765 people arrested on 1,352 charges in Townsville. I applaud the work that the Queensland Police Service is doing. One thing we have not seen is the LNP's so-called crime plan. It has been more than 1,000 days since the member for Burdekin and the LNP said they would have a plan around community safety.

**Mr Last** interjected.

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

**Mr STEWART:** Maybe that plan has been cut, which would explain its whereabouts. We know that they have a track record of doing that. When they were in government they cut police numbers and they cut their resources. They tried to sell the Townsville police academy.

**Mr Lister** interjected.


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

**Mr STEWART:** I want to know whether the LNP backs the government's plan for a police academy at the former 1300SMILES stadium site. At the last election, the LNP wanted to turn the old North Queensland Cowboys home ground into a harness racing track. The question the LNP needs to answer is whether they still want that to happen. The LNP showed its true colours when they chose horseracing over backing our Queensland Police Service. That asset, which I am proud to have

advocated for alongside the members for Thuringowa and Mundingburra, is now at risk. It is the Palaszczuk government that has given continued support to the police and other agencies with more resources so that they can target recidivist offenders. It is the Palaszczuk government that is investing in Street University in Townsville.

We will always back the Queensland Police Service with new and improved resources and staff numbers. As the Police Commissioner has said, there will be a minimum of 150 extra police officers deployed to the northern region, which includes Townsville. Right now there are around 1,400 applicants in the police recruitment pipeline and nearly 600 recruits undergoing training. I am proud of how we have supported the police and invested in the service.

We know what the LNP would do for our hardworking police officers. If the LNP had their way, there would be more than 1,000 fewer police officers across the state. We all know what happens under the LNP. There will be cuts. That is what they do. It is the only plan they have. They certainly do not have a crime plan, as we have heard before. The LNP talk about gold standards. I am happy to concede that they have a gold standard in dishonesty. They are dishonest to the people of Townsville, they are dishonest to our hardworking police and they are dishonest to all of Queensland.

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (5.20 pm): We have had eight years of Labor in government. We are in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis. Insurance premiums in North Queensland are already out of control and are increasing. Now we have a crime crisis which is impacting people every single day but for which the government has no solutions on the table. I remind the House of the member for Thuringowa's comments. He said in this House in June 2016—

We know that any repealing of the Newman government Youth Justice Act by our government reflects international evidence that increasing the severity of punishment is ineffective in reducing recidivism, particularly by children and young people.

Yet we see the government continuing to call on the LNP to release our policies. We released a breach of bail policy and the government adopted it. On 10 November 2016 the member for Thuringowa said—

I want a safe community in Thuringowa. My constituents deserve to live in a safe community and be safe in their own homes.

Right now on the member's own Facebook page—I see that he has not yet removed the comment—is the comment—


I've voted Labor all my life. But at the next election I will be considering voting liberal.

This is because of the crime crisis in Townsville.

I draw the House's attention to a tragic circumstance that unfolded in Townsville. I assure the Deputy Speaker that this is not sub judice. I refer to a woman who was kicked in the stomach and hit over the head and whose children's lives were threatened by somebody who entered her home. We talk about break and enters being up 22 per cent in the last 12 months and about assaults being up 14 per cent. These are real victims of crime. The opposition met with victims of crime here at parliament and continued to advocate for them and tell their stories. Members of the government had to be dragged kicking and screaming to meet with victims of crime. Then they made another announcement that we need to continue to support victims of crime and throw more money at the problem but not solve it. We would not need to spend an extra \$200 million supporting victims of crime if the government had addressed crime and were harder on criminals in the first place. It is very frustrating.

We constantly hear from those opposite that the LNP does not have a plan. We do have a plan. We will increase the numbers of police on the beat. We see 202 fewer police. A minister of the government has criticised our hardworking police, who risk their lives every single day upholding the laws of this state and ensuring public safety. They risk their own lives to deal with youth criminals who are out hooning on the Townsville Ring Road at 180 kilometres an hour while under the influence of alcohol. These are real risks not just to community safety but also to police safety.

We have a plan. They are the right priorities for Queenslanders. There has been a lot of focus on the document we have released. I am so pleased that members from across the House have read all of its 44 pages. It is fabulous. Not only does it outline the priorities for Queenslanders; it also tells real Queenslanders' stories. This document is evidence provided by real Queenslanders—people like Paris and Will. The opposition has spent the past three years travelling the state and listening to people—real Queenslanders who have been failed and continue to be failed by this Labor government. I sure hope the Leader of the Opposition is able to bring out an appendix in which we can highlight more Queenslanders' stories. It is tragic that it takes the opposition releasing a document for those opposite to take notice of the real issues and the real priorities affecting Queenslanders right now.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.25 pm): Well, that was interesting—self-promoting their brochure. I want a safe community, as does everyone in my electorate of Thuringowa. There is only one place where violent repeat offenders belong: in custody. I was pleased to read in today's *Townsville Bulletin* that after another incident that person has been refused bail.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. I will take some advice. Member, you need to clarify that the matter you are referring to is not sub judice. Again, I refer members to the advice I provided to the House about referring to matters in which there may be a charge imminently laid and the impacts statements may have on the carriage of justice. It is a matter that all members in this House should take very seriously. I ask the member to continue his contribution with those matters in mind and provide those assurances.

**Mr HARPER:** Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. We introduced breach of bail. This is what the LNP did 10 years ago. They had their failed breach of bail and their failed boot camp. Under the LNP, 90 per cent of the people with breach of bail reoffended within 12 months and 70 per cent of the people who went to the youth boot camp reoffended within 12 months. It was a failed policy. We brought in breach of bail with an actual offence. We brought in other provisions whereby a declaration of a serious recidivist offender increased sentencing options by the judiciary. We know that serious recidivist offenders should not get bail.

Members have talked about police. We back our police in Townsville. I am proud to have delivered in 2018-19 a brand new police station in the Upper Ross with 10 more police. I am proud to have delivered a \$30 million commitment for the new Kirwan station that has had 14 additional officers go there. I know that the new academy in Kirwan will be another \$100 million commitment. What did the LNP do in 2020? It wanted to sell the academy. We back our police; we will not sack our police. I knew some of the officers who lost their job under the LNP, and they will not forget. What do we have? We have a shadow minister who for 1,000 days had no plan. The member, along with Phil Thompson, likes to whip up a bit of a frenzy at a rally. I refer to a media article with the headline 'Townsville residents refuse efforts to break cycle for troubled young people'. I table that article.

*Tabled paper:* Extract from media article, dated 10 June 2022, titled 'Townsville residents refuse efforts to break cycle for troubled young people' [1759].

Is that an outcome? We will continue to do everything we can. The select committee presents an opportunity to actually do something. We have a cross-party approach. It is independently chaired. I say to members of the LNP: if you are genuine and not disingenuous, let's go out there and get more things done to make our community safer. We will see exactly what happens with that.


**Mr Crandon** interjected.

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

**Mr HARPER:** I want to talk about achieving other things in community safety. We want to hold people to account—that is the first thing—so when it comes to sentencing I would ask the judiciary to meet community expectations. I think we all agree on that. I have worked really hard to get a street university in Townsville. I want to read this post. It is great that the members opposite have been following my Facebook. This is from Annie Sue and it is about the Street University I worked hard to deliver on top of the new police stations and on top of the additional police. She said—

My 16-year-old son and his mates go to this place every day and come home with so many positive things to say about this place. The people and the opportunities that are in front of them are all there. Truly such a valuable asset to the youth community. I truly cannot thank them enough for all they offer to young people. It may only be new, but it's already had a positive impact on my son and his mates.

I will continue to do exactly what I can in the youth space, including: additional funding for Clontarf to keep kids in education; the Stars program for girls; the Indie School just opened up in Thuringowa, which is again another asset in the youth space; the JT Academy; Silver Lining; Queensland youth services; and Community Gro in the Upper Ross, which has diversionary funding to make sure that kids stay out of trouble and get back into education, skills and training. It is about working with those NGOs and doing all we can to keep our communities safe and hold offenders to account. I will never shy away from that. I want a safe community just like everyone else in Thuringowa.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (5.31 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Burdekin. I am also happy to talk about some of the points contained in the amendment moved by the police minister, particularly (e), which notes 'the strong advocacy of all government members for stronger laws for community safety'. I want to point out something that the member for Whitsunday has highlighted before. I am honoured to follow the member for Thuringowa, who is on the record in this place as championing the watered-down youth justice laws that were introduced by this government

back in 2015-16. They might want to come in here and do a tough-on-crime pantomime, but you cannot rewrite history because it is recorded in *Hansard*. In 2015-16 we know that it was the top priority of this government when they were elected to water down youth justice laws in this state—to impose a social experiment on this state—and we are now suffering the consequences of that. Back on 21 April 2023 the now Attorney-General, who was the then attorney-general, said in this place—

Evidence clearly shows that increasing the severity of punishment does not reduce offending ...

...

This bill reflects evidence on what works to reduce youth offending. The government has listened to academic, legal and community sector stakeholders who have been open in their opposition to the 2014 reforms—

—of the LNP. On 17 June 2016 the then attorney-general said—

The former government's amendments were not evidence based. The bills before the House today reflect the research and evidence on what actually supports a reduction in youth offending, with a longstanding body of national and international evidence showing that increasing the severity of the punishment is a blunt and ineffective tool when it comes to reducing recidivism ...

On 3 November 2016 the then attorney-general said—

... the Palaszczuk government is a progressive government with a strong reform agenda. We listen to the people: to experts, to stakeholders and to our departments.

I want to know who these experts are. Who are the experts this government constantly relied upon when watering down these laws? The Premier came in here yesterday and talked about listening to Queenslanders. The member for Townsville just mentioned accountability and listening to Queenslanders, but history shows that the only experts they are listening to—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member, you will either read from that document or table it.

**Mr PURDIE**: It is just a quote from *Hansard*. I am happy to table it.

*Tabled paper*: Extract, undated, from a speech made by the member for Ninderry, Mr Dan Purdie MP [1760].

The evidence shows that, citing experts, this government overtly watered down the laws. We know that at that time all crime indicators were pointing to downward trends. The Childrens Court report at that time was showing a reduction in youth offending, and now we see unequivocal evidence not only in the stats which we have heard about earlier today across Queensland—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Pause the clock. Member, I will just give you guidance again. Documents are to be read from or tabled, not held up and waved around the chamber as you just did.

**Mr PURDIE**: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Across Queensland unlawful use of a motor vehicle has doubled since 2014-15; assaults have almost tripled. More alarmingly, in Townsville unlawful use of a motor vehicle is up 119 per cent—almost 14 cars a day are being stolen—and assaults have nearly tripled. The stats are alarming. We have heard some personal stories today. We all know the horrific stories we have heard like those of the Beasleys, the Beaumonts, the Lovells, the Fields—and the list goes on.

I recently heard something which really tells the story of how these watered-down laws tipped the balance of power in favour of young offenders on the street. Last month in Mundingburra, in Townsville, in the suburb of Idalia—which I understand is a beautiful, relatively new master planned community full of aspirational first home buyers, Queenslanders who are working hard to get ahead and improve their lot in life—a house was broken into and the car keys were stolen, as is happening 14 times a day in Townsville. A young offender stole the car. The next afternoon that family was in their front yard talking to the neighbours, as we often see in communities across Queensland—probably telling them about the crime that happened last night—when the young offenders in that stolen car drove slowly up and down past the house where they had stolen the car—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Member, can you give the House assurances that this matter is not sub judice?

**Mr PURDIE**: I understand the police did not attend because they told the informant when they rang that there was nothing they could do because juveniles were driving the car.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: I will just take some advice; resume your seat. Member, I am not satisfied with that explanation. Can you assure the House that there are no charges laid in this matter?


**Mr PURDIE**: The police did not attend.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: That is not what I asked you. Can you assure the House that there were no charges laid in this matter?

**Mr PURDIE:** The reliable information I have received is that no-one was arrested for that offence, so no-one is before the court.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You have the call.

**Mr PURDIE:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Not only were they driving past the house where they stole the car; they were using the electronic remote of the garage door to open and close the door of the house to intimidate that family. When they rang the police they were told, 'If they're juveniles, we're sorry, there's not much we can do.' Fast forward to today, we have the Minister for Main Roads—who has had that portfolio for three terms of government but still cannot get his head around it—giving Ian Leavers, the president of the police union advice, evidence from experts who say that reduced laws do not reduce crime. It is only the LNP that has the priorities to ensure a safe future for Queenslanders across this state.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (5.37 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment. One crime is one too many. I will always, and have always, advocated in the strongest possible terms for my community, and the government has listened. We have some of the toughest laws in the nation. Even those opposite have voted for those amendments and changes in this parliament. When it comes to lawbreakers, especially recidivist youth offenders, we lock them up with the new legislation. The courts have the resources, the police have the resources, and we will back the police every day of the week. Those opposite have sacked police officers—they are on public record—and they would have my community believe they would have crime at zero. But guess what: there were rapes, there was domestic violence and there were stolen cars under their watch. Do not be fooled by their propaganda, because they are guilty of the same offence. Under the government there are more police in Townsville. There are more than 700 new officers, including the Rapid Action Patrol Team, which relentlessly targets offenders—just like those offenders opposite.

The government has also invested \$25 million in extreme high-visibility police patrols. If the member for Burdekin cared so much, he would visit the Townsville University Hospital, but the whole time he has been in this House he has not taken any notice of those in the Townsville University Hospital—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Use correct titles, please.

**Mr WALKER:**—who have been the victim of his leadership in this House. Under this government, we have more boots on the ground more often, and this produces real results. The community is noticing the elevated police presence. They are noticing the extra patrols through public places, including shopping centres and other places with high levels of pedestrian traffic. The police are disrupting and preventing crime. In Townsville under Operation Victor Unison, the police have conducted nearly 12,000 proactive activities. Police under this operation have caught 377 adult offenders and charged them with 862 offences. They have apprehended 388 juvenile offenders—listen up, those opposite—and charged them with 490 offences. That is a total of 765 offenders on 1,352 charges. That is making a real difference.

Do not forget that the LNP candidate I ran against in the seat of Mundingburra in 2020 stood up, on television and in public, and said that the Queensland Labor government's legislation and the work they were doing was working. He had a post on social media posing with Pauline Hanson saying that she was going to be the next prime minister. That is loyalty for you. The member for Broadwater was sent packing from the seat of Mundingburra. The member for Broadwater then stacked the branch in Broadwater and threw out his own LNP member—a female member of parliament—just so he could have a safe seat in this House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mundingburra, I will bring you back to the—

**Opposition members** interjected.


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr Krause:** He's completely irrelevant.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Scenic Rim, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Mundingburra, I will bring you back to either the amendment or the motion.

**Mr WALKER:** A new Townsville police academy will be built on the same site as the old Cowboys stadium, thanks to the member for Thuringowa for advocating for our region. There are currently nearly 600 police recruits undergoing training at the Brisbane and Townsville police academies. There are approximately 1,400 applicants in the recruitment pipeline. As part of this watershed investment in police personnel, the Police Commissioner has publicly stated that a minimum of 150 extra police

officers will be deployed to the northern region, which includes Townsville, where the seat of Mundingburra is. That would not happen if those opposite had their way. The LNP went to the last election committed to cutting the government's investment in police by more than two-thirds. They were going to slash the Queensland Police Service in Townsville by two-thirds. If the LNP had their way, that would mean more than 1,000 fewer police. Do not be fooled by the gold-plated, empty promises from those opposite.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (5.42 pm): What we have just heard is Labor's voice in Brisbane when we should have been hearing Townsville's voice here in this chamber. The people of Townsville need a strong advocate to come and represent them in this place. The people of that city have absolutely had enough of this crime crisis. We know what caused this crime crisis. It all started when the gates were opened and the legislation was watered down. We are told there is no policy. Let me suggest one policy. Section 18 of the *Youth Justice Benchmark* states—

A child should be detained in custody for an offence, whether on arrest, remand or sentence, only as a last resort and for the least time that is justified in the circumstances.

That right there is the problem. The judiciary have their hands shackled by this government. The police have their hands shackled by this government. The government will not give them the legislation that will remove these people from the streets and stop new victims being created night after night. Whether it is a tomahawk in the chest or a machete up your nose, these people are running rampant through the state. This started when police numbers were being cut by those opposite. The number of police has been going down—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr WATTS:** They were not sacked; they were put into a different department. Get your facts right. The simple fact is that the numbers of police have been going down under this government. The legislation was weakened by this government. The judiciary is shackled by this government. What we see is victim after victim after victim coming forward—whether it be from Townsville or a myriad towns across this state. This has spread because this government cannot control the crime cancer it created by unleashing these juveniles. We now have a generation of criminals bred by this government's weak legislation. They are now reaching maturity and they are going into the adult system. Finally, we might see them being able to be incarcerated after they have had multiple victims.

We know that their programs did not work. I want to read something else as well, because section 19 says—

A child detained in custody should only be held in a facility suitable for children.

This government's plan was so bad. They were so disorganised. They created this crime crisis and then they started incarcerating young children into police watch houses. They have actually started to build an extra watch house to incarcerate these children. What kind of rehabilitation are they going to get in that place? What is the chance of reducing recidivism in that place? This crime crisis has been completely created by the Labor Party. They have tried calling in the military. An ex major has done a report. They have had report after report after report. Nothing has been implemented that has been effective because they fundamentally do not believe it.

They would not come and listen to the victims in my community. They were too afraid to hear from real Queenslanders—unless it was a procured environment where they could control who was allowed to talk to them and what they were allowed to ask. We see people who are getting subsidised to put bars on their windows and deadlocks on their doors—when the bars and the deadlocks should be in detention centres that are suitably designed and built for children. If they did not come in with such a chaotic policy setting back in 2015 and 2016, they could have built the correct facilities, they could have made sure the children were getting the rehabilitation they needed and they could have unshackled the judiciary and allowed them to do their job and remove these criminals from our streets.

In the middle of a crime crisis, we see the cost of living going up everywhere. People across Queensland should check their house insurance and their car insurance. I dread to think what it is in Townsville. In Toowoomba it is bad, but in Townsville it is a crisis. What is car insurance like in Townsville for a young person who needs to get to their job in the morning? What about the deadbolts they have to buy out of their hard-earned cash or the bars they need to put on their window to try to feel secure? All this government needs to do is unshackle the judiciary, give them the ability to detain these people and punish them appropriately.



**Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (5.47 pm): What hypocrisy coming from a party that sacked police across the state. The two meagre initiatives they put up when they were in government meant that people were more likely to offend. They not only did not build any detention centres while they were in but did not plan for any detention centres. What hypocrisy to hear them rambling about what they are going to do about youth crime when they get in government.

We hear the slogans over and over again. It is absolutely ridiculous to suggest that any member of this government does not care about youth crime, or that any member of this government does not hear the plight of the victims of youth crime, or that any member of this government is not appalled by the impact of youth crime, or that the members in Townsville do not care about the impact of youth crime. As the Minister for Youth Justice my second time around, there is not a week that goes past when I do not hear from these members or see them on my doorstep. They are talking to me about what is happening in the state. They are talking to me about what is working and what is not working. They are talking to me to make sure there is evidence for what we are doing.

Next Monday, I am going with those noble members to open the Street University. I want to acknowledge the member for Thuringowa and the work he did because that is what works. All of those members—the members for Thuringowa, Mundingburra and Townsville—are on my doorstep all the time, advocating for their communities.

On a complex issue like youth crime, the people opposite are making it sound like it is pretty simple: all you do is apply their three slogans. Up until last weekend, we had 13 words and three slogans that were going to address the whole of youth crime—targeting serious repeat offenders, addressing the complex causes of crime, making sure the community is safe and supporting victims. It was going to be 13 words and three slogans. Then after the weekend I thought, ‘Oh, okay. There is a bit of a document there. What do we have here? Maybe there is a bit more substance to it.’ I had been asking them for a few more words, just so that we have a bit of an idea. But let me tell you: now that there is actually an extra—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. I will take some advice. Resume your seat, please, Minister. Members to my left, the level of interjection is far too high, particularly yelling at people making contributions, and I have to say that I am not impressed at the interjections referring to the prop. I would not go as far as to say that it is a reflection on the chair, but we have made multiple rulings in relation to that matter today.

**Ms FARMER:** Regarding this little document—and we have seen them all; they were all told, ‘Make sure that when someone gets up you hold it up so we can all see it’—I had a bit of a read of it, hoping there would be more substance. If you want to do justice to victims of youth crime, how dare you patronise them with some slick slogans. I went through this, and there are more than 13 words now. There are now 533 words which you could connect to addressing youth crime. An increase of words—520; an increase in content—zero.

Let me give some examples of what they still say. Their slogan is ‘embed consequences for actions’. The one thing you have to do is apparently introduce a breach of bail offence. Let me tell you, it was not really breach of bail when they did it. They called it that, but you were more likely to reoffend if you were convicted under that law. They actually shackled the judiciary because it was a completely unworkable law. Let me talk about the strengthening community safety laws, which they supported. We have almost 1,300 people charged with the breach of bail offence, with over 300 charges. We have nearly 1,400 charges under the unlawful use of a motor vehicle circumstance of aggravation.

Then we have ‘unshackle the judiciary’, talking about detention of last resort. Do members know what? We have more people in detention in Queensland than in any other state in Australia. We are keeping the community safe because we have strong laws. Then we have—

*(Time expired)*



**Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.53 pm): I never thought I would start a contribution on a debate by thanking the Labor Party for the huge promotion of ‘The Right Priorities for Queensland’s Future’ document. I have never seen a government so bereft of ideas that they would actually concentrate all two days of parliament—question time, ministerial statements, a motion debate today—talking about the LNP’s ‘The Right Priorities for Queensland’s Future’. They are obsessed with us. They are obsessed with our document. They are obsessed with that document because they know that after nine years they need to cling to anything to come up with ideas because they have run out of ideas. They have no ideas to fix these issues.

The minister who just spoke is now the Minister for Youth Justice again. The interview she gave on *Four Corners* should have cemented her political career as dead, buried, cremated. There is no turning back from that *Four Corners* interview. She implemented the bail houses which they then had to backtrack from. They abolished them. That minister then set up the department of youth justice with its own director-general. They then abolished the department of youth justice after that minister failed in that regard. Not to be demoted, she gets promoted and then back into the very portfolio that is most of the causal effect of the youth crime crisis we have in this state.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection. There is no prospect of promotion for any of the backbench. Not only do I take the interjection from the honourable member for Everton; it was the Premier's own comments in the media to the *Courier-Mail* that she would not say any of her backbench could be promoted, including the backbencher who is gesticulating at the moment. There is no chance, member for Thuringowa, of promotion into the Palaszczuk government's cabinet.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection. Not only is the cupboard bare of policies; the cabinet is hopeless and the backbench is hopeless. Let's look at some of the contributions from our honourable colleagues. Minister Mark Ryan started his contribution by moving an amendment to pat themselves on the back. Meanwhile, Queenslanders are saying, 'We are in a youth crime crisis. Crime has skyrocketed under the Labor Party.' The very first thing the Labor Party do is say, 'Let's pat ourselves on the back.' Sorry, Labor Party. They do not deserve to be patting themselves on the back because their record is atrocious in this regard.

In 2015-16, they started down the slippery slope of taking away tough laws in youth crime. They weakened the youth justice laws. We have fewer police on the beat now. Is it any wonder we have a youth crime crisis? The member for Townsville said that people are being held accountable; it is all rosy in his electorate. Really? I do not think so. That is not the feedback we are getting.


The member for Thuringowa talked about backing our police. Not the Minister for Transport! No-one in the Labor Party has called out the comments of the Minister for Transport, Mark Bailey, today attacking the police, attacking our hardworking police men and women on the beat. No-one in the Labor Party has called out Minister for Transport Bailey's comments on that, and that is shameful. The member for Mundingburra—

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Sandgate, you are warned under the standing orders. I have given multiple pieces of guidance on interjections.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The member for Mundingburra—aka Jean Valjean 24601. He will not even know what I am talking about—'Look down, look down.' Mr Deputy Speaker, I would put to you that the member for Mundingburra has more personal experience with the justice system than the former member for Mundingburra ever did, and maybe we would like to understand those personal experiences of watch houses and what it looks like inside a watch house, or maybe our wonderful candidate for Mundingburra was the arresting officer for the current member for Mundingburra. Who knows?

We know that the Labor Party has failed Queenslanders. We know that there are great candidates like Natalie Marr in Thuringowa and Janelle Poole in Mundingburra who are taking on the Labor Party and sticking it up the Labor Party for and on behalf of Queenslanders. The Labor Party are soft on crime. They do not have the solutions, but the LNP do because we have the right priorities for Queensland's future.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (5.59 pm): I rise to support the amended motion because this is a serious issue. No-one on this side of the House would ever say it is not. Let me tell honourable members that when I go to various meetings of ministers—education ministers, racing ministers, industrial relations ministers—they all say the same thing: this is an issue that is happening all over Australia. Queensland is not alone when it comes to these issues. However, if we listened to those opposite we would think that it is only happening in the state of Queensland.

To be serious, to blame a particular government and say that it does not care, that it is all their fault or somehow it is the orchestration of the will on our part is misleading and is playing the people of Queensland for fools. Let me tell them the people of Queensland knew all about chaos between 2012



and 2015. Those opposite know all about chaos because those who were in the House then lived through it for three years. It was absolute chaos. Let me tell honourable members if someone's career in this place should have been dead, buried and cremated, it is that of the member for Kawana. Just have a look at those opposite and what the former auditor-general said about what they brought in to address youth crime. What did they bring in? What did they say? Boot camps, beautiful! That was the solution! Direct quotes from the former auditor-general laid bare the appalling failures of this scheme, 'cost blowouts, youth absconding and an abject failure'.

**Mr Harper** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Thuringowa, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms GRACE:** The Audit Office's report states—

Services procured for the expanded boot camp trial do not represent best value.

...

The evidence indicates that suitable, lower cost service providers were available.

...

It also ultimately leaves the process of awarding the two contracts open to accusations of favouritism ...

That is what we got from those opposite. The Auditor-General even found the contract awarded to one of the service providers 'includes a 15 per cent "profit margin" and ... other costs not clearly related to service delivery.' What a shameful indictment of the LNP's signature youth crime policy. That is what we got from them. What have they done now?

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Ms GRACE:** They have elevated that person whose career should have been dead, buried, cremated—

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

**Ms GRACE:**—and is now the deputy leader. We can also look at the bikie laws. Recently—and who could forget—Campbell Newman spoke out about the failed bikie laws that were to crack down on them. Those are not my words; they are Campbell Newman's words who, I remind members, was mentor to the member for Broadwater; he said that last month. Then we have the former premier of this state, Campbell Newman, coming back to what they did on crime—

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Mermaid Beach is warned.

**Ms GRACE:**—and said in his words, not mine—

Looking back on the whole thing, I just don't believe that it was necessary.

Then they came up with all these magic possessions. They said, 'Let's have breach of bail as an offence.' Under their breach of bail—the Clayton's one they had, the one that did not work—zero people were convicted. We brought in true breach of bail. We have done it, so now they have moved on to another tangent. Now it is incarceration as a last resort, a UN convention that applies to adults, to human beings. They want to eradicate that, another magic potion on that side. They are as empty of ideas as Jann Stuckey said—and let me say it again: 'whingeing, weary, policy-vacant bunch of ageing, grumpy individuals'.

This motion that we are supporting outlines our plan, laws that those opposite supported in this House. We are doing everything we can for Townsville and everywhere in Queensland—the toughest in the country—and we will not be lectured to by those opposite.

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

**AYES, 49:**

**ALP, 49—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Palaszcuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 35:**

**LNP, 32**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

**KAP, 2**—Dametto, Katter.

**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

Pairs: McMahon, Gerber; O'Rourke, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Ring the bells for one minute.

**AYES, 49:**

**ALP, 49**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Palaszcuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 35:**

**LNP, 32**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

**KAP, 2**—Dametto, Katter.

**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

Pairs: McMahon, Gerber; O'Rourke, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House notes:

- (a) the impacts of crime on the people of Queensland and police officers;
- (b) the Palaszcuk government's continued support for victims of crime, including over \$200 million boost to enhance support for victims of crime in Queensland;
- (c) the Palaszcuk government's \$446.4 million investment to target serious repeat youth offenders, tackle the complex causes of crime and enhance community safety;
- (d) the strong advocacy of the members for Townsville, Mundingburra and Thuringowa has seen:
  - (i) for the first time in Queensland's history breach of bail condition is an offence for young offenders under the Bail Act;
  - (ii) a new serious repeat offender sentencing framework;
  - (iii) the establishment of a street university in Townsville;
  - (iv) record investments in community safety in Townsville, including the Townsville Stronger Communities initiative.
- (e) the strong advocacy of all government members for stronger laws for community safety; and
- (f) the opposition's failure to produce a detailed crime plan, despite promising one over 1,000 days ago.

## TOW TRUCK BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3254, on motion of Mr Bailey—

That the bill be now read a second time.



**Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (6.12 pm): I am very happy to speak on this very important issue. It certainly might not be as sexy as some of the issues we discuss, but late at night when you have had a little brouhaha on the side of the road or you have had an accident, tow truck drivers are essential. I put on the record that we have fantastic tow truck drivers in the Far North. They do a wonderful job, particularly in the wet season. We know there are significant challenges that Mother Nature throws at

us at that time of the year. I have spoken to a couple of tow truck drivers about this legislation. They are quite happy with the legislation and felt they had been consulted in relation to, as the minister, what is seen to be a balanced approach when it comes to some of the changes.

The seven policy objectives of the Tow Truck Bill 2023 are pretty straightforward. The first objective is to maintain the framework previously provided by the Tow Truck Act 1973 for the towing, in regulated areas of Queensland, of motor vehicles damaged in incidents, seized by police from off-street regulated parking areas or towed from private property in particular and certain circumstances. The second objective is to maintain the requirements for persons who conduct a tow truck business or are involved in operating tow trucks in regulated areas to hold an accreditation. That is known as either a certificate or licence.

The third objective is to maintain the requirement for persons who hold an accreditation to comply with duties, obligations, standards of conduct and other requirements. That is an important point.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr HEALY:** I take the interjection from the member for Logan. It is a valid point. There are some other points when talking about bribery and inducements. I know that a lot of good tow truck operators say that the quality of person is important.

The fourth objective is to modernise the existing legislation by introducing a new structure and terminology that improves consistency across accreditations administered by the Department of Transport and Main Roads. The fifth objective is to enhance the accreditation process, including the accreditation eligibility requirements. We need to make them very clear for the industry. That then makes it easier to be able to recruit more people into that line of work.

The sixth objective is to ensure that penalties and offences are targeted, but, most importantly, appropriate. The seventh objective is to modernise enforcement powers to ensure authorised officers have suitable compliance powers. This is to ensure that we have appropriate rules in place and we need to enforce them.

I read with interest that the 1973 act currently provides a framework for the towing, in regulated areas of Queensland, of motor vehicles involved in crashes, seized by police from off-street regulated parking areas or towed from private property in certain circumstances. I was not aware that it also provides a framework for the subsequent handling and storage of those vehicles, the handling of confidential information, offence provisions, enforcement provisions, and administrative and review provisions. All other forms of towing, including breakdown towing, trade towing and compliance towing, are not covered by the legislative framework. A fair bit of work was needed in this area to ensure we covered off on that. The 1973 act was revised in 1977 to incorporate police seizure towing and again in 2018 to include private property towing as a result of the independent investigation into the towing industry. Removal of vehicles was one of the key areas.

I want to touch on the fact that bribery and incentives to gain information about a crash scene or to secure a tow are practices that are not supported by the towing industry. That should come as no surprise because there are a lot of decent people in that industry doing the right thing by us. It is also important to acknowledge that those activities are not supported by the Queensland government. There are no surprises there. We are a government of integrity, unlike those opposite.

As part of the comprehensive consultation undertaken on the new legislation, the community and towing industry were asked if they supported tow truck companies using incentives to secure a motorist's approval to tow their crashed vehicle. Over three-quarters of responses from industry and the community did not support the use of incentives and inducements as they believe that this practice may lead to coercion in what is an already stressful situation to motorists. I think it is important to acknowledge this particular point. We can imagine the stress people are under if they have either hit somebody or been hit by them. They are in a heightened stress environment. Their pride and joy has been damaged and all of a sudden they have somebody there negotiating terms with them that they find a little difficult to work with. It is good to hear that over three-quarters of the industry absolutely struggles with this.


In view of this feedback, the existing bribery protections in legislation will be maintained and in some instances strengthened. It is proposed that the new tow truck regulation, currently in development, will address this behaviour by making it an offence for: one, towing accreditation holders to offer inducements to vehicle owners; two, accreditation holders to offer inducements to another person in exchange for providing information about an incident such as a crash; and, three, a person receiving a

benefit in exchange for information about an incident—for instance, using crash spotters. These are things that have traditionally given this industry a bad name. It is reassuring to know that the majority of this industry believe that this should not take place and are supportive of the government. The penalty for those offences are proposed to be consistent with similar offences that exist in the current act. That is reassuring.

Importantly, tow truck operators are already doing the right thing. The continued prohibition of bribery and incentives will have no direct impact on their operations, which, at the end of the day, is pretty important. As I said and the minister touched on, there was extensive consultation with the industry. I spoke to two operators in Cairns. I also want to acknowledge the work of the committee. I spoke to its chair, who does a fantastic job, and he was very clear in where the industry wanted to go. These things only work when the industry is consulted and it consults with government and, as the minister touched on and as the chair touched on in his address, this has been a very consultative approach.

To ensure that the industry remains informed about changes, TMR will be meeting with industry representatives in the near future to discuss the new legislation and its implementation. It is absolutely essential that the industry is aware of what changes have been made and the immediate impact they will have on it. We know for a fact that this will ensure that it will be able to adopt and employ these measures to ensure that we are all falling in line and doing what we have all agreed to. It is anticipated that a further meeting will be held in early 2024 as implementation of the changes becomes TMR's primary focus. To touch on that point, the Department of Transport and Main Roads has been all over this. It was acutely aware of the change that needed to be made.

As a result of the valuable input from the towing industry, motoring groups and the community, this bill will achieve its objectives for Queenslanders with a modern tow truck scheme that is responsive and safe and most importantly one that delivers improved outcomes for our communities. As I said at the outset, a fee for towing a vehicle from a crash scene—including loading the vehicle onto a tow truck, clearing the scene and towing for the first 50 kilometres—should not be something people have to argue about or negotiate; it is something people should be able to do quite easily when that accident takes place. This is an industry where there are a lot of good people who work very hard. As we have heard from committee members, this is also an industry that is keen to have that change. Unfortunately, we are seeing a lot more cars on the roads although the roads are getting better, and to see that we only have to look at the amazing work that our minister is doing and the growth that is happening in a wide range of areas. I am sure the statistics will be able to show whether or not drivers are better, but what I can say is that we as a government are happy to work with the towing industry to ensure that it gets better outcomes and there are better outcomes for the people of Queensland.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.22 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the Tow Truck Bill 2023. The government states that the bill will be implementing the remaining recommendations from a 2018 independent investigation into the towing industry, and that really is my first point. It has been a long time coming for this legislation to get to the committee and to this House and it was a bit rushed through the committee, so I am a little concerned by that process. I know that there were some submitters who were concerned because they did not feel that they were given adequate time, and we tried to accommodate them. I want to commend the chair. As always, he does a good job on this committee and I know that he is particularly passionate about this because when he does not fix his cars up correctly he needs a tow truck. No, I am sure that his cars are always very roadworthy. This is something that is important because when people need a tow truck they have either had an accident, which is not good, or their car has broken down on a journey and they are stuck in the middle of nowhere. As a father of two daughters, knowing that the industry has solid regulation and legislation around who is appropriate and how they are authorised and how that operates is something that I take some reassurance from.

Ultimately this bill grew out of the restricted parking enforcement and some of the mess that was created around that. It is a shame it has taken a long time and there is one area that needs to be further explored and needs to be much clearer in regulation, and that is how long impounded vehicles can be held for and at what charge, whether that is a police impoundment or other sets of circumstances. This is a significant amount of money for a vehicle that has either been damaged or stolen—and, let us face it, there are a lot of those with this government's crime crisis. Therefore, it is important that we have good regulation around this and I would hope that the regulation will set out in a very clear manner those parking charges and the circumstances and that it will be able to be used by the police and others to ensure that cars are not being held for too long.

The government's stated objective in modernising the existing legislation by introducing this new structure and terminology clearly states the main purpose of the act; clarifies what is considered regulated towing, because there are occasions where people might be moving their own vehicles or other arrangements, so clearly we need to consider what is regulated towing; and clarifies the distinction between operating a tow truck and operating a tow truck business, and that is important as well. We understand that there can be several businesses that are owned by a central business and there is not monopolistic but great control over the industry in certain areas. Everybody is aware that sometimes things can get a bit fiery around the scene of an accident as people are chasing business. These are hardworking drivers who are sitting around waiting for the call-out when someone is in their moment of need, so they are obviously chasing the business pretty hard. Regulating the method they chase that business with and what is appropriate behaviour around how to obtain that business is important.

Another stated objective of the government is to unify industry members under a new designation of accreditation to replace the terms 'licence' and 'certificate'. Anything we can do to bring clarity around who is authorised, how they are authorised and under what set of circumstances and if they are an appropriate person is all reassuring to know so that people who are stuck on the side of the road—potentially in the dark, in the rain, in the middle of nowhere—know that they have someone who is suitably meeting the requirements of a regulation turning up. I am sure that that will be good. Removing some superfluous provisions is another stated objective, so that is all fine.

There are a couple of areas that were touched on by the deputy chair that I think we could do a better job on. One of those is around EVs, whether it is through regulation or amendments at some point in the future. We know that the number of EVs is growing. We know that they need to be handled and managed differently, so it is very important that we have a methodology of ensuring appropriate training and an appropriate way of hooking up those vehicles when they need to be moved into a position of safety or away from the scene of an accident or if they have been parked illegally or whatever and they are being moved. It is important that they are handled appropriately.

One area of concern for me would be the stakeholders, and I mentioned briefly earlier that multiple stakeholders felt that they had not really been given good notice and enough time to make a decent submission, and where possible we tried to accommodate those. Given the length of time from the initial investigation to the legislation coming into this House, I think the consultation process could have been better. That really highlights that as an industry it probably does need a peak body and maybe it needs some regulation around how to set up that peak body so that it is not dominated by one set of financial interests or another. The industry needs representation. It is always useful for government to have a peak body that it can communicate with that has good, fair, open and transparent access to be able to communicate with its members, and this industry would be no different.

As I say, this is an industry that we all hope we do not need to rely on but from time to time we do. Making sure it is running smoothly, is well represented and has good communication with government to make sure its regulation and legislation is as we would require it is important. Whilst it has taken almost five years to get to this point, we are here now. Some might say the government could have built Cross River Rail in that time, but obviously this minister could not. The insurance industry was not aware of the proposed changes. Insurance companies have a lot of skin in the game, because they are the ones that are often going to be picking up the tab, depending on people's personal circumstances. Again, after such a long period of time, to not have that consultation was disappointing, although we did get an insurer make a submission to the committee and that was useful. I think it would be better with wider consultation. If at any point there are amendments put into this House to try to ensure the regulation is as we want it to be or the legislation needs adapting, a little bit of consultation by the minister and the department with those insurers would be interesting.

There are a couple of potential issues in relation to penalties imposed for damage to vehicles. The industry opposed this, as insurance can be used to protect consumers if their car is damaged by a tow truck. What we do not want to do is increase the clearance times that are taken because tow truck providers are concerned about copping a fine and a penalty as opposed to getting the traffic flowing again and/or making the environment safe. We do not want to see a situation where one accident is compounded by a second accident because of the response in moving that vehicle to a safe situation and making sure the people who are now outside the vehicle are safe. Better consultation, including with the insurance industry, a long hard look at the fees around impoundment and the setting up of a peak body can make this legislation better into the future.



**Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (6.32 pm): I support the Tow Truck Bill. I would like to thank the chair for his good work on this bill. I would also like to take a moment to acknowledge the deputy chair and his decision in relation to his future in this chamber. We spent a year together working on the agriculture committee. As members know, I represent a very agricultural electorate so I was able to teach the member for Gregory a great deal about the agriculture industry! I think I have exactly one beekeeper in Greenslopes. They are a very well represented beekeeper, let me tell members that.

Coming back to the bill, a few weeks ago while driving along Logan Road I was right behind a set of cars that had a quite significant and serious accident. It was literally right in front of me. My daughter and I were lucky not to be involved in that accident. I stopped to assist. It gave me a bit of an insight into what the people who work in the towing industry deal with on a day-to-day basis. The fires were there within minutes and the police and the ambulance were there very quickly, but the tow trucks were there really quickly as well. I saw just how distressed people who have been in a traffic accident are at that time. I have been in a couple of traffic accidents myself, but to see it as an observer was something different. I have worked with a lot of people impacted by motor vehicle accidents over the years, but usually my involvement is well after the point of accident. You can see how vulnerable people are when they are involved in an accident. I also saw what I would consider to be pretty poor behaviour from people passing the accident, which was quite shocking. People were making ridiculous comments and abusing people. It was good to see the way that the various first responders, including the people in the tow trucks, were able to manage and deal with that situation. What I also saw was how fast congestion builds up when there is an accident of that nature. Having tow trucks there within five minutes of the accident means that it would be cleared that much quicker.

In relation to this bill I note that there has been extensive consultation and that there is ongoing consultation with the towing industry. In addition to that, motoring groups and the community have been consulted about this legislation over the last couple of years. It is critical to ensure that the legislation balances the viability of the towing industry with consumer protections. I note there were industry forums and a public discussion paper, an online survey and meetings with motorist advocate groups, insurance companies, QPS and tow truck businesses. All of that takes time. When I listen to the contributions from the LNP and I read the statement of reservation, I have this confusion in my mind. On the one hand they are saying that the government have dragged their heels on this and taken too long but in the same debate they say that we have rushed this through the House. I do not see how we can take too long and rush something through at the exact same time. That indicates the quality of the shadow minister in this particular portfolio area. That would be the shadow who thought it was okay to speed through school zones a few years ago. We all remember that. Taking the time to get complex legislation right should not be something that is criticised. One would think that after their mercifully short time in government the LNP would have been well versed in the dangers of rushing things through this place.

I also note the work this bill does in relation to the maximum fee charges. As I said, it is important that we ensure customer protection, but we also need to make sure we have a viable towing industry. It is an essential service provider in our community and it needs to be able to charge reasonable fees for its services to remain viable. As I saw in the recent accident that I had to assist in, motorists are incredibly vulnerable after a crash. The government needs to ensure—and this legislation does that—that they are protected from any unscrupulous or predatory practices. To keep the towing industry viable and protect consumers this bill does a number of things, including regulating the maximum fees for towing a vehicle from a crash scene. These fees will be prescribed in the new regulations currently being drafted.

Importantly, the bill will require that a person be suitable to work in the industry. As noted, people involved in crashes are vulnerable so we need to ensure that those people who work in the industry are suitable people. The bill puts in place checks to ensure those operating within the scheme are suitable for the inevitable interactions they will have with vulnerable members of the community—and I saw those firsthand. Criminal and traffic history checks are undertaken for all operators and drivers, as well as licence checks to ensure they have appropriate licensing for the appropriate vehicles.

I note that offences that do not relate to towing have been removed from the list of relevant offences. This ensures that only those offences relevant to the towing profession are taken into account, particularly offences involving violence, abuse, theft or intimidation. I am pleased to note in the bill that the decisions that are made in relation to those matters are reviewable on request by the applicant and that there is an allowance for the applicant to seek internal review by a different decision-maker within TMR and also appeal the matter to QCAT. Overall, this is an approach that is in line with natural justice arrangements that are in place for most administrative decisions in Queensland. I am comfortable they will protect the rights of those people seeking to work in the towing industry.


The bill introduces a range of reforms that are going to be beneficial to the industry and will assist with operational efficiency. One of the things that it will do is to reduce red tape by streamlining the notifiable offences processes. As I said, notifiable offences will only include offences that are directly relevant to the towing profession. I note many industry submitters asked that the bill address dishonest and illegal practices that are sometimes seen in the industry. I can understand that. If you are a decent and honest operator, as I think the majority of people in the industry are, you would want to get rid of those people who are doing the wrong thing.

The bill provides explicit offences for a range of unacceptable activities such as using an unauthorised tow truck to carry out regulated towing activities, which could be extremely dangerous; using unauthorised holding yards to store vehicles towed as a result of regulated towing activities; and an accredited operator directing an unaccredited person in their employment to carry out regulated towing tasks. Again, someone who is not suitable for the industry, properly trained or even appropriately licensed could do great damage. I note that these changes will help to get rid of unwelcome practices and will ensure that only compliant and reputable operators continue to provide towing services and do not have to compete with shonky operators.

I note that TMR is developing an online accreditation checker that will allow operators to undertake regular checks to ensure that their drivers and assistants hold the appropriate accreditations. Probably the key thing that the bill does is to establish fair standards for operators in the scheme, which is important for maintaining industry viability.

Importantly, the bill enacts legislation that plays an important role in safeguarding the interests and safety of motorists and consumers. As noted, motorists are quite vulnerable when they have been in a motor vehicle accident. The bill ensures that the people who come to assist them by towing their vehicle do so in a manner that is safe and professional. A key mechanism for protecting those motorists is the process to ensure that a person is suitable to be accredited to operate within the tow truck scheme. As a nurse, I have operated under a similar scheme for the past 30 years. I can assure the House that those sorts of systems absolutely do provide consumer protection. I would definitely support them.

Overall, the bill appropriately balances the needs for professional and safe conduct by people in the towing industry, which I think the majority show, while providing important consumer protections during what can be a very stressful situation. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (6.42 pm): I rise to support the Tow Truck Bill 2023. It is 50 years since the original legislation was introduced into the Queensland parliament on 10 April 1973. I have beside me a good ally in the member for Bundaberg. We have a shared passion for history. Members may recall his contribution yesterday. Today we have done a little work on the Tow Truck Bill. Our Members' Reading Room has an extraordinary resource in the *Hansard* debates. We have been going through the original *Hansards*. It was an extraordinary debate; a hotly debated piece legislation.

The Hon. Kev Hooper, the member for Greenslopes and minister for transport, introduced the bill, which came with a fair bit of controversy at that time. It was hoped that the bill would achieve a number of outcomes to regulate the industry and curb some dubious practices. It was hotly debated by the member for Cairns, Mr Ray Jones, and there were some interesting contributions from Russ Hinze, the member for South Coast, and, in particular, Mr Des Frawley, the member for Murrumba. Mr Frawley made his contribution at 5.22 pm on 10 April 1973. He said—

Since this Bill was introduced I have received many telephone calls through the Parliament House switchboard from people claiming to be associated with the tow-truck industry. Most of the calls were congratulatory, a few were abusive and two bordered on being threatening. One caller said, "Someone will get a bullet over this." When I asked, "Who is the someone?", he hung up. Another caller said, "Someone will get badly hurt over this tow-truck business." When I asked "Who are you talking about, me or the towtruck operators?", he hung up.

There were some really interesting contributions.

**Mr Smith:** Rich history?

**Ms RICHARDS:** Yes, it is a rich history indeed, member for Bundaberg. I thought the following was interesting in terms of the charges and costs associated with tow truck drivers. Mr Frawley said—

In regard to the charges made by the Tow Truck Operators' Association, I must correct a statement by the honourable member for Stafford about storage charges. The first 48 hours' storage after a tow are free. No reputable tow-truck operator or member of the Tow Truck Operators' Association makes a charge for the first 48 hours. After that, the charge is \$1 a day if the vehicle is under cover and 75 cents a day for vehicles that are not under cover.

I do not think you could even find 75 cents these days. You would be pushing your luck to find 75 cents. Our Members' Reading Room contains a wealth of historical information on legislation that we have before us today and that has come before the House in years gone by. Mr Frawley went on to say—

The licensing of tow-trucks in this State is here to stay. Even though it may have taken some time to weigh all the pros and cons and to make sure that it did the right thing, the Government has brought down this Bill because it realises that the public has to be protected against the snide operators. Through the Commissioner for Transport, we intend to see that in the very near future tow-truck operators give a reputable service to the public.

There is some very interesting history in the library right next door to the chamber. That was a little bit of history that I share with everybody because I think it is really interesting. I do not think many people in this place realise the resources that we have in that little room next door and in the *Hansard* records.

The current 1973 act provides a framework for towing, in regulated areas of Queensland, motor vehicles involved in crashes, seized by police from off-street regulated parking areas or towed from private areas in certain circumstances. It also provides the framework for the subsequent handling and storage of those vehicles, the handling of confidential information, offence provisions, enforcement provisions and administrative and review provisions. This bill seeks to refresh that legislation from 50 years ago, outlined in this very big volume right beside me.

**Mr Smith** interjected.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I will not table that, member for Bundaberg. The bill seeks to refresh the current legislation. The policy objectives are: to maintain the framework previously provided in the 1973 act; to maintain the requirement for persons who conduct a tow truck business or are involved in operating tow trucks in regulated areas to hold an accreditation, currently known as a licence or a certificate, which is not too dissimilar to what we have outlined in the 1973 volume; and to maintain the requirement for persons who hold an accreditation to comply with duties, obligations, standards of conduct and other requirements. The bill also aims to modernise the existing legislation. It is 50 years old so it is probably very timely that we are continuing to do the good work that we did in 2018. I think the member for Logan, who is not in the chamber at the moment, had quite a bit to say about some of the work done at that time. The bills seeks: to modernise the existing legislation by introducing a new structure and terminology that improves consistency across accreditations administered by the Department of Transport and Main Roads; to enhance the accreditation process, including eligibility requirements; to ensure that penalties and offences are targeted and appropriate; and to modernise enforcement powers.

It is important that I cover the new elements of the bill. The committee did a great job in examining the bill.

**Mr King** interjected.


**Ms RICHARDS:** Yes, member for Kurwongbah, it did a fantastic job. The committee looked at issues regarding accreditation and offences, Department of Transport and Main Roads consultation with stakeholders—it is interesting to see some of the stakeholders who were mentioned in the 1973 debate involved in our most recent inquiry—and the bill's compliance with the Legislative Standards Act and the Human Rights Act. The committee recommended that the bill be passed and made three additional recommendations: that the minister consider what extra natural justice safeguards could be provided to ensure that part 6, division 2 of the bill has sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals in respect of the reversal of the onus of proof on provisions contained therein; that the minister consider amending the statement of compatibility to better clarify the difference between charges and convictions in contemplation of sections 31 and 32 of the Human Rights Act 2019 and further clarify that heavier weighting should apply in the chief executive's decision-making process in part 1, division 3 of the bill to the existence of a criminal conviction than to an untested criminal charge; and that the minister convene a working group of all interested truck industry stakeholders.

Many of the submissions to the committee largely supported the proposals in the bill; however, some submissions raised concerns about particular amendments and their potential impacts on the tow truck industry. The committee also questioned whether the bill did not provide sufficient natural justice safeguards. As I outlined in the government response to the committee report, it is considered that the evidentiary provisions already incorporate sufficient safeguards. These evidentiary provisions have been in place for many years and there have been no identified instances of them causing concerns related to natural justice in practical application.



The committee's third recommendation asked that consideration be given to distinguishing the difference between charges and convictions when determining suitability. In response to the committee's recommendation of establishing a working group to engage with industry stakeholders, TMR has met with tow truck industry stakeholders to discuss the new legislation.

In concluding my speech, I give a shout-out to the member for Southern Downs' son, William. He is a big tow truck fan. He loves them. He is a big *Cars* fan. The member for Southern Downs thinks I am Holly Shiftwell; I think he might be Finn McMissile. We all know that Lightning McQueen's best friend was Mater the tow truck, and I think he would think this legislation is fantastic. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (6.51 pm): I thank my good friend the member for Redlands for that reference.

**Ms Richards:** Finn McMissile.

**Mr LISTER:** Finn McMissile, yes. I am a bit of a fan of that because my kids were of that age when *Cars* and *Cars 2* were really big. My kids watched them over and over again.


**Ms Pugh:** Great movie.

**Mr LISTER:** Yes. I take that interjection from the member for Mount Ommaney; it is a great movie. My kids will probably be watching now because they wanted me to talk about Tow Mater. I think the best line was when Tow Mater said, 'Whatever you do, do not eat the free pistachio ice cream. It has turned!' Anyone who has seen that would know what I am talking about. Thank you for your indulgence, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I have a brief contribution to make on this bill. I want to make the House aware of some of the peculiarities of the tow truck business on the border in my electorate of Southern Downs. I believe that the areas the tow truck industry works in around the Gold Coast are regulated zones, but this does not include the areas in my electorate. I gained this from some correspondence I had with the minister about six months ago. The effect of that is that tow truck operators in my electorate compete with New South Wales tow truck operators, who can come into Queensland—because it is an unregulated zone—and pick up work. The Queensland tow truck operators are unable to do the same thing and pick up work by crossing the border into New South Wales. There is no accreditation required for the New South Wales operators, but Queensland operators would have to be accredited in New South Wales. That is very expensive and I believe involves regulations like wearing certain uniforms and so on.

I was speaking to the family of Jamie and Kristine Reid, who operate Warwick Towing N' Recovery in Warwick. This was one of their concerns. Wherever there is any regulation along the New South Wales-Queensland border, there tends to be complications—some of it unintended, some of it could be intended. Others are very difficult to explain all around.

One of the things I would really like to see in the future is that regulation of these sorts of things would be organised with the New South Wales government, perhaps with a future cross-border commission, to ensure the regulation of the areas does not unnecessarily disadvantage Queensland operators such as the Reids in Warwick and can keep the pests of New South Wales out of our area when there is money to be made by Queensland local family businesses.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.54 pm): I rise to speak in support of this bill. Normally I describe myself as a very proud local member for Mount Ommaney, but I am not so proud to be the local member for one of the worst blackspots in Queensland, the dreaded Jindalee Bridge, which is currently having some really significant nip-and-tuck renovations done which we are very excited about. I digress. It is much more than that. I am so glad the minister is in the House tonight, because he knows how excited I am about the Centenary Motorway upgrade. The first sheet piles were put into the river last week—big news for my community. I was lucky to be down there to watch it. The reason that is so important to this bill—anybody in this House will tell you—is that that bridge is a towie's delight right now. When we are finished with it, it is going to be anything but. It is going to be a master class in modern engineering, and my community cannot wait.

People in my community get very excited about tow truck regulation, because they are frequent flyers in my community. It is also an increasingly important issue in lots of local areas as our local streets get busier and tow trucks are called more and more frequently not just to accidents on motorways. Of course, I have two major motorways in my electorate. In addition to the Centenary Motorway I also have the Ipswich Motorway. Both of those stretches of road are frequented by towies when there are accidents. We also have local businesses that have car parks. Those car parks are at a premium. When

people outstay their welcome or when people who use car parks are not legitimate customers, towies will get a call. That is exactly why it is so important there are robust rules in place. That is exactly what this legislation seeks to do.

One of the first provisions in the bill that I want to speak to is around bribery or incentive offering. In my house, it really depends which child you ask as to whether something is a bribe or just an incentive. For the purposes of this bill, we shall use both terms. Bribery and incentives to gain information about a crash scene or to secure a tow are practices that are not supported by the towing industry or by the Queensland government. As part of the comprehensive consultation undertaken on the new legislation, the community and the industry were asked if they supported a tow truck industry company using incentives to secure a motorist's approval to tow that crashed vehicle. Over three-quarters of the responses from the industry and from the community did not support the use of incentives and inducements. The general feedback was that they believe this practice may lead to coercion in what is already a stressful situation for a motorist. Saying it is a stressful situation is probably something of an understatement in many cases.

In my community we dread that radio update that there has been an accident on the Centenary Motorway, because it means that our afternoon commute home is going to be pretty horrendous. We have to spare a thought for the poor people who have just been in that bingle and now need a tow truck. In view of this feedback, the existing bribery and incentives protections in the legislation will be maintained and in some instances will be strengthened. It is proposed that a new tow truck regulation, currently in development, will address this behaviour by: making it an offence for towing accreditation holders to offer inducements to vehicle holders and accreditation holders to offer inducements to another person in exchange for providing information about an incident such as a crash.

To expand on what that might look like, if someone is working in a location that is an accident hotspot and they happen to see these incidents on a frequent basis—they may also have that opportunity to make that call—there will be strict rules about how they can do that and the inducements they now cannot receive. In terms of a person receiving a benefit in exchange for information about an incident—I was just talking about crash spotters—the penalties for these offences are proposed to be consistent with similar offences that exist in the current act. Importantly, if tow truck operators are already doing the right thing, the continued prohibition of bribery and incentives will have no direct impact on their operations.

I am really pleased to speak about the maximum fee provisions of the bill, because there is a particular car park in Oxley that cars can get towed from in a matter of minutes. Car owners shopping there may step off site to shop at another venue, because it is a strip of shops. People may park in one of the car parks but then go to the bakery across the road and come back. They may have just been to the butcher and do not want to move their car from one side of the street to the other because they are getting bread from across the road.

Debate, on motion of Ms Pugh, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

### Kruger, Mr J



**Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (7.00 pm): We all know the old line that not all heroes wear capes. Tonight I would like to talk about the 2023 Westfield Local Hero Award winner, Mr Jeff Kruger. I rise to speak about the selfless work that Jeff has displayed in the Chatsworth area for many years.

About three or four years ago Jeff reached out to a mate who was going through a really hard time and simply suggested that they go for a walk and have a bit of a chat. From the kernel of this very kind act and gesture more than 750 men have connected over the past couple of years, with over 60 men participating in weekly walks, walking and talking. Jeff is the co-founder and treasurer of Men's Walk & Talk, a not-for-profit community group that regularly meets in two locations. Walk, talk and connect is about men supporting each other in a healthy environment. I can personally vouch for the fact that the group meets literally every Sunday morning rain, hail or shine in my local patch at Minnippi Parklands at Carindale.


In addition to this activity Jeff also supports mental health in our local community. Monthly Men's Health Mind Workshops run in conjunction with the Hope Hubs at Westfield Carindale, and through these workshops participants are linked with professionals who provide mental health first aid training. Those in need are also connected with counsellors and psychologists who provide additional support. Westfield Carindale have awarded a community grant of \$20,000 to help Jeff and Men's Walk & Talk

to greater assist those in need in our local community. Men's Walk & Talk will use the funds to register as a charity and fund 30 counselling sessions for at-risk community members. Men's Walk & Talk is dedicated to running mental health awareness events and raising funds for local charities and community groups.

To quote Jeff, 'When I started this journey I would have been happy to help one person, but to have started something that has had such a positive impact on our community is amazing.' I have actually observed this firsthand. Over the last couple of years I have attended maybe three or four, sometimes five a year, and I have literally seen men who, when you go for that first walk, pretty much say nothing. If you go back three or four months later and you happen to be walking with that same gentleman, it is just amazing how much they have indeed come out of their shell. It really has made a huge difference to so many lives.

When I am asked what the favourite part of my job is, it really is getting involved in the local community with groups such as this. There were many people up against Jeff for this local hero award. He was honoured to win it, and I take this opportunity to congratulate Jeff Kruger.

### Nudgee Electorate


 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (7.03 pm): One of my favourite parts of being a local member is engaging with young people across my electorate and listening to their thoughts on current issues, the challenges they are experiencing and their hopes and dreams for the future. So often these conversations are made possible by the regular contact we have as local members with local schools and community groups. For me, these conversations are also made possible by my Nudgee Youth Advisory Council, now in its third year.

Throughout the year I have had the invaluable insight of 11 young locals, some in their senior years of high school, some in university and some who have joined the workforce full-time. We have discussed their experiences and concerns with vaping, our democratic processes of voting in a referendum and what it means as an Australian to have your say in what our founding document looks like. They have raised a number of issues that concern them as young people—from mental health, to consent education and action in schools—and as their representative in parliament I am thankful to them for their honesty and for lending their voices to the deep issues we are considering in government. I am looking forward to hosting them here in parliament on Thursday evening and wrapping up another successful year for the Nudgee Youth Advisory Council.

I also recently wrapped up my Nudgee Small Business Awards, which I established during COVID to rally our community behind our local small businesses and their amazing staff during what was a very difficult time for all. Of course, my wonderful community needed no convincing, and each year since it has been so heartening to see the many thousands and thousands of votes flood in in appreciation of our local small business community—from Phil's Fruit and Veggies, a business run out of the Nundah home of Phil and Colleen, who source fresh, quality produce at an affordable price to help our local community manage national cost-of-living pressures, to businesses like the Closet, an online preloved clothing store offering an innovative solution to the impact of the fashion industry on the environment. There are so many amazing small businesses across my electorate, and I love shining a light on each of them each year with these awards.

In my new role as environment minister I was proud to introduce into the awards this year the Leanne Linard Sustainability Award, nominated by my community but selected by myself and my hardworking electorate team, for a business that strives to incorporate sustainable, circular economy principles into their business practices. It has been my absolute pleasure over the last week or so to deliver the good news to the winners in person, and I will be looking forward to announcing who they are next week. Thank you to all the amazing constituents in my electorate of Nudgee for always supporting local and each year showing their appreciation for the backbone of our local and Queensland economy: our small businesses and their hardworking teams.

### Nanango Electorate; Drought, Bushfires

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (7.06 pm): Drought is not on the way: it is already here, and it has been for many months. Primary producers across my electorate of Nanango have been dealing with drought conditions for some time, and I note that this is spread over much of southern Queensland. These ongoing extremely dry conditions are being experienced from Somerset to the Gympie region in the north. I know that these conditions will extend across many parts of Queensland.

I have recently written to the minister for agriculture, calling out for our local drought committee to be reconvened to consider an early drought declaration; however, the response I received did not address this request. While I understand there is currently a review of how drought declarations are made, I say to the minister that while he is happy to wait for this review to be released, people who are living in the daily grip of drought cannot wait. Landholders need to know what is going on. Thanks to the Palaszczuk government, we no longer have a dedicated DAF employee within the South Burnett. They have sacked them, got rid of them. The Palaszczuk government needs to know this is a dire situation that will be recognised, and I call on the minister for agriculture to act.

Turning to another topic, I would like to extend my deep condolences to the families who have lost loved ones as a result of the current fires in and around Tara. My thoughts are for those landholders whose livelihoods have been wrecked because of those devastating fires. Not only are these landholders dealing with starving livestock and dry dams; some have been hit with bushfires across my electorate, destroying farming infrastructure and whatever precious feed they may have still had in the paddock. This occurred a few weeks ago in the Cooyar region of the Nanango electorate. I would like to acknowledge Ted and Rosalie Cole, Rowena and Shane Gibson, Gavin and Christine Close and Paty and Lloyd Muller—property owners who have lost fences, cattle yards, sheds, tanks, timber and other much needed infrastructure in this fire. There are many others who were also affected. I know that the Cooyar region has been extremely hard-hit by this event.

I spoke with rural firey Wayne Scheff, who told me the fire was very fast moving, with local wind gusts up to 73 kilometres an hour. Nearly 2,000 acres was burned in only a couple of hours, and it was only through the rural fires' determination that it was stopped before entering into dense bushland and locals' homes. I certainly know that Ted and Rosalie are very lucky their home is still standing.

I also thank local Cooyar police officer Olivia Hetherington who has been invaluable in keeping everyone safe during and after the fire. I am calling on QFES and the Labor government to acknowledge this Cooyar fire as a local disaster event so these property owners can access the assistance that the Deputy Premier is giving to other regions which have been declared, like Deepwater, Baffle Creek and Tara. I believe the Cooyar area also should be declared.

### **Mansfield Electorate, Infrastructure**



**Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (7.09 pm): I am very proud today to share the exciting updates on school infrastructure and the Eight Mile Plains Satellite Hospital investment that will significantly enhance the Mansfield community. As a former school leader and educator, I know the importance of investing in teachers, the teaching and learning process, and school infrastructure for my community.


I am delighted to reveal that Mackenzie state school will be receiving a fantastic upgrade, with the installation of outdoor lighting for its sports field. This project will better enable community involvement and encourage our young people to stay active and engaged. We have grand plans for Upper Mount Gravatt State School to expand the school's parking facilities by adding a substantial 28 new spaces that will not only ease congestion but make the school drop-off safer and quicker. In total, we aim to provide 52 parking spaces for staff and visitors, all connected by pedestrian pathways and protected by an acoustic screen fence to ensure harmony with our neighbours.

Since being elected in November 2017, I have delivered more than \$200 million to our local schools. These investments include: \$16.2 million for Rochedale State High School to deliver a new hall as part of my 2020 election commitment; \$11.1 million for Wishart State School to build new classrooms; and \$600,000 for Rochedale State School to refurbish their administration block. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister for Education on her commitment to the children of Queensland. The Palaszczuk government has a clear vision for education. We believe that a quality education transforms lives. It is the best investment that we can make for the future of Queensland and for the future prosperity of our great state.

Shifting our focus to health care, we celebrate the extraordinary commitment of the Palaszczuk government to the Eight Mile Plains Satellite Hospital—a game-changing addition to our community. This facility features a brand new minor injury and illness clinic, offering urgent care to patients facing non-life-threatening illnesses and minor injuries. The satellite hospital will offer services including medical imaging, renal dialysis, chemotherapy and 280 weekly appointments. Walk-in urgent care services will be free for Medicare holders. We have tailored the operational hours to meet our community's needs. For the minor injury and illness clinic, it is 8 am to 10 pm seven days a week.

The above demonstrates my unwavering commitment to enhancing Mansfield's school infrastructure and health care. These updates signify our dedication to a safer, more prosperous and healthier community. I will continue to work tirelessly towards a better future for the Mansfield electorate.

### Redlands Electorate

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (7.12 pm): For everybody in this chamber, our year 12s are heading into their exam period for the next two weeks. I think everybody in this chamber is going to wish every year 12 student in their electorate the very best of luck. I had the opportunity to talk to our year 12 students at Victoria Point State High School on Friday. They were all very excited to be heading into their last two weeks, but I think they are probably a bit more excited about their formal at the end of that period.

I want to take this opportunity to give a shout-out to Jarrod at our Macleay Island State School. He runs the playgroup out there, the Buzzing Bees.

**A government member** interjected.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Too many Jarrods! He does an absolutely fantastic job. He has over 40 little ones in that playgroup. They are providing that gateway into our school system. Jarrod is doing a fantastic job on Macleay Island. I give a shout-out to our Russell Island State School. We are delivering kindy in the state school setting. It is the only place in South-East Queensland that is doing that. They are doing a fantastic job in their beautiful new buildings delivered by the Palaszczuk government. That is an absolutely fantastic opportunity for our young kindergarten students to get that lead into prep.


When we talk about education, there is so much happening in the Redlands. I give a shout-out to our new Scenic Shores State School which is set to open in term 1 in 2024. Our government is planning to make sure we have the infrastructure in place for growth. To Principal Hendriks and Deputy Principal Bunce, you are doing a fantastic job. I cannot wait to see what that looks like when we open in term 1 next year. There is a lot of work in that education space.

We know that there are a lot of bushfires happening across Queensland at the moment. I give a shout-out to our rural firefighters. My Russell Island rural firefighters dealt with another house fire on Russell Island last week. They did a fantastic job. To everybody who is on the front line of any fire anywhere in Queensland, I say thank you for your service to our community. We are very blessed for that service. They do an amazing job.

I also give a shout-out to the Macleay Island Progress Association that is doing a fantastic job with some renovation works at the Progress Hall. They had Bernie's Market on the weekend. It was a fantastic opportunity to talk to the locals, and very delicious coffee and cakes were had that morning. I give a shout-out to James and the team.

Finally, I want to again reflect on the amazing jetty terminals. Minister Bailey, those terminals are transformative for the four Southern Moreton Bay Islands. That is \$46 million worth of brand new jetty terminals for our island community. I am so proud of the work we are delivering right across the Redlands.

### St Paul's School

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (7.15 pm): St Paul's School is situated at Bald Hills just outside of my electorate. Many past and present students and parents are my constituents. For the past 15 years the college has been expertly led by award-winning principal Dr Paul Browning who, after the school featured in the royal commission into child sex abuse, was instrumental in restoring its good name as he reached out to sexual abuse survivors.

In May 2022 the chair of the Anglican Schools Commission, the ASC, Bishop Jeremy Greaves, and the executive director, Sherril Butterworth, met the school council to discuss Dr Browning's contract that was due to expire at the end of 2023. An extract of the minutes of that meeting states—

Sherril Butterworth advised it was clear Paul Browning was very experienced and knew how to run a school, and that it would therefore not be necessary to undertake the comprehensive process outlined in his current contract. She felt a process involving self-reflection based around his vision for the future, coupled with a 360 survey would be adequate.

A few months later the school council, after following the direction of the ASC, unanimously recommended Dr Browning be offered a further five-year contract. The 360 review came back with an 89 per cent approval of Dr Browning's work. In March 2023 the Anglican Schools Commission informed

the school council it was sacking Dr Browning, despite never contacting the school council in the six months following the recommendation to reappoint him. After the school council continued to press for an explanation, they themselves were sacked.

In September 2023, again with no discussion with the parent community, the ASC terminated Dr Browning's employment early, effective from the end of term 3. To say that the aforementioned actions shocked the school community is an understatement. They were and remain devastated. Here is an excerpt from a letter from a year 12 student describing the impact on the student body—

The uncertainty and disruptions caused by this decision have left many of us feeling adrift, anxious, and unsure of what the future holds for our school community. It has affected our morale and confidence at a time when we should be celebrating our accomplishments and looking forward to a promising future.


I table that letter.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, undated, from an anonymous student regarding the decision by the Anglican Church not to renew the contract of the Principal of St Paul's School, Dr Paul Browning [1761].

Putting aside any arguments about the merits of the decision made by the ASC, the process not to renew Dr Browning and then finish him early has been abysmal. I call on the education minister to heed the submission made by the school community to the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board. Minister, do the command and control actions of the ASC over the last 12 months meet the governance standards and practices of a modern education institution?

*(Time expired)*

### Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry


 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (7.18 pm): Tonight I want to talk about being an influencer and being able to influence the odds for the better for people with blood cancers. I urge every member of this House to reach out to their communities and encourage people from the age of 18 to 35 to register as bone marrow donors with the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry. People with ethnic or Indigenous heritage are under-represented on the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry. There is a lot of misconception around the process of being a donor. However, it is as simple as donating blood.

Cancer is a disease that affects the lives of many Queenslanders, either directly or indirectly, with tens of thousands of people diagnosed with cancer each year. I recently attended the event hosted by the amazing people at Simply Human—Superheroes without Capes. They shared their story and they also explained that when many of us hear the words cancer, leukaemia, bone marrow and other medical terms we do not really understand them. Organisations like Simply Human offer support to diverse communities including overseas students, the elderly and the vulnerable.

Perna Pahwa, the founder of Simply Human, knows there is a lack of understanding surrounding blood stem cell—also known as bone marrow—transplants. She realised that a person's ethnic background has a big impact on finding a match. Simply Human meets a gap in support systems. They provide ongoing and needed support to patients and their families in Australia, knowing that no-one should go through the trauma of dealing with cancer alone. Simply Human is about being human, our similarities as well as our differences. Facing hardship in difficult times can bring out the humanness and the kindness in us all.

I urge everyone to be a superhero, with or without a cape, and help save lives. I repeat: I ask you to be an influencer—an influencer in your community to encourage people to get on the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry.

### Bushfire Preparedness

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (7.21 pm): I rise to address the vital issue of bushfire preparedness. In a bushfire prone state like ours, it is hard to understand how government authorities are still failing to keep communities safe. Queensland should have been well and truly bushfire ready by now. Instead, we find ourselves yet again on the back foot when it comes to bushfire preparedness.

Today there are more than 40 bushfires raging across the Western and Darling Downs of Queensland, with warnings issued for the Scenic Rim, Gympie, Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay, Cook shire, Aurukun and Mount Isa. Out-of-control blazes have destroyed homes, sheds and cars and, sadly, at least two people have lost their life. The government should have been doing much more to prevent, or at least mitigate, the severity of these bushfires. Instead, they have been cutting back on proven safety measures all year.


In 2022, Operation Cool Burn was replaced with a new, more 'sustainable', fire management strategy called Operation Sesbania. It is working—not! According to QFES, Operation Sesbania was 'changing the way Queensland communities prepare for bushfires'. It was the bushfire safety manager who said there is huge change in mindset about how we do business. Controlled burns in the winter months to prepare for summer were seen as 'old hat' under the new model. 'Mitigation strategies' are now run throughout the year and include everything from community engagement and education programs to investments in state-of-the-art green technologies and surveillance and monitoring infrastructure.

At estimates, the QFES commissioner said that the state had 'moved to a different way of running our risk mitigation programs'. He said from 1 January through to 7 August 2023, QFES had carried out 630 'mitigation activities'. What he did not say was that these 'mitigation activities' comprised many different programs, not all of which involved the traditional slashing, back-burning and cool burns that have proved so effective in the past and actually worked. This failure was repeated at a press conference the following month, when he reassured the public that since January QFES had overseen more than 530 hazard reduction burns.

The ABC subsequently revealed the commissioner had provided incorrect and inflated numbers for the operations his department had undertaken to reduce bushfire risk. It turned out that the figure of 530 had been inflated by QFES by including other activities such as community engagement and training programs. An updated figure was provided by QFES which claimed it had carried out 418 burns, totalling 666,000 hectares. Compare that to the 1.03 million hectares in the 2018-19 financial year ahead of the 2019 bushfires. Commissioner Leach also said hazard reduction burns were up by 300 on 2022, which was also later revised downwards to 281.

Hazard reduction activities are a major part of controlling the fuel load in our state. We have to do it. Kabra just got caught the other day with an Ergon fire. Animal welfare is the major concern here as well as infrastructure and the livelihoods and lives of people. It is not happening.

### **Acacia Coffee Co.; Seniors Month**


 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (7.24 pm): The Algeria electorate is home to some incredible local businesses that do not just deliver a service but embed themselves in the fabric of our community. One such business is Acacia Coffee Co., which is a small business in Acacia Ridge at the top end of my electorate of Algeria. In the early hours of this morning that business was destroyed completely by fire. Police are treating this incident as suspicious and are appealing for anyone who may have information to call Crime Stoppers. I spoke to Kym this morning, who is rightfully devastated and incredibly upset about what has happened. I wish her all the very best.

This month is Queensland Seniors Month and it has been great to see so many local groups in my electorate of Algeria celebrate the occasion. This year's Seniors Month theme is celebrating social connection and is an opportunity to connect people who otherwise might be at risk of experiencing social isolation and loneliness. We also know that elderly Queenslanders are most at risk of falling victim to scams. That is why I joined with the member for Logan to co-host a seniors safety afternoon tea. I want to thank the member for Logan for taking on the role of emcee at the event. The event was attended by more than 60 seniors, who gained valuable insight into how to stay safe online.

I would like to acknowledge Lynette from the Office of Fair Trading, who gave a presentation to spread awareness about scam messages and phishing attempts, especially as we come into the holiday season. I would like to acknowledge Jade from Smart Service Queensland, who provided key cost-of-living supports that are available to seniors who are dealing with the national rise in cost-of-living pressures including: the combined \$1,072 rebate, the 50 per cent reduction in public transport services and long distance train travel, the 50 per cent reduction in vehicle registration, free dental treatments including the provision of dentures at public clinics and hospitals, and the Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme which provides funding for a range of aids and equipment. Queensland seniors can also visit locations across the Queensland Museum network, the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art exhibitions at a discounted rate. These concessions are just some of the ways the Palaszczuk government is supporting Queensland seniors.

Seniors from the Algester electorate also gained insight from Lou from the Queensland Police Service about increasing their awareness of home safety and decreasing the risk of break-ins and theft. Key elements include simple tips like locking front, back and side doors and garages and, of course, ensuring people look out for their neighbours. I am conducting another one of these forums later this week. I support seniors to come along and learn more about being safer.

### Ninderry Electorate

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (7.27 pm): It is no surprise that two of the biggest issues impacting my constituents in Ninderry are crime and cost of living. Every day I hear from locals who are concerned about the increasing cost of living, whether it be skyrocketing rents, the cost of groceries, electricity prices or fuel. Similarly, locals are becoming increasingly concerned about their own security, having been a victim of crime themselves or knowing someone who has. It is becoming increasingly clear that the Palaszczuk government has given up on both of these issues.

Earlier this week we heard about the extraordinary admission that they have exhausted all their options when it comes to youth crime. I am pleased to be appointed to the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee that has been charged with going back to the drawing board when it comes to this serious issue. Having been on the front line when the Palaszczuk government started watering down the laws back in 2015, I saw firsthand the impact of their soft-on-crime approach.

My LNP colleagues and I know other members of the committee are determined that this will not simply be another talkfest. We need to hear from those on the front line—our hardworking police and prosecutors who are the ones charged with executing our laws. This government's obsession with only listening to so-called experts, academics and bureaucrats has failed miserably. It is time to start listening to victims and our frontline staff in police, education, youth justice and other partner agencies.

I would also like to place on the record some other significant events on the Sunshine Coast. The first is the annual Walk for Daniel on this Friday, which I know many of my colleagues on both sides of the House will be attending. Thanks to unwavering dedication and commitment of Daniel's parents, Bruce and Denise Morcombe, an unfathomable tragedy has evolved into what is now the Daniel Morcombe Foundation—a hallmark for child safety and protection across the country.

Another event is the Diwali festival I attended on Saturday night. I acknowledge our proud Indian community which celebrated their annual Diwali Festival of Lights on the weekend. The president of the Sunshine Coast Indian Association, Vas, and his team hosted a fantastic event at Aussie World on Saturday, where we all came together to honour this important annual ceremony to mark the start of the Hindu new year.

Finally, I acknowledge Ros and Michael White of the award-winning White's IGA group on the Sunshine Coast who this weekend will celebrate an impressive 30 years in business. From their first NightOwl store in Maroochydore to a growing network of six supermarkets that stretch from one end of the coast to the other, they are known not only for their generosity to each and every community that they serve but their unique focus on local and sustainable produce. Congratulations on a wonderful achievement.

I look forward to seeing colleagues on this side of the House and across the chamber this Friday morning for the Walk for Daniel.

The House adjourned at 7.30 pm.

### ATTENDANCE

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