



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Tuesday, 14 November 2023

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TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2023

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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



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

ASSENT TO BILLS



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

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

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

Date of Assent: 2 November 2023

A Bill for an Act to consolidate and provide for the law relating to property, and to amend this Act, the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, the Building Units and Group Titles Act 1980, the Land Title Act 1994, the Limitation of Actions Act 1974, the Property Occupations Act 2014 and the Acts mentioned in schedule 3 for particular purposes, and to repeal the Property Law Act 1974

A Bill for an Act to regulate the operation of tow trucks to remove motor vehicles from private property and damaged and seized motor vehicles, to amend this Act, the Photo Identification Card Act 2008, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 for particular purposes, and to repeal the Tow Truck Act 1973

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

Yours sincerely

Governor

2 November 2023

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 2 November 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor to the Speaker advising of assent to certain bills on 2 November 2023 [[1866](#)].

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Absence of Members



Mr SPEAKER: I have received advice that the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water, the member for Gladstone, Hon. Glenn Butcher MP, will be absent from this week's sittings of the House. I have also received advice that the member for Ipswich, Ms Jennifer Howard MP, will be absent from this week's sittings. The members' notifications comply with standing order 263A.

Acoustic Assessment in Chamber




Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to advise that today I have agreed to an acoustic assessment of the Legislative Assembly chamber. This relates to the current project to replace the ageing infrastructure and improve the audio experience within the chamber. The project installation is

scheduled during the December-January period. The assessment will involve the placement of an acoustic analyser and microphone on the table of the House for part of today to capture data, allowing for an acoustic assessment of the chamber. This assessment will occur again during the first—

Mr Bleijie interjected.


Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Kawana, I am making a statement. This assessment will occur again during the first sitting weeks of 2024, after the new solution has been implemented, allowing for validation of success criteria. It is not the intention to pick up any ambient noise, but members should be aware that any conversation that could be heard at the table could be picked up by the acoustic analyser. The device will be removed during the lunchbreak today. All data collected from these acoustic assessments will be deleted at the completion of the project.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to acknowledge the presence in the gallery today of a visiting delegation from Jiangsu Province in China.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

School Group Tours

 **Mr SPEAKER:** I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery today by students and teachers from: All Saints' School Boonah in the electorate of Scenic Rim; Clover Hill State School in the electorate of Mudgeeraba; Redbank Plains State High School in the electorate of Bundamba; and Assisi Catholic College in the electorate of Coomera.

PETITIONS

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

Burnett Electorate, Mineral Development Licence Application 3040

Mr Bennett, from 1,430 petitioners, requesting the House to prevent Mineral Development License Application 3040 from commencing in the Burnett [[1852](#)] [[1853](#)].

Darling Downs, Ophthalmology Services

Mr Weir, from 1,366 petitioners, requesting the House to provide local care for acute ophthalmology patients in the Darling Downs Health Service area [[1854](#)] [[1855](#)].

Gillnet Fishing

Mr Dametto, from 9,961 petitioners, requesting the House to develop a balanced solution that protects the Great Barrier Reef whilst allowing sustainable fishing practices including N2 inshore gillnet licences, and to properly reimburse fishers for the resumption of their business enterprises [[1856](#)] [[1857](#)].

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

Hope Island Railway Station, Parking

834 petitioners, requesting the House to increase the parking capacity at Hope Island Train Station by 500 carparks; implement a shuttle bus service to the train station; and preserve the remaining area of Mangrove Jack Park [[1858](#)] [[1859](#)].

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

Western Brisbane, State High School

Dr Rowan, from 1,422 petitioners, requesting the House to build a new high school in western Brisbane [[1860](#)].

Warrego Electorate, Infrastructure

Ms Leahy, from 335 petitioners, requesting the House to address the narrow sections and poor condition of the Mitchell St George Road, eight to 25 kilometres south of, Mitchell [[1861](#)].

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

Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

3,836 petitioners, requesting the House to block the Criminal Code and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 [[1862](#)].

Deongwar State Forest

856 petitioners, requesting the House to cease logging Deongwar State Forest and to transition it to the conservation estate [[1863](#)].

Rent Stabilisation Policy

1,261 petitioners, requesting the House to implement a rent stabilisation policy [[1864](#)].

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

PAPERS TABLED DURING THE RECESS (SO 31)

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

27 October 2023—

- [1780](#) Ethics Committee: Report No. 219, 57th Parliament—Annual Report 2022-23
- [1781](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 52, 57th Parliament—Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023
- [1782](#) State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 48, 57th Parliament—Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023
- [1783](#) Queensland Mine Rehabilitation Commissioner—Annual Report 2022-23
- [1784](#) Annual Report on the administration of the Marine Parks Act 2004—1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023
- [1785](#) Domestic and Family Violence Death Review and Advisory Board—Annual Report 2022-23
- [1786](#) Transmax—Annual Report 2022-2023

30 October 2023—

- [1787](#) Medicines and Poisons Act 2019: Extended Practice Authority 'Pharmacists' (Version 4)
- [1788](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 52, 57th Parliament—Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023: Erratum

31 October 2023—

- [1789](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 53, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 14 June 2023 and 22 August 2023
- [1790](#) Queensland's Category 2 Water Authorities—Consolidated Annual Report 2022-23
- [1791](#) Queensland's River Improvement Trusts—Consolidated Annual Report 2022-23
- [1792](#) Dumaresq-Barwon Border Rivers Commission—Annual Report 2022-2023

1 November 2023—

- [1793](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on Singapore overseas mission by the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure, Hon. Dr Steven Miles, 24-29 September 2023

3 November 2023—

- [1794](#) Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 41, 57th Parliament—Annual Report 2022-23
- [1795](#) Response from the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure (Hon. Dr Miles), to an ePetition (3902-23) sponsored by the member for South Brisbane, Dr MacMahon, from 3,909 petitioners, requesting the House to protect Raymond Park and East Brisbane State School and scrap the Gabba redevelopment

6 November 2023—

- [1796](#) Land Court of Queensland—Annual Report 2022-23
- [1797](#) Land Tribunal—Annual Report 2022-23
- [1798](#) Department of Agriculture and Fisheries: Code of Practice for the Management and Control of Panama disease tropical race 4 on an Infested Property in Queensland

7 November 2023—

- [1799](#) Economics and Governance Committee: Report No. 54, 57th Parliament—Annual Report 2022-23
- [1800](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 58, 57th Parliament—Annual Report 2022-23
- [1801](#) Legal Affairs and Safety Committee: Report No. 59, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 23 August and 12 September 2023

8 November 2023—

[1802](#) Queensland Integrity Commissioner—Annual Report 2022-23

[1803](#) Response from the Minister for Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts (Hon. Enoch), to an ePetition (3881-23) sponsored by the Clerk under the provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 333 petitioners, requesting the House to assist the Message of the Cross Indigenous Corporation (Campfire Healing) group continue to operate

[1804](#) Response from the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women (Hon. Fentiman), to a paper petition (3966-23) presented by the member for Burdekin, Mr Last, from 1,155 petitioners, requesting the House to install a CT scanner at the Ayr Hospital

9 November 2023—

[1805](#) Response from the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure (Hon. Dr Miles), to an ePetition (3919-23) sponsored by the Clerk under the provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 5,373 petitioners, requesting the House to recognise buses, tiny homes on wheels and caravans as permanent housing choices and allow rural land owners to host tiny housing

[1806](#) Response from the Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice (Hon. Farmer), to an ePetition (3921-23) sponsored by the member for Theodore, Mr Boothman, from 3,885 petitioners, requesting the House to implement a range of measures to address youth crime

[1807](#) Response from the Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing (Hon. Grace), to an ePetition (3903-23) sponsored by the member for South Brisbane, Dr MacMahon, from 3,069 petitioners, requesting the House to plan for a school in East Brisbane and Kangaroo Point to create a lasting positive legacy for this community

[1808](#) Response from the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement (Hon. de Brenni), to an ePetition (3929-23) sponsored by the Clerk under the provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 246 petitioners, requesting the House to review and amend the draft Queensland Development Code MP 4.1 version 1.14

[1809](#) Response from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services (Hon. Bailey), to an ePetition (3897-23) sponsored by the Clerk under the provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 941 petitioners, requesting the House to make first aid training a compulsory part of gaining a driver's license in Queensland at no extra cost to the license holder

10 November 2023—

[1810](#) Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 42, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 14 June 2023 and 22 August 2023

[1811](#) Health and Environment Committee: Report No. 43, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 23 August 2023 and 12 September 2023

[1812](#) Public Trustee Advisory and Monitoring Board—Annual Report 2022-23

[1813](#) State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 49, 57th Parliament—Annual Report 2022-23

13 November 2023—

[1814](#) Response from the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities (Hon. Furner), to an ePetition (3959-23) sponsored by the Clerk under the provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 1,316 petitioners, requesting the House to end the logging of Deongwar State Forest and transition it to the conservation estate

[1815](#) Response from the Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice (Hon. Farmer), to a paper Petition (3968-23) presented by the Clerk under provisions of Standing Order 119(3), and an ePetition (3934-23) sponsored by the Clerk under the provisions of Standing Order 119(4), from 665 and 869 petitioners respectively, requesting the House to consult with the local community and residents to find a more appropriate site than Edmonton to locate a youth detention centre

[1816](#) Legal Services Commission—Annual Report 2022-23

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

The following statutory instruments were tabled by the Clerk—

Racing Integrity Act 2016:

[1817](#) Racing Integrity Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 150

[1818](#) Racing Integrity Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 150, explanatory notes

[1819](#) Racing Integrity Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 150, human rights certificate

National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Act 2014:

[1820](#) National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 151

[1821](#) National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 151, explanatory notes

[1822](#) National Energy Retail Law (Queensland) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 151, human rights certificate

Medicines and Poisons Act 2019:

- [1823](#) Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2023, No. 152
- [1824](#) Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2023, No. 152, explanatory notes
- [1825](#) Medicines and Poisons (Medicines) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 2023, No. 152, human rights certificate

Criminal Code (Serious Vilification and Hate Crimes) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023:

- [1826](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 153
- [1827](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 153, explanatory notes
- [1828](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 153, human rights certificate

Health and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023:

- [1829](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 154
- [1830](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 154, explanatory notes
- [1831](#) Proclamation commencing certain provisions, No. 154, human rights certificate

Recording of Evidence Act 1962:

- [1832](#) Recording of Evidence Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2023, No. 155
- [1833](#) Recording of Evidence Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2023, No. 155, explanatory notes
- [1834](#) Recording of Evidence Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 2023, No. 155, human rights certificate

State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971:

- [1835](#) State Development and Public Works Organisation (Julia Creek—Richmond Critical Minerals Zone Water Delivery Options) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 156
- [1836](#) State Development and Public Works Organisation (Julia Creek—Richmond Critical Minerals Zone Water Delivery Options) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 156, explanatory notes
- [1837](#) State Development and Public Works Organisation (Julia Creek—Richmond Critical Minerals Zone Water Delivery Options) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 156, human rights certificate

Industrial Relations Act 2016:

- [1838](#) Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Amendment Rule 2023, No. 157
- [1839](#) Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Amendment Rule 2023, No. 157, explanatory notes
- [1840](#) Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Amendment Rule 2023, No. 157, human rights certificate

Health and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023:

- [1841](#) Health and Other Legislation Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2023, No. 158
- [1842](#) Health and Other Legislation Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2023, No. 158, explanatory notes
- [1843](#) Health and Other Legislation Amendment (Postponement) Regulation 2023, No. 158, human rights certificate

Radiation Safety Act 1999:

- [1844](#) Radiation Safety Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 159
- [1845](#) Radiation Safety Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 159, explanatory notes
- [1846](#) Radiation Safety Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 159, human rights certificate

Rural and Regional Adjustment Act 1994:

- [1847](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Primary Producer Flood Management Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 160
- [1848](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Primary Producer Flood Management Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 160, explanatory notes
- [1849](#) Rural and Regional Adjustment (Primary Producer Flood Management Grants Scheme) Amendment Regulation 2023, No. 160, human rights certificate

Queensland Veterans' Council Act 2021:

- [1850](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 161
- [1851](#) Proclamation commencing remaining provisions, No. 161, explanatory notes

MINISTERIAL PAPER


The following ministerial paper was tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for Resources (Hon. Stewart)—

- [1865](#) Survey and Mapping Infrastructure Act 2003: Cadastral Survey Requirements (Version 8.01)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Bushfires


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.36 am): This past month, Queenslanders have battled more than 1,000 bushfires. They have burned from the border to the cape. Tragically, four lives have been lost including three firefighters whose plane crashed near Cloncurry. Among them was a young American who had joined the firefighting effort in Australia simply because he wanted to help. He was part of a team performing fire mapping that undoubtedly saved lives. We owe them a debt we can never repay.

Although 74 homes are confirmed lost, along with 62 sheds and 12 mobile homes, they do not tell the whole story of these fires. They do not tell of the 387 homes that were saved. They do not tell of the skill and courage of more than 1,000 firefighters who once again ran towards danger and risked their lives to save others, or the 74 drops our large aerial tanker made to protect lives and properties. These heroes—many of them volunteers—came from as far as Victoria and New Zealand to give our Queensland firefighters a much needed break. They do not tell of the police who went door to door to warn people to get out and seek safety. They do not reflect the outpouring of help I saw in evacuation and neighbourhood centres in Dalby and Tara. In Tara I sat down with Ricky, who lost her home, along with Christine, Shane and Will, who watched it come terrifyingly close. It was hard to tell what was more welcomed: the rain at the end of that week or the arrival of 20 caravans and mobile homes to give people a roof over their heads and a place where they could stay with their animals.

To date, 1,958 people have benefited from more than \$406,870 in disaster relief payments via our department of communities. The Deputy Premier has approved the activation of the jointly funded Commonwealth and state Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements to further support those impacted by the fires. More than 360 large square bales of fodder have been delivered to bushfire affected farmers, but more will be needed. We have established a Bushfire Fodder Taskforce to assist primary producers seeking emergency livestock feed.

Ministers have been on the ground in fire-affected areas to see for themselves what is required to rebuild. We are also encouraging Queenslanders to give to Red Cross, Givit, St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army, Lifeline and Rural Aid as part of our bushfire appeal. Once again, there are Queenslanders who need help. As a government, we are providing it. I also know that the arms of Queenslanders will wrap around them, as they always do.

China, Trade Mission


 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.38 am): Last week I led the largest trade mission to China in Queensland's history. I was joined by representatives from the tourism sector, agriculture, business, education and trade. We had one simple goal: to strengthen Queensland's trade ties with China, because trade equals jobs. This was my fourth official visit to China and my second visit to the China International Import Expo. This is the world's largest trade expo and international platform for products Queensland has to offer. In 2016, just 14 Queensland companies were represented at the inaugural expo. Now in its sixth year, 70 delegates from 28 companies joined me to officially open the CIIIE Queensland Pavilion, which was the largest of any Australian state. From all reports, it was an all-round success.

Companies have reported making more than 600 trade connections which could lead to future international export partnerships. This is on top of the \$45 million in MOUs that I witnessed at the event, solidifying partnerships between Queensland and Chinese businesses. We locked in a \$6 million deal that will see Queensland beef on the shelves of over 500 Chinese supermarkets and lobbied the Chinese government to increase imports of our beef. This means more good jobs for one of our strongest export industries.

While in China I also met with the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Shanghai. The region has been Queensland's sister state for more than 34 years. It was a positive conversation that also talked about the ties between our regions. I held a meeting with the vice-president of China Eastern which has paved the way for direct flights to return to Cairns. I met with the Vice Minister of Education in Beijing, alongside the vice-chancellors from Queensland's major universities and representatives from Queensland TAFE. The vice minister acknowledged Queensland's strong reputation in delivering globally recognised qualifications and gave very positive signals that more Chinese students will return to the Sunshine State. This trade mission could not have come at a better time—just off the back of a successful visit from the Prime Minister.

Queensland has a long friendship with China dating back to former deputy premier Tom Burns, who was one of the first to visit China in the seventies. This long friendship helps Queensland's businesses. They are good indications that our trade relationship will continue to stabilise, resulting in greater export opportunities for Queensland businesses because Queensland has what the world wants, and it is our time to shine.

Satellite Hospitals

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.40 am): Queenslanders deserve good quality health care close to home. That is why our government is investing a record amount in Queensland Health and it is why we blazed the trail by building satellite hospitals for the most populated areas of the south-east.

I am pleased to announce that the Satellite Hospital Program has reached another milestone, with the health minister and Minister Scanlon opening the Tugun Satellite Hospital on the weekend—and patients will commence from tomorrow. These facilities are delivering real healthcare outcomes for Queenslanders.

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: So far, more than 19,000 patients have presented to the satellite hospitals across Caboolture, Ripley and the Redlands. Let me say it again: more than 19,000 patients have presented to the satellite hospitals across Caboolture, Ripley and the Redlands. The member for Currumbin can thank us later.

Mr Hart: Tugun's been finished for weeks. It was late for a ribbon cutting.

Ms PALASZCZUK: You are welcome to have a tour, member for Burleigh.

Ms Bates: Me too?

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left will cease their interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would be more than pleased to show the member for Mudgeeraba our world-class satellite hospitals. Come to the opening at Kallangur. Come on!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms PALASZCZUK: I dare you! Come on. We'll show you.


Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Thank you, members on both sides.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Each satellite hospital includes a minor injury and illness clinic and provides specialist outpatient services like physiotherapy, occupational therapy, podiatry, social work and mental health. I take this opportunity to thank our dedicated frontline health workers for providing these critical services to Queenslanders. They love working at our satellite hospitals.

I am also pleased to advise the House that the satellite hospital at Kallangur has reached practical completion and the remaining two, at Eight Mile Plains and Bribie Island, will open next year. My government is committed to providing more health services closer to home, and when we say that we mean it.

Federal Labor Government, Infrastructure Funding

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.42 am): Our government will always stand up for Queensland's fair share. I have been consistent on this from day one. Today I have again written to the Prime Minister regarding the federal infrastructure review.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members to my left!

Ms PALASZCZUK: This follows on from the letter I sent to the Prime Minister on the federal budget in May this year. While I am yet to see the full—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Surfers Paradise, member for Everton and member for Mudgeeraba, you are all warned under the standing orders. Sorry, it was the member for Bonney, not the member for Surfers Paradise.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have seen the global figures and I am not happy. For a decade Queensland was ripped off by the former coalition government.

Mr Lister interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Facts!

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: That means our government has done more than our fair share of the heavy lifting. On transport alone our government is investing over \$21 billion over the next four years, which is more than double the contribution from the federal government. The LNP told us that we had to sell Queenslanders' assets to receive infrastructure funding in regional Queensland.


Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nanango, you will cease your interjections.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The federal LNP rejected any funding for Cross River Rail, so we went ahead and did that ourselves. As a result, the latest Infrastructure Australia *Infrastructure market capacity* report states that 70 per cent of projects are in New South Wales and Victoria. Cutting large infrastructure projects in a growing state like Queensland would only increase inflation by lowering productivity. More people within Australia are moving to Queensland than to any other state. The federal budget papers alone state that over six years 170,300 are moving to Queensland, while 167,600 are leaving New South Wales. People want to move to Queensland, and they are doing so in droves.

We are on the runway to 2032. I will be fighting to keep Queensland's Big Build on track, to deliver the infrastructure that Queenslanders want and that Queenslanders need. Today I am calling on the federal government and the Prime Minister to do what is right. Right now Queensland needs more infrastructure, not less.

Bushfires

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (9.45 am): In recent weeks communities from the New South Wales border to our state's Far North have had fires raging on their doorsteps. Since 21 October more than 1,000 vegetation fires have been reported around Queensland. More than 130 structures have been lost to the flames. More than 60 households were assisted with emergency accommodation in hotels, motels and caravans in the Western Downs alone. It is estimated that 729 kilometres of fencing, 32 kilometres of private roads and 301 kilometres of levees and channels have also been damaged.


Queensland's firefighters, including our Rural Fire Service, assisted by volunteers from interstate, have done an incredible job to keep communities safe and protect properties from bushfires. Last week, alongside Queensland Reconstruction Authority CEO Major General Jake Ellwood, I visited communities hit hard by the fires—Tara, Dalby and, with the member for Bundaberg, Bundaberg and Childers. The people I met with have been through some of the worst experiences possible, yet there was a determination to keep going, to rebuild their lives in the wake of the disaster. As they rebuild, we will be there with them until the job is done.

With the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, we worked quickly to activate the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements to get support to affected individuals and councils as quickly as possible. By delivering disaster assistance, affected local governments were able to quickly stand up their evacuation centres and strengthen containment lines to help protect their communities.

Fodder drops have helped keep surviving livestock safe and fed, giving farmers time to make longer term plans. Immediate financial support in the form of personal hardship assistance has been made available. Uninsured residents can also access income tested grants up to \$5,000 per household to reconnect damaged services such as electricity, gas and water. So far more than \$420,000 in hardship payments have been made to more than 2,000 eligible Queenslanders from 15 local government areas—numbers that will continue to increase. In the Western Downs, 23 caravans will be moved to the Tara showgrounds and are currently providing temporary accommodation for 13 temporary households.

We are also supporting primary producers significantly affected by Friday night's hailstorm in the Lockyer Valley. Some impacted producers are eligible for disaster assistance loans of up to \$250,000 and freight assistance to help with emergency repairs to equipment, fencing and machinery as a result of the storm. Even after bushfires, storms and other disasters are brought under control, the recovery journey is often only just beginning—and we will be with Queenslanders every step of the way.

Federal Labor Government, Infrastructure Funding

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.48 am): The public record shows that over consecutive budgets our state was repeatedly ripped off when it came to infrastructure by the Abbott, Turnbull and Morrison governments. Billions were poured into southern states for projects like airport trains that had no alignment. We even saw the federal coalition directly fund new hospitals in southern states. Our state had to shoulder all of those transport and health infrastructure burdens without receiving our fair share from the Morrison government and its predecessors.

Despite this lack of investment, Queensland is now Australia's growth state, absorbing 118,000 interstate migrants over the last three years on a net basis. At the same time, more than 100,000 people left New South Wales and 56,000 left Victoria. All of this means one thing: Queensland needs more infrastructure, not less. That is why our government will not take a backward step in demanding our fair share from Canberra, whoever is in charge. The reality is that infrastructure is costing more than ever because of global supply chain problems and labour shortages. That means that in many cases it costs more money to deliver the same amount of infrastructure. That is not a reason to cut projects; it is the reason we need more funding, not less.

We are, of course, supportive of all genuine efforts to reduce inflation, and we are supportive of sensible approaches to infrastructure funding. Queensland has already endured cuts to infrastructure, with the federal government cutting \$5.7 billion to Queensland water projects in its first budget and making major reductions in inland rail in Queensland. No other state has suffered that level of reduction, so you will hear no complaint from Queensland when Morrison government election boondoggles in southern states get the same treatment. In many cases those southern states will welcome it because they simply cannot afford their share of those projects due to their enormous debt burdens.


This is not so in Queensland. We have been paying down debt thanks to progressive coal royalties, with a 76 per cent reduction in debt last financial year—the biggest year-on-year reduction in net debt in this state for almost 25 years—and the third consecutive reduction in net debt in a row. Progressive coal royalties mean we are ready, willing and able to jointly fund infrastructure projects with the federal government, including projects where costs have risen. All we need from the federal government is their commitment to meet their obligations so Queensland can receive its fair share.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer, you will cease your interjections across the chamber. The Leader of the Opposition will do the same.

Federal Labor Government, Infrastructure Funding

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (9.52 am): Since we were first elected in 2015, the Palaszczuk government has been doing the heavy lifting when it comes to infrastructure investment in Queensland. This includes eight record Queensland transport and road infrastructure programs that show a rolling program of investment across the state nearly double the last 'cuts' budget of the Newman government. Queensland's road and transport infrastructure program is strategic and responsible and responds to population growth that exceeds the national average. The Palaszczuk Labor government has committed full funding to making trains in Maryborough, the Cross River Rail project and several major projects that are well advanced in the planning stages like—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry, Minister. Member for Warrego, member for Gympie and member for Chatsworth, you are warned under the standing orders. I can do this all day.

Mr BAILEY: We have committed full funding to making trains in Maryborough, the Cross River Rail project and several major projects that are well advanced in the planning stages such as the Logan and Gold Coast Faster Rail, which is in detailed design and early stages of procurement. However, Queensland has already been subject to more infrastructure cuts from the federal government than other jurisdictions.

I am very concerned to read reports today that the federal government plans to walk away from 80-20 funding on regional transport infrastructure. We have strongly urged the Albanese government to remain committed to these principles when responding to the review; to ensure that regional and South-East Queensland are no worse off; to maintain existing funding arrangements on corridors of national significance; to quarantine Brisbane's 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games related investment and across the state from deferral or cancellation; and to ensure Queensland receives its fair share of funding, noting existing population share, current and future forecast growth and historical underfunding in rail infrastructure.

Queensland is Australia's fastest growing, most decentralised state with the largest road network of any jurisdiction. The economic contribution from regional Queensland through the resources sector alone is \$27.5 billion annually. Seventy per cent of all resources jobs are in regional areas, and these regions rely on transport infrastructure for commerce, connectivity, access and productivity. Any deviation from the currently agreed 80-20 funding split on regional corridors and 50-50 on urban corridors will significantly disadvantage our regions, which are amongst the most decentralised and road transport reliant in the nation. We are the only state with the majority of our population in regional areas. It is crucial that these investments continue so that Queensland supports our booming population and decentralised economy and is ready to support substantial transport tasks for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2032.

Bushfires, Fire and Emergency Services; Police Service, Recruitment



Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (9.55 am): Our frontline heroes have, as always, shone in recent times. We have seen extraordinary efforts from extraordinary citizens during our state's bushfire emergency. We owe all of them a debt of gratitude and we are safer because of their efforts. We also remember the three people who died in the Agair plane crash as they were undertaking aerial firefighting duties on our behalf. Our thoughts and condolences are with their families, friends and colleagues.

This morning I had the great pleasure of witnessing what is believed to be the single largest parade of police recruits on record in Queensland history. More than 500 recruits gathered at the Oxley Police Academy, and what a sight it was! When you add the extra recruits undergoing training at the Townsville Police Academy, we have close to 600 new police officers on the way in our academies right now. Some of the recruits we saw this morning are on an accelerated training regime. These are people such as the recruit who was formerly a member of the London Metropolitan Police who saw the light and decided to move to the Sunshine State for warmer days and higher pays.

There are more police recruits on the way. There are currently over 1,600 applicants in the recruit pipeline. More than 200 of those applicants are people who have served as police officers either interstate or in New Zealand, and there are more than 300 applicants in the pipeline who hail from other overseas jurisdictions. In total, the Queensland Police Service has received around 3,500 applications this year. Last week police recruiters interviewed approximately 100 further applicants with policing experience. I am advised that, because of the demand, additional recruiting staff have now been allocated to the academy to assist with processing applications.

I commend the Queensland Police Service for its agile and innovative approach to recruitment in what is a very challenging labour market for all sectors of the economy. The government has delivered funding and positions for the Queensland Police Service, and now the Police Service is delivering new police officers for our state. Working together, the government and police are creating great permanent, secure and satisfying jobs which will help improve safety in our communities.

Education



Hon. G GRACE (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.58 am): We have a world-class education system here in Queensland that we should all be rightly proud of. The latest snapshot from the Department of Education shows that we are continuing to head in the right direction on a number of fronts. New data released today shows that overall attendance levels at Queensland state schools are on the rise across all year levels, with an


overall increase in attendance from around 86 per cent in 2022 to over 87 per cent in 2023—an increase of 1.5 per cent. It has been a very disruptive and atypical three COVID years, with attendance rates falling across Australia. These results show that we are bouncing back and that all of the work done to support students, boost engagement and maximise days of learning is starting to pay dividends. The data released this week also includes the annual School Opinion Survey results. Each year the School Opinion Survey invites students, staff and parents to have their say about schooling and learning at their school, with almost 240,000 responses received.

School communities across the state should take great heart from the very positive results, including the fact that 91 per cent of parents, caregivers and staff say that their school is a good school—with 80 per cent of students also agreeing that theirs is a good school. However, 97.7 per cent of students agreed that their teachers encourage them to do their best. There is always room for improvement, and schools can now use these results to better understand what they are doing well and to identify areas which may require additional attention. The latest education data also shows that, when it comes to class sizes, the vast majority of classes—97 per cent—met the agreed size targets. The majority of classes that were over target were over by just one or two students, often catering for individual student needs.

We are also seeing positive results from our Next Step survey, which tracks how our year 12 graduates make the transition to further study or employment. I want to congratulate our current year 12 student cohort, who have finished their final exams and are now just days away from formally completing their 13 years of schooling. It is such an exciting time in anyone's life and, really, the world is now their oyster.

The same goes for those very young Queenslanders who are about to embark on a life of learning thanks to our Kindy for All and free kindy from next year. This is part of a major statewide cost-of-living support package which will save Queensland families up to \$4,600 a year while giving their kids the best start in life. The Palaszczuk government will continue to work with all stakeholders and school communities to ensure we provide students with the best possible education, no matter where they live in Queensland.

Health System

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (10.01 am): We know that more and more people are coming to access the world-class health care offered at our Queensland hospitals. Despite a global health workforce shortage our health workers are working incredibly hard, and we know that our plans are paying off. In the July-September period we treated 38,251 patients from the elective surgery waitlist. That is an all-time record—the highest number of elective surgeries performed in Queensland's history. This mammoth effort also means that we have reduced elective surgery long waits by 40 per cent—that is around 2,800 Queenslanders who have received the care they need—and we have delivered 185,000 specialist outpatient appointments, which is a 12 per cent increase compared to the same time last year.


The data also shows that the system continues to operate under enormous pressure. Our emergency departments saw over 575,000 patients—that is almost 20,000 more than the same time last year. The people we are seeing, unfortunately, are sicker, with a huge 8.6 per cent increase in category 1 and 2 presentations. In addition, we now have 877 long-stay patients in our hospital beds. That is almost Caboolture Hospital times three. Through no fault of their own, these patients are waiting for discharge—at a cost to our hospitals of \$1.7 million.

Despite this increasing pressure, our amazing frontline health workers are ensuring our emergency departments continue to perform well, with 100 per cent of the most serious patients seen immediately and the median wait time dropping to 15 minutes—four minutes faster than it was under those opposite. This fantastic progress is thanks to the hard work of our frontline staff and our plans, like our \$764 million Putting Patients First plan and our \$224 million plan to do even more elective surgeries. I am confident that the \$200 million I announced to develop strategies to move long-stay patients out of hospitals will help relieve pressure on the system.

The Palaszczuk government recognises that all Queenslanders are facing additional cost-of-living pressures which is why the continued provision of free, universally accessible public health care is so important. We are committed to expanding the avenues available to Queenslanders to access free health care closer to home, and that includes our new satellite hospitals, which have seen so many thousands of Queenslanders since they opened, with the Tugun Satellite Hospital opened on Sunday.

Another example of our commitment to relieving cost-of-living pressures facing Queenslanders is through our Spectacle Supply Scheme. This is a scheme which provides prescription glasses to eligible Queenslanders absolutely free of charge. Since 2018 we have provided free glasses to more than 300,000 Queenslanders who need them, providing much needed cost relief to Queenslanders under financial pressure. Whether it is our free satellite hospitals, our free Spectacle Supply Scheme or our Queensland Ambulance Service—which is the only ambulance service on the mainland of Australia that is free—the Palaszczuk government will always fight for universally accessible, free public health care.


Renewable Energy

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (10.05 am): There is no denying that renewables present the cheapest approach to new electricity generation—no denying that on this side of the House, at least. Every extra unit of renewable power we build into the system means we put downward pressure on energy prices, so much so that I am advised that the Australian Energy Market Operator has reported a 71 per cent reduction in Queensland wholesale prices since last year. That has followed a 20 per cent increase in renewable generation in this state.

Retail power prices in Queensland are today amongst the lowest in the nation and, with our nation-leading cost-of-living rebates, power bills are the lowest in Australia. Public ownership will ensure that continues. Independent modelling forecasts that by 2032 household retail bills will be \$150 lower. Prices for small businesses in 2032 are expected to be \$1,495 lower. Since we launched the nation-leading Energy and Jobs Plan last September, we have seen a significant increase in wind and grid-scale solar generation. Today we can announce that Queensland is now powered by over 27 per cent renewable energy, more than halfway to hitting our 2030 target of 50 per cent renewable capacity.

The plan we have does not just provide for Queenslanders five, 10 or 15 years away; it is delivering for Queenslanders right now. With our dual strategies of public ownership and progressive coal royalties, I can today inform the House that more than 33,000 Queenslanders have taken up the cashback on energy-efficient appliances. I can further inform the House that, as a direct result of this program alone, the average recipient will save more than a further \$100 a year off their power bills on top of our record cost-of-living support. Those households are not just saving on their budgets; it means more progress towards decarbonisation, with the equivalent of over 10,000 tonnes of carbon removed from our emissions profile each year—the equivalent of taking nearly 3,000 fossil fuel cars off the road. When it comes to support for Queensland budgets, the Palaszczuk government will always put Queenslanders first.

SwimStart


 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (10.07 am): Learning to swim can save lives. We know that the cost of living is putting real pressure on families with small children right around the nation. Some are doing it tougher than others. The last thing we want is for tight family budgets to get in the way of our youngest Queenslanders learning the basics of water safety. That is why the Palaszczuk government has launched the SwimStart cost-of-living initiative. SwimStart's inaugural round opened last week for eligible infants to four-year-olds to get started on developing one of the most important life skills they will ever learn. We are making more than 30,000 SwimStart vouchers, valued at up to \$150, available to eligible families ahead of Christmas to help with the cost of living and breaking down the financial barriers to young Queenslanders learning to swim.

Data from the Queensland Family and Child Commission shows that children aged four years and under are at greater risk of a water safety incident in a backyard pool or water hazards in rural areas. Helping their preschooler to start learning the basics of water safety will be on the radar of the most well-intentioned parents and carers, but we also know that cost-of-living pressures on disadvantaged families in particular are forcing some challenging kitchen table decisions to be made—between their young children's learn-to-swim classes and paying the rent or putting food on the table. SwimStart is a targeted cost-of-living relief for these families.

I take this opportunity to thank Olympic gold medallist Brooke Hanson OAM for her public support for SwimStart. As an accomplished athlete in the pool and a mother, Brooke is a great advocate for teaching kids to swim. As of this morning, the families and carers of more than 3,300 preschoolers have received a SwimStart voucher, and I can advise that 250 SwimStarters have already begun building their confidence in and around the water. SwimStart is an addition to the Palaszczuk government's

established water safety and swimming education program in primary schools. While SwimStart's cost-of-living relief will give some young Queenslanders the best possible start at learning to swim, wherever there is water this summer there is no substitute for parental supervision. I ask all members to remind their communities of that.

Housing


 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing) (10.10 am): Last week, Australians saw the 13th RBA rate rise in 18 months. Combined with ongoing interstate migration and construction supply chain challenges, Queensland renters are not immune from the impacts of national housing pressures. That is why, while we build more social and affordable homes and unlock more supply, we are helping renters stay in their home. I can advise the House that in the last quarter, between July and September this year, \$9.7 million was provided to 1,692 new households for things like rent, bond and the purchase of appliances for people who may have been fleeing violent households.

Whether you have fallen behind on your rent or an increase is more than you can handle, there is assistance available when Queenslanders need it. That includes for people like new mum Rachel O'Donnell, who I had the pleasure of meeting last week. Rachel never thought she would be a mum, let alone face homelessness. Then, not long after going to the emergency department seeking treatment for what she thought was stomach pain, it turned out that she was in early labour. Little Xavier was also born with Down syndrome and had complications from his premature birth. Less than a month later, still in shock at being a new mum, Rachel was facing the possibility of being homeless when her lease was not renewed. That is when she turned to the Chermiside Housing Service Centre, where staff had previously helped her address rental arrears accumulated while she was in hospital and unable to work. Through the department, Ms O'Donnell, an early childcare educator for 30 years, secured a two-bedroom community housing unit in Windsor, close to health services for Xavier. Rachel said—

(Staff member) Karen was amazing. I cannot speak highly enough of her. She bent over backwards for us. She was life-saving.


We have teams in our housing service centres all across the state who help people like Rachel every day. We are also helping Queenslanders with cost-of-living relief through our Home Assist Secure program. This program has helped hundreds of thousands of older Queenslanders and people with a disability pay for home maintenance and modifications. Last year alone, the program assisted almost 30,000 homes, whether it was for yard and outside maintenance, small repairs, smoke alarm related jobs through to jobs requiring a licensed tradesperson. There is financial support of up to \$500 through the Home Assist Secure program. Whether it is rental support, home maintenance, free kindy, free TAFE, appliance rebates or energy bill relief, the Palaszczuk government is helping families with cost-of-living pressures.

ABSENCE OF MINISTERS

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.13 am): I advise that the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water will be absent this week due to a back injury. As such, Minister Crawford will take questions on Minister Butcher's behalf this week. In addition, I advise that the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities is ill with COVID. As such, Minister Ryan will take questions on Minister Furner's behalf until the minister returns. I am advised that the Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts is ill. As such, the Deputy Premier will take questions on Minister Enoch's behalf until the minister returns. I thank the Manager of Opposition Business for agreeing to pairs for these members and others due to medical reasons.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Report

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (10.14 am): As chair of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee, I lay upon the table of the House the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee's report No. 110, 57th Parliament, *Annual report 2022-23*.

Tabled paper: Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee: Report No. 110, 57th Parliament—Annual Report 2022-23 [[1867](#)].

This report details the activities of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. In accordance with section 108 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001, this report includes a summary of issues considered by the committee, a statement of revenue and

spending, and a list of committee meetings and members' attendance. On behalf of the committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the work of the committee during this reporting period. I thank other committee members for their ongoing work in overseeing and monitoring the CCC, and the committee's secretariat and parliamentary staff for their professional support throughout the year.

The CCC has been the subject of many inquiries in recent years, including two by the PCCC. The CCC has undertaken work to implement recommendations of these inquiries in 2022-23 and publicly reported on numerous occasions on its pursuit of implementing recommendations of the commission of inquiry which was released in August 2022. There are also numerous recommendations from the PCCC's five-year review, which was tabled in 2021, and the PCCC's Logan Council inquiry, tabled on 2 December 2021, that impact upon the CCC and are linked to the reform work of the CCC in 2022-23.

It is observable, however, that several key recommendations of these inquiries require legislative amendments to be brought forward by the government, and most, if not all, of these have not been made—not in the more than 800 days since the five-year review was tabled, not in the more than 700 days since the Logan Council inquiry was tabled, and not in the 15 months since the COI released its report. The government has not implemented legislative changes even in respect of most of the recommendations they have publicly accepted. Some of this legislative change is essential for the CCC to implement the reforms they have committed to, and so it is vital that the government act.

A significant event related to the CCC's reform work of 2022-23 was the High Court decision handed down in September 2023 in the matter of *Carne v the Crime and Corruption Commission*. The CCC has clearly indicated that this decision severely restricts the ability of the CCC to perform its corruption function in the way it was understood it could for more than 30 years, reaching back to the principles handed down from the Fitzgerald inquiry and adopted 'lock, stock and barrel' by then premier Mike Ahern. The CCC has stated publicly that it seeks urgent legislative amendment to address this decision.

I need not remind members of the history that led to the formation of the CCC and its predecessors, nor matters examined in the Fitzgerald inquiry that led to the creation of these bodies. However, that history surely makes it absolutely clear to all members, including those who occupy executive office, that legislative change to deal with the High Court decision must be implemented. There must be no 800-day delays or 700-day delays in dealing with it.

Mr SULLIVAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Scenic Rim is anticipating debate on a bill that is before the House. He is specifically referring to legislative reform on that very issue.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Nanango. You are warned under the standing orders. Member for Scenic Rim, do you have anything further to add? I have heard the point of order from the member for Stafford.

Mr KRAUSE: Mr Speaker, I am almost finished.

Mr SPEAKER: If it involves anticipation of debate of a bill, you will be sitting down.

Mr KRAUSE: Mr Speaker, I do not believe I am anticipating debate.

Mr SPEAKER: Please continue.

Mr KRAUSE: The CCC's corruption function is essentially muted right now. The CCC, in 2022-23, has undertaken work to reform itself after significant inquiries—

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe that what the member is seeking to do is use this report as now debating issues in this parliament and it is abuse of the privilege of being able to table this report. The member is now straying well beyond and giving simply opinions of the opposition in introducing this report.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Scenic Rim, I think we have heard enough. The report will be tabled.

Mr KRAUSE: The report has been tabled.

Mr SPEAKER: You will resume your seat, member for Scenic Rim.


Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I will wait for silence, members. It is not an opportunity to speak, members.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.19 am.

Prince Charles Hospital, Patient Safety

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.19 am): My question is to the Minister for Health. Muhammad Hussain died from a fungal infection after having a heart transplant at the Prince Charles Hospital. His family was only told that there may have been a cluster of infections on the day Queensland Health was doing media. Did the minister prioritise a media response over a response to grieving families?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the opposition leader for his question. First, I express my deepest and most sincere condolences to the families of the two patients who have recently passed away. Every death is a tragedy, and I know that those families are hurting. I acknowledge and pay tribute particularly to Kelly Richards, the wife of Adam Retmock, who spoke last night to media. She has shown much strength and courage in sharing her story at what would be an unbelievably difficult time.

I have reiterated once again to the chief executive of Metro North Hospital and Health Service how important it is that families are communicated with in a timely and compassionate way. I do understand that Dr George Javorsky, who runs the heart transplant unit at the Prince Charles Hospital, has had many conversations with patients who may be affected by this and their families. They will continue to do that.

There are two clinical reviews underway as a result of these patients' deaths. I understand that a number of different fungal strains have been identified in patients, but only one of those has been found in the hospital. It is very common for transplant patients—some of the most vulnerable patients in our hospital service—to be susceptible to a very wide range of infections and illnesses because of their very vulnerable condition. Given how prevalent mould is in the community, every relevant patient has been placed—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, the minister is being responsive to the question asked. Cease your interjections.

Ms FENTIMAN: Given how prevalent mould is in the community, every relevant patient has been placed on antifungal treatment. I am advised the head of the transplant unit at Prince Charles Hospital—an award-winning transplant unit, one of the best in the nation that provides critical, life-saving surgery—has found that there were evaluated levels of mould in a storage place where equipment was kept. I am advised that they immediately did a deep clean of that room. I am advised by the head of the transplant unit that the transplant unit is absolutely safe. Metro North, as well as the clinicians in the transplant unit, are in continuous contact with all patients. Every precaution has been taken. The transplant program recommenced over a week ago. My message to the broader community is: as soon as this was detected an immediate deep clean began. They were in conversations with directly affected patients and their families.

(Time expired)

Prince Charles Hospital, Patient Safety

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Minister for Health. After undergoing a heart transplant at Prince Charles Hospital, Adam Retmock acquired a fungal infection. His family said that Adam only found out on the news that it could be fatal. Days later, Adam died from his infection. Will the minister explain why patients heard about the cluster from their hospital beds while watching the news, rather than being informed by Queensland Health?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. Again I would say that it is absolutely not acceptable that patients found out via the news. The head of the transplant unit assured me that he had spoken directly to every patient. If that has not happened then I again sincerely apologise to those families. It is not good enough. I have reiterated to the chief executive that when these fungal infections were detected there needed to be immediate communication with the families. I understand that that has now happened.

In relation to Mr Retmock's specific case, I have been advised that no link has been found between his fungal infection and the fungal infection at the hospital. They are different strains. A number of different fungal strains have been identified and, as I said, only one of the strains that was found at the hospital has been found in a patient. That does not minimise the devastating death of this particular

patient to his family. Having heard his wife speak yesterday, I again say that my sympathies are with the families. These are some of the most vulnerable patients in our hospital system and they are prone to a number of infections. I am advised that Mr Retmock was suffering from a range of complications at the time of his death which were unrelated to the fungal outbreak. Again, Dr George Javorsky, the clinical director of the heart transplant unit, stated that these patients are much more susceptible to any form of infection and that fungal spores are everywhere in our community.

The hardworking clinicians at the unit have done everything they can. They have done a deep clean. It is safe. They are working with those families. I absolutely agree that it is not good enough if a family found out via the news. There needs to be direct conversations from clinicians to these patients. I am advised that that has now happened, and that is appropriate. We will continue to support any of the heart transplant patients who have identified fungal infections to make sure they are getting the very best treatment.

The other thing I would quickly say is: if anyone in this House has not registered through DonateLife to be a donor, please do so. This absolutely saves lives. To the people who did register and who did donate their organs for these patients, I thank you. It takes 30 seconds to register, and I urge everyone to do so.

Infrastructure

Mr RUSSO: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. How important is the Queensland Big Build infrastructure program for our growing state, and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Toohey very much for his question. Of course, the member for Toohey has been integral in securing the Coopers Plains overpass, which is a good example of how governments work together. That project is not under threat, but it is a good example that we work best when we work together. I think everybody in this House and Queenslanders in general would be shocked to hear that the federal government is looking to cut up to \$1 billion per annum in infrastructure spending across our state. Queensland is a growing state—there is mass migration to Queensland—and we need the best infrastructure delivery for the people who live here.

There are a number of principles I want to adhere to. One is to ensure we do not take a back seat when it comes to demanding our fair share from the federal government so that we are no worse off in South-East Queensland and no worse off in regional Queensland. Secondly, we are not going to change the way in which funding has been allocated over many years—that is, an 80-20 split on our National Highway and a 50-50 split on urban roads. We are absolutely committed to these principles.

We maintain that the Brisbane 2032 Olympics infrastructure projects should be quarantined and that we should continue to receive our fair share when it comes to population growth. Let me put it in perspective. We know that, in the past, LNP federal governments have given money to the southern states at the expense of Queensland. New South Wales got \$9.8 billion and Victoria got \$7.2 billion. When it came to Cross River Rail we went it alone, without one dollar from the federal government. We will stand up to the federal government and to the Prime Minister and say that Queensland deserves its fair share. We will accept nothing less, because we have projects that are underway, like the M1—

(Time expired)

Prince Charles Hospital, Patient Safety

Ms BATES: My question is to the Minister for Health. When did the minister first know about this deadly fungal cluster and why did the minister not make a public statement informing Queenslanders?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. I was advised just under two weeks ago—and I spoke to the media about this two weeks ago—so I understand—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Kawana, you are clearly not directing your comments through the chair. You are interjecting at a rapid rate. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms FENTIMAN: It was brought to my attention over the weekend that the program had been paused while they were doing a deep clean. I was advised that all appropriate action was taken to do a deep clean. At that stage they were still investigating what fungal strain had been identified and

whether or not patients had been affected. I was advised that they were talking to relevant families. Then, of course, this story broke and I asked for further information about this matter and I gave all the information I had when asked.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members to my left, the minister is being responsive to the question as asked. I have made that clear on a number of occasions. Leader of the Opposition, you are on thin ice.

Ms FENTIMAN: I also took advice from the senior clinicians who run the transplant unit and they said it was more appropriate for them to make a public comment to ensure that the public had confidence in the very important work they do. Those clinicians stood up two weeks ago and made those statements. This is something that I have been aware of. It has been in the public domain now for a matter of weeks. I again want to reiterate that our thoughts and our sympathies are with the families affected. We are doing everything we can to appropriately communicate with them and make sure they have the very best care.

Cost of Living, Relief

Mr WHITING: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Can the Premier update the House on how the government is helping Queenslanders dealing with national cost-of-living pressures and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Bancroft for his question. Of course we know that cost of living is the No. 1 issue impacting families across Queensland and, in fact, across the nation. That is why our government is very targeted and deliberate about giving the largest cost-of-living relief that this state has ever seen. We know that we can help families the most when we can give them some slight relief when it comes to the payment of their bills such as electricity. Of course, I will keep saying this. There is \$550 for every family and for seniors there is a rebate of up to \$1,000. Why? It is because we kept our assets in public hands. Whether it is petrol or paying for groceries, the mortgage or rent, families are under stress.

I want to update the House on some figures we have received. A total of 1.6 million households are receiving our \$550 cost-of-living rebate. Another 600,000 seniors and concession card holders are receiving \$1,072 off their electricity bills. There are 205,000 small businesses receiving \$650 off their electricity bills. Over 38,000 Queenslanders have received our Climate Smart Energy Savers rebate. There are only about two weeks left to go in that program so I urge Queenslanders to please make sure they are purchasing energy efficient appliances. A total of 690,000 seniors have received 15 per cent off their car registration in the last year and 34,000 Queenslanders have been getting discounts on boat registrations in the last year. A total of 325,000 seniors have received free glasses through our Spectacle Supply Scheme in the last year. From next year—and the Minister for Education is very pleased about this—over 64,000 families across Queensland will receive free kindy, saving \$4,600 a year, and over 36,000 families have received our FairPlay sports vouchers.

Of course, we are yet to hear whether the opposition support our cost-of-living relief packages. They are absolutely silent. All they have said is that they will prioritise structural cost-of-living relief.

Dr Miles: What does that mean?

Ms PALASZCZUK: What does structural cost-of-living relief mean? The first on the chopping board will be the \$8 billion worth of concessions that we are providing to Queenslanders. We will continue to address the cost of living right across Queensland.

(Time expired)

Mr Saunders interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maryborough, you are warned under the standing orders. You are not assisting the House.

Prince Charles Hospital, Patient Safety

Dr ROWAN: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Were cardiac transplant operations continued at the Prince Charles Hospital knowing there was a possible fungal outbreak and, if so, did this lead to adverse patient outcomes?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. No, the transplant unit service was paused while they became aware of this issue. They did a deep clean. It is now safe and operating and there are no adverse patient outcomes.

Infrastructure Projects

Mr HUNT: My question is of the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure. Could the Deputy Premier advise the House how the Palaszczuk government is standing up for Queensland's Big Build and is the Deputy Premier aware of any other approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Caloundra for his question. I know that much of the population growth that we are seeing here in Queensland is going into the southern Sunshine Coast, and why wouldn't it? It is a beautiful part of the world and it has a fantastic local member in the member for Caloundra. We know that infrastructure is absolutely critical for us to be able to sustain that population growth while maintaining the lifestyle that is attracting people there in the first place.

In the member for Caloundra's seat we have seen very significant investments from our Big Build. The schools that we have been able to build to service that population are absolutely critical as are the ongoing investments into the Bruce Highway and the other roads servicing those new communities. Of course, as the population grows, we will need to see more public transport into that part of the Sunshine Coast and indeed right across the state.

As Queensland's population keeps growing, we need to deliver infrastructure right across the state and that is why the Big Build is so important. It is an \$89 billion investment into Queensland and Queenslanders—into hospitals for when Queenslanders get sick, into schools to educate Queensland children and the workforce of the future and, of course, into roads and rail projects. Our Big Build is creating jobs, it is protecting our lifestyle, it is allowing us to address congestion, which puts downward pressure on freight prices, ultimately addressing cost of living and the inflation challenges facing the nation.

The Big Build is so important. It is why we cannot afford the cuts that have been proposed by those opposite. We cannot afford the \$10 billion of cuts to Big Build projects that the Leader of the Opposition announced, we cannot afford the billions more of secret cuts announced by the member for Chatsworth and we cannot afford the cuts that will come from the productivity commission that those opposite have announced they would introduce. I think everyone remembers what the last commission did: cuts to everything and sell off what is left. That is precisely what their plan for a new razor gang, a new cuts commission, would deliver. It would deliver cuts to the Big Build, cuts to services and cuts to jobs. We cannot afford the productivity commission those opposite have proposed. Instead, what our state needs is ongoing investment into infrastructure. Our state needs our Big Build.

Sunshine Coast, Health System

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is directed to the Minister for Health. A whistleblower who works for the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service has told the opposition that admin staff hour cuts mean 21 locals are concerned they will not be able to afford their mortgages and their kids will go hungry and they have been told to call Lifeline, St Vinnies and the National Debt Helpline. Why did the minister not tell Sunshine Coast residents that admin staff hours have been cut from the Sunshine Coast university and Nambour hospitals?

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for McConnel.

Dr Miles interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am sorry, Minister. I have the Deputy Premier and the member for McConnel interrupting you.

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. I am very happy to look into that matter for the member and get back to him, but we as a government absolutely value all of our public servants, particularly those who work in our hospitals and our health systems. That is why we have hired so many thousands more public servants—not just our clinicians and not just our doctors and our nurses and our midwives and our allied health professionals but also our administrative workers and our cleaners and our cooks and our wardies and our ambulance officers. We are a government that absolutely values the Public Service.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition.

Ms FENTIMAN: We are not like the assistant shadow minister who says that we have to break the back of unrealistic employee entitlements. We are not like the shadow health minister who aspires to the Newman government record on health which would mean thousands and thousands of health workers losing their jobs. It would mean no infrastructure projects for health—no Big Build and certainly no satellite hospitals, because we know that the LNP does not support those. That was the Newman government's record: cuts and absolutely no infrastructure projects in health—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition.

Ms FENTIMAN: Those opposite actually want to come in here and talk about cuts to hours for administrative staff? They have one policy when it comes to health and that is cuts, because they do not support our mental health levy. In fact, they were the first—

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It relates to relevance under standing order 118(b). I acknowledge that the minister in her opening statement said that she would look into this matter, but since then she has not come back to the substantive nature of the question asked.

Mr SPEAKER: The question did have some broadness to it. Although it was about a specific location, it still did manage to talk about cuts to services. I will allow the minister to answer, but she will come back to the question as asked under standing order 118(b).

Ms FENTIMAN: Talking of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, that was a project that those opposite did not support either. Let's think about how radically it has changed the healthcare landscape on the Sunshine Coast, yet those opposite have never supported the project. We built that amazing hospital. We fund the amazing frontline workers as well as the admin workers and the wardies and the cleaners and the cooks. We have the most generous award entitlements for our public servants as well as a cost-of-living allowance, which, again, under those opposite no-one would benefit from because there would not be any healthcare workers because they would sack them all. They do not support our mental healthcare levy. They do not support progressive coal royalties, so what is their only option? Cuts!

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order with regard to relevance under standing order 118(b). My question was about Labor cuts to health services on the Sunshine Coast. The minister is talking about coal royalties when I am talking about my constituents having been sent to Lifeline.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member. A point of order should not be a statement in itself. Minister for Health, I ask you to directly answer the question. Otherwise, I will ask you to resume your seat.

Ms FENTIMAN: As I said, I am very happy to look into that issue, but I do want to say that staff at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital have been working incredibly hard. When we look at the latest performance data, their patient-off-stretcher time has improved 10 per cent. They are doing amazing work up there, despite seeing more patients than ever before, so I thank all of the workers at the Sunshine Coast University Hospital for the great work they are doing.

Cost of Living, Relief

Ms BUSH: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is delivering cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders in my community of Cooper, and is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Cooper for her question and her strong advocacy for her community in this House. Our government recognises the cost-of-living pressures facing Queensland families. That is why we put together the biggest cost-of-living relief package of any government in Australia—\$550 in electricity rebates for every household across Queensland this financial year and for vulnerable households, some 600,000 households, up to \$1,072 to support them. No other state or territory government in the Commonwealth is doing that, and the best thing about that is that it does not add to inflationary pressure. It takes pressure off CPI, and we saw that in the September quarter ABS data figures. In Queensland, power bills dropped 10 per cent in that quarter. In New South Wales they went up 12 per cent, in South Australia they went up 15 per cent and in Victoria they went up 17 per cent.

That is what our Labor government has done. That is real, targeted relief for householders and families in the Cooper electorate and across Queensland. What it is not is some kind of abstract idea of structural cost-of-living relief from the Leader of the Opposition in his fake plan for Queensland. Once again the LNP leader is very big on whinge but very soft on detail, and we know why: when you hand billions of dollars back to the coal lobby because you are going to axe progressive coal royalties, someone has to pay. Under the LNP, it is Queenslanders who always pay the bill. There would be no relief from power bills under the LNP.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr DICK: You revelled last time, Leader of the Opposition, when you were in government. You denied Queenslanders cost-of-living relief through electricity—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Treasurer, I will ask you to direct your comments through the chair. Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders for continually interjecting after I tried to give you guidance this morning.

Mr DICK: There would be no cost-of-living relief under the Leader of the Opposition. They revelled in refusing that when they were last in government. When the Leader of the Opposition was tucking into his lunch with the coal lobby last week, he of course was reaffirming his deal with the leader of the coal lobby to cut progressive coal royalties.

Last week I was proud to be out in Moranbah turning the first sod on the new Moranbah hospital, funded by progressive coal royalties, just as our cost-of-living relief is funded by progressive coal royalties. That is the choice for Queenslanders: a Leader of the Opposition who refuses to provide cost-of-living relief and hides behind secret words like 'structural cost-of-living relief', which is code for cuts, or a government that provides real and genuine cost-of-living relief to householders and families in Cooper and across Queensland.

Sunshine Coast, Health System

Mr PURDIE: My question is to the Minister for Health. Queensland Health documents obtained by the opposition identifying plans to cut admin hours across Sunshine Coast hospitals quote staff concerned about pushing tasks on to clinical staff, who are already buckling under ambulance ramping and surgery waitlists. Why are overstretched nurses being asked to take on more work?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for the question. As I said, I am very happy to look into any reduced hours for our admin staff, who work incredibly hard. I remind those opposite, including the member for Ninderry, that when the LNP was in government 80 staff lost their jobs on the Sunshine Coast. Where were the members for Kawana and Ninderry making sure that those staff could buy Christmas presents for their kids when they lost their job altogether? The hypocrisy of those opposite to come in and pretend that they care about health workers when they sacked 80 of them from the Sunshine Coast! It is absolutely outrageous that they come in here and ask questions about staff. Have you apologised to the health staff who lost their jobs?

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

Ms FENTIMAN: Has the LNP and has the Leader of the Opposition, who says he wants to be different to Campbell Newman, ever apologised to the thousands of nurses who lost their jobs and to the doctors who decided to leave Queensland Health altogether because they were putting them on individual contracts? Have they ever apologised for closing the Barrett Adolescent Centre? Have they ever apologised to the allied health staff who lost their jobs, to the 14,000 public servants—

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). The minister is talking about things that occurred over 10 years ago; the question was about things that were happening 10 days ago.

Mr SPEAKER: Yes, but it is not an opportunity to debate the question. Minister, the question did have things related to surgery wait times, ambulance ramping and numerous other things. I will ask you to at least address those elements of the question.

Ms FENTIMAN: I am very happy to talk about the elective surgeries that are happening in our hospital and health system. We have done more elective surgeries in the last three months than at any other time in Queensland's history—any other time. We have reduced long waits by 40 per cent. We are absolutely throwing everything at making sure that more Queenslanders are getting their surgeries earlier. That is because we absolutely believe that, coming out of COVID, we have a lot of work to do

to make sure that people are getting seen on time for their very important surgeries. That is why I announced \$200 million to make sure we were getting through more elective surgeries than ever before, and I am so proud to say that it is working.

I am also really pleased to say that in the month of September we have seen a significant increase in patient-off-stretcher time, and that is because our programs under Putting Patients First—\$764 million—are starting to work. Short-stay units, like we see at Maryborough—when I was there with the member the other day, the director of nursing, Bron, and her team were so proud to show me their new short-stay unit—have radically improved patient-off-stretcher time and ED stays. Our initiatives are working, and we could not do it without our amazing frontline staff. Unlike those opposite, we value them; we have employed more of them. We have the biggest build to make sure they have the best facilities to work in.

North Queensland, Road Infrastructure

Mr HARPER: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services. Will the minister please provide an update on the Palaszczuk government's significant record on delivering important road projects in North Queensland and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for Thuringowa for his question. He is a very fierce advocate for road infrastructure in North Queensland. I was up there recently for the opening of the Townsville Ring Road—a fantastic piece of infrastructure. The member is racking up a record in terms of Riverway Drive and the ring road, and he is absolutely gunning for Riverway Drive stage 2 on top of our substantial infrastructure program in North Queensland. The Townsville northern access is nearly complete and will see 14,000 movements a day, including a lot of freight. We have finished the Houghton River flood plain project on the Bruce Highway.

I can update the House that the Palaszczuk government has done 466 Bruce Highway upgrades since we were first elected. That compares to how many under those opposite? We can count them on one hand: four. They did four, and two of those were desktop studies. We have done 466 upgrades in nearly nine years. It is a great record. We are doing that because we have done the hard yards—the investment, the planning—that goes with getting that infrastructure done. We will always stand up for Queensland. We will not refuse to criticise where it is necessary, like those opposite did when Cross River Rail did not get a dollar from coalition governments in Canberra. We will always stand up for Queensland, not like the weak approach from the state LNP.

That is why I say this: the 80-20 funding needs to stay. We are the most decentralised state in Australia. We have the most interstate migration of any state. We have growth and the Olympic Games coming and we need the infrastructure necessary to deliver for a growing state. We have made it very clear. That contrasts strongly with those opposite whose record was to cut when they were in power. They cut transport infrastructure by \$1.6 billion and sacked RoadTek workers—700 of them—thousands of railway workers and thousands of Transport and Main Roads workers. One would think that they would learn from the mistakes of the Newman government where they lost after one term, but no. Let me quote the shadow transport minister, the member for Chatsworth, in a radio interview on Friday, 24 March this year. He stated—

We know at the moment that if you look at the budget we have got areas where we've already identified a couple of billion dollars worth of savings. At the moment there are a range of areas that we know already that we could prune things back.

Prune! They have a new word for cuts—it is pruning. The cat is out of the bag. The member for Chatsworth is saying, 'We have a cuts agenda. We will not say what it is.' That is the agenda of the Leader of the Opposition. It is very clear, as revealed by his own shadow transport minister.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Polling

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Why is the Premier spending hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars on secret sentiment polling?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think the member for Maroochydore would be aware that it is not uncommon for state governments and even the federal government to undertake such surveys. Let me say to the member for Maroochydore that it is not the \$70 million that your government, when you were in office, committed to Strong Choices. They forget about that \$70 million. We could have built a satellite hospital for that in Maroochydore.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I have said very clearly, we know that cost of living is a big issue—not only do we hear that from people—this enables us to make sure that the most vulnerable are getting cost-of-living relief.

An opposition member interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Well, where is the \$70 million Strong Choices? This is coming from the member for Maroochydore who threw the cameras out of the chamber. As I said, it enabled us to put in place in our budget the biggest cost-of-living relief Queensland has ever seen and also target the most vulnerable. When we look at our seniors, for example, they are getting more money back on their energy bills—\$1,000—50 per cent off their car registration and free spectacles. This is what governments do to ensure that those most in need are getting the most relief.

Community Safety

Ms LAUGA: My question is to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Will the minister update the House on the impact of the Palaszczuk government's strong laws and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr RYAN: I thank the member for the question. We have a lot of great members in this House. I think that this member for Keppel is the greatest member for Keppel ever to be in the Queensland parliament. She does not walk backwards. A former member, a mate of ours, was Paul Hoolihan, 'the Hooligan'. The member for Keppel is doing outstanding work. She is a great advocate for her community. She is a great advocate for strong laws for a safer community.

The Palaszczuk government has a very clear record when it comes to putting in place strong, tough, comprehensive laws which improve community safety. By any measure our anti organised crime laws are amongst the toughest in the nation, delivering results for the community. When it comes to hooning, we have some of the strongest, toughest and most comprehensive laws in the nation, with significant consequences for actions. When it comes to child sex offenders, we reversed the weakening by those opposite when it came to child sex offending and we now have the strongest regime in the nation. When it comes to the worst of the worst, we have given more powers to the Parole Board to prevent those most serious offenders from being able to apply for parole. Also, when it comes to youth offenders, we are implementing strong laws with tough consequences.

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr RYAN: Since we brought those new laws in, which were supported by those opposite—they voted for our strong, tough, comprehensive laws—the new offence, which had never been an offence in the Bail Act in Queensland's history, breach of bail—we brought it in for the first time—755 young people have been charged.

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Currumbin, your interjections are out of order. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr RYAN: There were 755 young offenders charged with that offence. For the first time in Queensland history that offence is in the Bail Act. We brought it in. There have been 40 serious repeat offender declarations. These are significant numbers because they lead to more severe consequences for those offenders. There were 1,405 young offenders charged with the new unlawful use of a motor vehicle circumstance of aggravation, with a 93 per cent conviction rate. Ninety-three offenders have been charged with the new offence relating to the social media circumstance of aggravation, with a 100 per cent conviction rate.

We have a plan around responding to community safety: more police resources, stronger laws and tougher consequences. Those opposite still have not delivered their plan, over 1,000 days later. Only a week or so ago in Townsville the Leader of the Opposition was put under a lot of pressure when he was asked, 'Where is your plan? Explain things.' He could not. The Leader of the Opposition's glass jaw was on show. He could not answer the question. Good on those journalists for calling him out for that because he is all slogans and no substance.

Hill Electorate, Speed Cameras

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. My office has now been contacted by over 360 people with more than 590 infringement notices at a cost of \$300,000 from an unmanned speed camera device located outside the small township of Malanda in September. The minister recently committed to investigating this matter. Will the minister now provide physical evidence that this device was tested for accuracy immediately before, during and after its deployment?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for the question. My previous answer to the member stands. My advice from the department is that when we put in the speed cameras they are carefully calibrated. There is a very clear procedure. No evidence has been provided to me by any person to suggest that that has not been the case. If someone has, I am happy to look at it. However, simply saying that people have been fined and, therefore, there is something wrong with the camera is not an evidence-based submission to me.

What I am aware of is that speeding on our roads is a killer and it is a killer in regional and rural areas at three times the rate as in urban areas, so I take this matter very seriously. When it comes to making sure we send out a very clear message on road safety, I urge all members to be part of that process because speeding kills Queenslanders. Last year we had the worst figure in 13 years in terms of the number of lives lost. It is better this year but not significantly better, so we have work to do. We have to be very clear with the road safety message.

I understand that some people have been caught speeding and that has attracted a fine. That is fine. They need to learn the lesson that speeding is not acceptable on our roads. When you do so, you are endangering other people as well as yourself and your passengers. It does not matter where you are on our road networks: we have speed enforcement anywhere, anytime across Queensland. That has been well established across multiple governments. It is a strong stance and it should be maintained, because we need to see a lot less speeding on our roads.

I hope that the honourable member can be a part of the road safety message. The advice from the department is that the calibration of the cameras is correct and I have had no evidence put to me that there is anything happening other than what the department advises. If the member has evidence then I am happy to look at that specifically, but that is the advice from my department. Let us see less speeding on the roads, fewer fatalities and fewer hospitalisations of people who are often left permanently maimed, sometimes by the irresponsibility of other people. We have to see less speeding on our roads. I am happy to meet with the member if he wants to request that.

Education

Mr KELLY: 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 record on delivering a world-class education for Queensland students and advise if she is aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Greenslopes for the question. He is a great advocate for schools in his electorate. We often talk about the great work that is happening in our schools.

As education minister, I am very proud of our record \$17.6 billion investment, which is continuing to deliver a world-class education. We stand by our education record any day including, starting next year, a \$2 billion four-year program of free kindy for over 64,000 families. We have air-conditioned every classroom, library and staffroom across Queensland. We have opened 25 new schools, employed thousands of new teachers and teacher aides, and invested \$100-plus million to support our Student Wellbeing Package. We have a new resourcing model for our most vulnerable students, students with a disability, providing support for an additional 40,000 students per year. Our \$200 million Telstra deal means that students will not be disadvantaged by not being able to access a digital education and our enterprise bargaining agreement with teachers is nation leading.

Under our current bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth, we have increased funding to state schools year upon year from five to seven per cent per year, with an additional \$4 billion in funding. Our current commitment, agreed with the Commonwealth, is to move Queensland's contribution to 75 per cent. I am proud to report that Queensland is forecast to exceed its Schooling Resource Standard funding target for 2023. The trouble is that the SRS funding does not tell the full story. It does not include the capital injection that we have been spending in our schools: new schools, classrooms, tuckshops, playgrounds, libraries, halls and other facilities. I do not think there is an electorate in this

state that has not benefited from record amounts of investment in capital infrastructure in our schools, none of which is counted towards the SRS. It does not tell the full story. Our free kindy program, worth \$2 billion over four years, is not counted towards the SRS.

When we talk about Queensland's investment in schools, let us tell the full story. Let's not cut corners. Let's tell it as it is, which is that this government is spending more on education than any government before ours. Anybody who misinterprets information and gives false and misleading information—yes, I am looking at that end of the House—is actually not telling the full story. We will go out and tell the full story every time.

Dr MacMahon interjected.

Ms GRACE: The member for South Brisbane—I take that interjection—has seen significant capital infrastructure investment in her electorate and yet complains about public education every single day. Come in, spinner!

(Time expired)

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

Middle East

Mr BERKMAN: My question this morning is to the Premier. Israel has now killed more than 11,000 Palestinians, mostly women, children and elderly people, since its siege on Gaza began more than a month ago. Will the Premier join the hundreds and thousands of people across Australia who are calling not for a pause or for steps towards ceasefire but for an immediate ceasefire?

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar, I am going to rule the question out of order. The state does not have any jurisdiction over foreign affairs, defence or other areas that you have covered in your question.

Cost of Living, Relief

Mr HEALY: My question is to the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement. Can the minister advise the House on how the Palaszczuk government is cutting running costs for Queensland households and businesses and whether he is aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for Cairns for the question. He is a well-known champion for supporting Queensland and Far North Queensland families and businesses. If you walk along the Esplanade in Cairns and talk to people, they will tell you how the member for Cairns is delivering for families and small businesses. Every second person you talk to will tell you how the member for Cairns is taking care of them. That is because he has delivered for 17,000 Far North Queensland households through our cash rebate on energy-efficient appliances. I repeat: 17,000 households. That is a bill saving of \$158,000 across those households in Far North Queensland. I congratulate the member for Cairns. That means he is protecting the reef, protecting local jobs and cutting emissions by 420 tonnes. That is real action to support families in Far North Queensland.

We are also taking action to help up to 250,000 eligible small businesses across the state with their energy bills, with \$650 in rebates as part of our nation-leading cost-of-living program. Every dollar that a small business saves can be passed on to their customers. I am pleased to announce today that the Queensland Business Energy Saving and Transformation Rebates program is now up and running across the state. It is up to \$12½ thousand for hundreds of thousands of Queensland small businesses. That is action to cut the costs of doing business in this state. That is action to help stem inflation in this state. It is action to reduce power bills and to help small businesses decarbonise.

Small businesses are already benefiting. I am informed that we are seeing savings across the state already. I have some examples here of beneficiaries of the Queensland Business Energy Saving and Transformation Rebates program. In Central Queensland annual savings of more than \$2,000 are flowing to a smash repairer thanks to our funding the installation of new energy efficient LED lighting. A North Queensland hotel installed an energy efficient air conditioner to chill its rooms and save almost \$3,000 a year. Right here in Brisbane there was a very sweet saving of over \$3,200 for a chocolate factory thanks to their new LED lighting. On the Sunshine Coast a produce company installed a new energy-saving variable-speed drive unit to slash their energy bill by \$6,700 annually. That is real action. That is our plan from our real plan—the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan.

Queenslanders know the track record of those opposite. When electricity prices went up by 43 per cent, what action did they take? They took no action. They are all cuts and no action, and Queenslanders know it.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Cabinet Documents

Mr POWELL: My question is directed to the Premier. It has been over 500 days since the Premier promised to release cabinet documents within 30 days. Will the secret sentiment polling, reportedly taken to cabinet, be released in line with the Coaldrake review and the Premier's promise?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. As the member is aware, we are processing a number of reforms, with cabinet documents to be released from the first quarter of next year.

Cost of Living, Relief

Mr MADDEN: My question is of the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services. How does the Palaszczuk government support seniors and other vulnerable Queenslanders to manage the cost-of-living pressures, and is the minister aware of any alternatives?

Mr CRAWFORD: I thank the member for Ipswich West for the question. Like all members on this side of the House, he is a strong and passionate supporter of Queensland seniors. I am delighted to say that under the Palaszczuk government more than one million Queenslanders hold a Seniors Card or a Seniors Business Discount Card. Across the length of our great state, from Coolangatta to the tip of Cape York, that figure accounts for 88 per cent of all eligible older Queenslanders. Seniors and other vulnerable Queenslanders are benefiting from the Palaszczuk government's \$1.8 billion in concessions this financial year, and they are loving it.

Seniors cards and seniors business discount cards help to ease cost-of-living pressures. We have heard, for example, that eligible Queenslanders with a Seniors Card can access the \$700 cost-of-living rebate on their electricity bill in addition to \$372.20 under the Energy Rebate Scheme. Added together that is \$1,072.20. That is not all. They can get a 50 per cent reduction in the registration component for cars and boats. They can get discounted rail travel. I have talked in this House before about the fact that it costs \$25 to travel between Cairns and Townsville. They can get a \$87 subsidy for reticulated natural gas, \$200 under the pensioner rate subsidy, free basic prescription spectacles once every two years and free dental treatment, including dentures, through public dental clinics and hospitals.

The Palaszczuk government holds seniors expos around the state including in Mareeba just last week and in Townsville two weeks ago. I inform the House that next week we are going back to Hervey Bay. One of the most important and popular presentations that seniors hear is from the Office of Fair Trading which talks about scams and fraud prevention. Older people can be vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. One of the top three scams targeting seniors is romance and dating. Across Australia last year, almost \$82 million was lost by people aged 65 and over. Many of these scams go unreported.

Queensland seniors need to be scam aware when it comes to another scam—the Liberal National Party. Unlike the Palaszczuk government, the LNP refuses to support progressive coal royalties. Coal royalties contribute to our many concessions and rebates. We have heard about a couple of LNP scams already. We have had the fake Bradfield scam. Members might remember the fake Bruce Highway scam. This one is my favourite—all members would remember it—the 'public servants have nothing to fear scam'. We on this side of the House say to our seniors: don't fall for the scams of the LNP and their secret cuts plan when it comes to the soaring cost-of-living pressures on our elders and our most vulnerable.

Mackay Base Hospital, Helipad

Ms CAMM: My question is to the Premier. With the helipad at Mackay Base Hospital out of action and scheduled to close in January 2024 for at least three years, why did the Labor government not build a temporary helipad at the hospital as requested by RACQ CQ Rescue to avoid lengthy ambulance patient transfers from the airport—a practice that CQ Rescue said could potentially be very detrimental to patient care?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. I am advised that, following safety concerns raised by CQ Rescue and Babcock aviation relating to landing on the Mackay Base Hospital helipad, a decision was made to temporarily move the helipad to the airport. The decision was made in

consultation with and on the advice of CQ Rescue. I am further advised that last week there was a meeting with CQ Rescue, QAS and Retrieval Services Queensland to discuss the location of an alternative landing site.

Health System

Mr SULLIVAN: My question is of the minister—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I am sorry, member. Member for Pine Rives and member for Whitsunday, you are warned under the standing orders for quarrelling across the chamber.

Mr SULLIVAN: 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 is ensuring Queensland has access to world-class health care, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Stafford for his question—a huge supporter of all of the upgrades to hospitals on the north side of Brisbane. I thank him for his support—

A government member: Prince Charles.

Ms FENTIMAN: Particularly Prince Charles. I take that interjection. This morning I have already talked about our latest hospital performance data. I am very proud that, despite all of the additional pressures and more and more people coming to our hospitals, we have reduced the median wait time for our emergency departments and have the highest numbers of elective surgeries in our history. It is because of our amazing frontline staff, the \$764 million Putting Patients First plan and our \$200 million plan to boost surgeries.

I know that those opposite will have been so pleased to see that data because they put out six media releases saying, 'Where is the data?'—that is despite the fact that the data is always released at this time and has been for the last three years. While they were busy hitting 'send' on their media releases about the data and spinning lies about how it was late, we on this side of the House were busy announcing—

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

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock.

Mr LANGBROEK: The minister has used an unparliamentary word and I ask that you direct her to withdraw it.

Mr SPEAKER: I believe that the word may have been 'lies'. I ask you to withdraw, Minister.

Ms FENTIMAN: I withdraw. Whilst the LNP were busy putting out these media releases with their mistruths, we were announcing a draft workforce strategy to get even more frontline workers, we announced free flu vaccines for next year, we announced a \$28 million plan to crack down on vaping and we opened a brand new satellite hospital. Did we hear anything from those opposite about these key health initiatives? We heard not one word. That is because those opposite have one plan for health: cuts. The Leader of the Opposition says he is a changed man. He says he has changed since he sat around the cabinet table under Campbell Newman, but he still has not apologised for sacking so many doctors and nurses. As stated in the *Townsville Bulletin* in 2012—

Whilst you have to feel for those—

public servants—

involved, you have to live within your means.

I table that for the benefit of the House.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Townsville Bulletin*, dated 5 September 2012, titled 'Meet the LNP's three wise monkeys: MPs deflect blame for health job cuts' [[1868](#)].

Of course, we had a question today from the member for Kawana about admin staff at his hospital. In 2012 he said that we have to cut jobs and admitted that the first few months of office have been tough but that 'small businesses understand that public servants cuts had to happen'. There was no apology. The member absolutely defended Campbell Newman's cuts, and we know they will cut again.

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

MOTION

Business Program



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.20 am): I move—

1. That the following business will be considered this sitting week, with the nominated maximum periods of time as specified:
 - (a) the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, to complete all stages by 12.55 pm on Thursday, 16 November 2023;
 - (b) the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, to complete all stages by 12.55 pm on Thursday, 16 November 2023.
2. The following time limits for the bills listed in 1. apply:
 - (a) the minister to be called on in reply:
 - (i) for the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, by 11.55 am on Thursday, 16 November 2023.
3. If all stages of the bills listed in 1. have not been completed by the specified times in 2. respectively, Mr Speaker:
 - (a) shall call on a minister to table any explanatory notes to their circulated amendments, any statement of compatibility with human rights or any statement relating to an override declaration,
 - (b) shall put all remaining questions necessary to either pass that stage or pass the bill without further debate,
 - (c) may interrupt non-specified business or debate on a bill or motion to complete the requirements of the motion,
 - (d) will complete all stages required by this motion notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders.

I am sure everyone is excited that we are in the penultimate sitting week for 2023. While we are heading into the Christmas period, it does not mean that this parliament or the Palaszczuk government will be slowing down. As members will see from the business program motion circulated in my name, the motion prescribes two bills for debate: the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.


Last sitting week we commenced debate on the body corporate legislation, with over two hours of debate already occurring. I know that there are a few more members who wish to make a contribution to this debate, and I look forward to the consideration in detail as the opposition have indicated their opposition to some of those provisions. Once that bill is completed, the House will commence debate on the local government bill, which, if it has not already, will conclude by lunchtime on Thursday. This is to allow other legislation to commence debate this week to ensure this House continues to scrutinise the bills that matter to Queensland. In addition, this week we will undertake a motion of condolence for the late Tom Barton. This will occur on Thursday.

As I said earlier, I want to thank the Manager of Opposition Business for agreeing to a number of pairs this week due to illness. Although we all understand our obligations to attend parliament and represent our electorates, it is equally important that those who are unwell stay away, to ensure we do not all get sick. It is lesson that we learned through COVID, and I am pleased that we continue that practice in the workforce right across Queensland and Australia. With those few remarks, I commend the motion to the House and hope that the opposition will be supporting it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Before I call the next speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to remind those members of the House who are on a warning. They are: the members for Mudgeeraba, Everton, Bonney, Southern Downs, Chatsworth, Warrego, Gympie, Nanango, Buderim, Kawana, Maryborough, Broadwater, Toowoomba South, Currumbin, South Brisbane, Pine Rivers and Whitsunday.



Mr POWELL (Glass House—LNP) (11.22 am): I am afraid, Mr Deputy Speaker, that I will again be disappointing the Leader of the House in announcing that the opposition will not be supporting this business program motion. I will not go over all of the reasons that I have previously raised other than to point out that, whilst the structure of this business program motion is different from what we have previously seen, it is still, in effect, a guillotine of debate on legislation. Setting a time frame for two bills does not lessen the fact that that shortens the amount of time we will have to debate both of those bills. The opposition will be opposing the business program motion.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (11.23 am): I will be very brief. This is the predictable opposition's opposition to the business program motion. It is the normal ordering of business for a full parliamentary week where members will have ample opportunity to speak on a range of things. It ought to be supported and we should not be wasting the time of this House with a long and arcane discussion about procedure.

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

AYES, 46:

ALP, 46—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Farmer, Fentiman, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

NOES, 35:

LNP, 29—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts.

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Pairs: Butcher, Powell; Enoch, Krause; Furner, Nicholls; Howard, Weir; S. King, Camm.


Resolved in the affirmative.

BODY CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 26 October (see p. 3366), on motion of Mrs D'Ath—


That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (11.29 am), continuing: I rise to resume my contribution on the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Whilst I have spoken in detail about the sunset clauses and especially the changes to buying off the plan, there is another aspect of this legislation that definitely needs to be debated. I know that the member for Mermaid Beach is very passionate about this issue—that is, the termination of community titles schemes.

On the one hand, this legislation helps those in need—vulnerable people, especially first home buyers. On the other hand, this legislation takes powers away from and throws to the wolves some of the most vulnerable people in our society. That is a disgrace and it is an abomination that we are debating that in this chamber today. I know that the member for Mermaid Beach is very passionate about this and the LNP members are very passionate about this.

Property rights are critically important for everybody. When it comes to the 75 per cent rule for bodies corporate, let's think of a family member—say, a disability pensioner living in an aged unit. This individual has lived there for decades. They have spent a lot of their life living in this unit. For government to legislate that a developer can come in and acquire their property is a disgrace. When we think about the value of such a property compared to a new property in the region, especially on the Gold Coast, how are these people going to be able to afford to buy another property on the Gold Coast? They will be taken away from the communities they know and the centres where they have lived for many years. It is abhorrent that a government would do this to innocent people, so I ask the government to address this situation and take this out of the bill.

I welcome the rest of the bill, especially when it comes to sunset clauses and buying off the plan, because that will make a huge difference. It will protect the rights of the vulnerable, especially our first home buyers. This other aspect of the legislation needs to be removed. We need to protect these people. On the one hand, we are doing everything we can to protect the rights of home owners and help them get into the property market; on the other hand, we are destroying it for people at the other end. Therefore, I cannot support that part of the legislation whatsoever. It is wrong and it needs to be removed.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (11.32 am): I rise to support the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. A few years ago I was pleased to have the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management of Jordan for an information forum. In the presentation provided, the commissioner spoke about the three Ps of body corporate: pets, parking and parties. Whilst these are, and continue to be, common complaints received by the office of the commissioner, we recognise that body corporate and community management is so much more complex than this. In a time of unprecedented housing demand we need to ensure that every possible lever available to government is at our disposal. However, the work being undertaken through this bill is not a reactive response to the times but something which has been reviewed, considered and consulted on over a number of years.

Through the Queensland University of Technology's review of property law there was a recommendation to reform Queensland's body corporate and community titles scheme laws. As we know, the type of buildings captured through the community titles scheme includes duplexes, townhouses and apartment buildings as well as shopping centres. As the Attorney-General confirmed to the parliamentary committee, as of June 2023 there were 528,190 lots in 52,089 schemes across Queensland. It is a very important housing sector and a necessary one. The recent draft South East Queensland Regional Plan update showed that the south-east is booming, with almost six million people expected to call this region home by 2046. It is also recognised that our population is not just getting bigger; it is changing, with household sizes, demographics and lifestyle trends shifting.

Electorates like the one I represent have mainly relied on new greenfield developments to provide housing. In fact, the Greater Flagstone Priority Development Area, which the Jordan electorate encompasses, is expected to provide 51,500 dwellings to house a population of up to 138,000 people over a period of 30 to 40 years. This will need to be a mix of traditional detached housing but also more duplexes, townhomes and apartment buildings. In Greater Springfield we still have some traditional greenfield growth, but over the next decade we will need to look at greater density, particularly within the town centre and near key nodes such as public transport, education facilities and health and hospital services. That is why it is vitally important that we have modern, workable body corporate laws that will meet housing demands now and into the future.

One of the key issues recognised at the 2022 Housing Summit was the need to reform the act to allow for the termination of uneconomic community titles schemes to facilitate renewal and redevelopment. Currently, a community titles scheme can only be terminated by a resolution without dissent of the body corporate supported by an agreement between all registered proprietors and lessees under registrable or short leases about recommendation issues or an order of the District Court. Getting agreement on any matter through a body corporate can be quite tricky, so seeking to terminate a scheme can be particularly challenging; however, there are countless examples of run-down units, townhouses or complexes with unsustainable, ongoing maintenance costs where owners want to terminate but cannot because a single owner is blocking that termination.

A person's home is obviously such an important element of their life, their economic circumstances and their overall sense of security, so it is important that as a government we recognise that. There are certainly competing interests in relation to this. There will be some who will be aggrieved by a decision to terminate a scheme, but there will also be a number of lot owners faced with the prospect of having to pay very high body corporate contributions so that bodies corporate can undertake extensive or costly repairs, maintenance or rectification works to a property to ensure it is structurally sound. Continuing to spend money on a property may just become economically unfeasible for many.

The bill provides a new process to facilitate the collective sale and termination of community titles schemes with the support of 75 per cent or more of lot owners where the body corporate has decided there are defined economic reasons for termination. In her speech the member for Currumbin said—

Let us not forget that the Housing Summit is the same summit that this 75 per cent rule has come out of.

That is actually not correct. Whilst the proposal was raised as an important measure in the Housing Summit last year, it had its origins in the QUT property law review and has been discussed and consulted on with stakeholders for a number of years. Under the new process contained in the bill, the economic reasons for termination are either that it is no longer economically viable or that within five years it will no longer be economically viable to repair or maintain the scheme or, for a scheme of a purely commercial nature, it is not economically viable for the scheme to continue.

I was also interested in the comments of the member for Scenic Rim, who in his speech tried to insinuate that these laws are all about being very friendly with the development lobby. The development lobby actually advocated for there to be no reasons provided for termination—open slather. The balance

here is around the key factor of economic reasons. Despite the requests of those stakeholders, the termination provisions are not intended to be broadened to all community titles schemes or to have the economic reasons test removed. This is an important safeguard, as the committee noted it is about unlocking development opportunities for ageing community titles schemes, not undermining the property rights of community titles scheme lot owners.


The new process will include safeguards to protect owners in the minority who do not support termination. If the body corporate approves a termination plan a dissenting owner will be able to make an application to the District Court, which would consider a set of just and equitable factors in deciding whether the termination should proceed. The bill aims to provide this balanced approach to the termination of community titles schemes, recognising the need to facilitate renewal and redevelopment but also respecting the property rights of individual owners. The parliamentary committee observed some considerable angst from unit owner groups around the proposed amendments, and I support the recommendation of the committee that a proactive education campaign be undertaken with guidance and resources on how the reforms will work, particularly around the dispute resolution process.

Another area that raises emotions is certainly around the keeping or bringing of animals into homes under community titles schemes. Australia is a pet loving country and it is an issue that is very important to many who dwell in townhouses or apartment blocks. Whilst there have been a number of tribunal and court decisions that have established it is unreasonable for by-laws to prohibit pets or restrict the size, type or quantity of pets, there continues to be some confusion around this matter. The bill does clarify rights and obligations regarding pets by amending the act to: prohibit by-laws that ban occupiers from having pets on a lot or the common property; and prohibit by-laws that restrict the number, type or size of animals that an occupier may have on a lot or the common property. A person, however, must still apply to the body corporate in order to lawfully keep or bring a pet onto their premises. I appreciate there has also been some movement on the keeping of pets within the Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008 and would support the committee's recommendation that further work needs to be undertaken on the interaction between those two acts and the time frames for requests to keep pets from a lot owner or a tenant.

Finally, I would like to make a comment on the issue of sunset clauses in off-the-plan contracts for sale—or 'Mark's law' as those opposite would like us to believe. He is the Erin Brockovich of sunset clauses. The bill will ensure that property developers can only invoke a sunset clause to terminate off-the-plan contracts for land to specific situations—with the buyer's consent, through a Supreme Court order or through a regulation. The goal of these amendments is to provide greater protection for buyers whilst also deterring sellers from terminating an off-the-plan contract without making a genuine attempt to finalise the contract. We recognise that there are currently significant cost pressures on property developers, especially in terms of labour and materials, leading to increased costs for the construction of buildings, but this cannot be used as a reason to gouge unsuspecting buyers who have in good faith signed off-the-plan contracts.

According to the parliamentary report, the UDIA have submitted that 94 per cent of developers have not used a sunset clause to terminate a contract over the past three years. This is good news and shows that most developers are doing the right thing by their buyers, many of whom are purchasing their very first homes. As a result, these amendments should have minimal impact on the development industry. The government is also cognisant of the current development industry pressures being faced, which is why the sunset clause reforms will be reviewed in a couple of years to see whether further reforms are necessary, including for community titles and similar off-the-plan lots.

Whilst I do not have a lot of bodies corporate within my electorate at this time, I know that with the changes in housing styles that we are seeing—including people rightsizing by purchasing townhouses, duplexes and apartments—we need to ensure that our body corporate and community management laws are robust in addressing the changing nature of housing in our state, as well as the contemporary rights and obligations of buyers, sellers and the body corporate and strata title industries. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (11.41 am): In my 17 years in this place, this bill is amongst the worst pieces of legislation this House has contemplated. The union puppets opposite have no idea about the development industry. They are dancing to the music of the development industry and the real estate industry, which have already started to move—and I will talk about that shortly.

I spoke in this House when this was first mentioned at the UDIA conference or the Property Council meeting by the Premier. I said that this is the first attempt in Queensland's history, that I have seen, to enable private persons to acquire a person's house—the first time! I have been in local

government and state government, and the only time we have acquired a person's property is for the greater community good. This is for development profit. There is no affordable housing coming out of this. There is no fix to the homelessness problem. This is a sop by a government which is out of ideas on how to fix the rampant problem of rent rises and the shortage of housing in Queensland. We have enormous demand coming from interstate migration, as we have heard from the Treasurer, yet the supply factor has been cut off at the knees by a government that has put a black ban on councils through the state government planning regime in terms of developing greenfield areas.

This is not the answer. I understand that this legislation can address some issues in terms of greedy property owners holding one property for more money and those types of issues. This legislation will enable developers that have 75 per cent of a body corporate to throw out the little old lady or the little old man who has had that house for 20 years. They will be able to throw out the disabled person and his carer who live in that smallish, cheaper unit because that is all they can afford. Is this a Labor government caring about its constituency out there in the community? No. It is a Labor government that has forgotten its roots and has no ideas. It is basically a sop to the development and real estate industries.

I had a communication this week from lawyers and real estate agents who are already using this piece of legislation, even though it is not law yet, to force people to sell out of their community titled unit. There are a lot of people who are living in community title as their home these days. It is a changed world—we get that—but this will mean that their house is not safe from a greedy developer who wants to put up a multimillion dollar high-rise. That is ridiculous. This government will be the architect of a lot of sadness for a lot of people in years to come, and that grieves me greatly. Even when the council had to acquire people's properties for community benefit, I did it with great personal grief because it had been their home and, as that famous film says, a person's home is their castle. For us to attack that ownership through this legislation in this House is greatly disappointing to me.

I am sure that Sir Robert Menzies—who saw home ownership as the great Australian dream coming into the 1950s out of the war—would be rolling in his grave to see this legislation being passed through this House. This government is totally out of ideas, is totally out of association and has no idea what the real estate agents and property agents will do to make this happen. I have correspondence from one person who has owned his house for 22 years. His email states—

Due to the extreme capital growth of the Broadbeach real estate area—
which is my area—

our block has become a prime target for greedy real estate agents and developers whose behaviour ranges from friendly to antagonistic and threatening.


Is this what we want in our communities? It grieves me greatly to see this as a hallmark of the government of the 57th Parliament which is out of ideas and picking on those people who cannot defend themselves. Some members on that side have jumped up and down in this House and said, 'We've given them legal protection.' These people cannot afford legal protection and they will be threatened and done out of their home by these greedy developers. I get that there is a lot of value in these sites, particularly those along the light rail in Mermaid Beach and areas in my patch, but these people deserve to have their home. A person's husband or wife may have died there and they may have lived in the home for 20 years. They deserve the security of living in their own home without the threat of being kicked out—a threat that this government has given to developers. I find it absolutely tragic that this government is putting this legislation through.

This bill could be fixed with one clause. If we had an exclusion for property owners who had occupied their house for the last seven years at least, that would give surety to the home owner and would take out all of the other players who are holding it for all of the other greedy reasons, viewing reasons and all the things that should not be held. One small clause could have fixed it but this government did not want to consider it. It just wanted to run forward and give a sop to the development industry. I have spoken to the big developers down there. I know the big developers and I know how they work. They say exactly what I am saying is the right way to go. The people who have occupied it—whether it is the little old lady or the disabled person—are the ones who should be protected morally. Those developers are good with that. It is all the greedy ones who would like to see this legislation and would like to be a part of it.

Government members interjected.

Mr STEVENS: They can jump up and down over there because they are all puppets with no idea of the development industry—none. They just dance to the union boys, and the union boys want a few more jobs on the development sites. I get that. A lot of money flows through to those union boys from those development sites, I can assure you of that. On all the jobs that are there, you see all the CFMEU flags everywhere. I do not know which members over there on the other side are members of the CFMEU, but you can understand why they are all for this development at any cost. Kick the little old lady out, kick the disabled guy out—it does not matter. This is an absolute blight on this government in terms of putting this legislation through. It is the first time in Queensland that private people will be able to kick other people out of their home. That is the fact of this legislation. Government members should hang their heads in shame.

There is one bright spot in the whole piece of the bill that we are hearing today, and it is 'Mark's law'. That sunset clause was a load of rubbish for the development industry. It was there under the government's watch, all the way through for the last eight years, yet they allowed it to happen. Mark bringing it to the attention of the House, of the public, of the media has seen a major turnaround where we finally see this good legislation. I congratulate the member for Theodore on his hard work for his community. It is a wonderful achievement. His time in this parliament will be remembered by 'Mark's law', protecting those young families who have been robbed of buying their land in the proper places and getting a home, as they are entitled to, and not seeing it squeezed out of their reach. Our home in Australia is our primary asset—the thing we all work to—and these guys in government have done two things. They have ruined it for one lot of people and in this legislation 'Mark's law' has saved it for many.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (11.51 am): I rise to support the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. My electorate probably has more of these body corporate and community management schemes in it than any other electorate, other than perhaps the Gold Coast electorates—some of them would be fairly big as well. When it comes to other than the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast and areas like that, the inner city of Brisbane would have to be up there with them.

Many of the reforms in the bill originate from the QUT property law review which also informed the Property Law Bill that was passed earlier. Each of the reforms relating to community titles was also considered by the Community Titles Legislation Working Group which was established by the government to provide advice about specific issues impacting the community titles sector. The group included representatives from the Australian College of Strata Lawyers, the Australian Resident Accommodation Managers Association, the Owners Corporation Network, the Queensland Law Society, the REIQ, the Strata Community Association, and the Unit Owners Association of Queensland—a very diverse range of stakeholders. To suggest that we have come in here and we have not taken all of those views on board and that the only view that we are taking is some unknown view of someone who raised some unknown issue in this House to somehow take credit for what the Attorney-General's bill has put forward in this House is laughable. You see them all there patting their backs, suggesting that they were the reason different things were done. I tell those opposite that we did not even know that it had even been said. I am sure that the Attorney-General will swear under oath that her staff had no idea what the ideas of those opposite are because, let me tell you, when it comes to ideas, they are very few and far between from those opposite.

Returning to the bill, I am aware that there are a number of issues that come up with bodies corporate. I think the member for Jordan mentioned that they were pets, parking and parties. I add smoking to that as well. This bill will institute a new process for terminating uneconomical community titles schemes without unanimous consent for all lot owners. Let me reiterate that. It says 'uneconomical'—not just an ordinary community titles scheme, but an uneconomical one, which has slipped by those opposite. They strengthen buyer protections by limiting when sunset clauses can be used to terminate off-the-plan contracts. Let me tell you, there was a lot of discussion in relation to that, but none of that came from those opposite.

The bill will reduce the barriers to lot owners and occupiers keeping pets in community titles schemes. I must say that in my electorate I have never seen so many pets that people actually keep in their apartments. Quite clearly they are able to have pets, but this makes it pretty clear about their rights to do so. The bill will allow bodies corporate to implement by-laws restricting smoking in certain circumstances. It will allow adjudicators to consider alternative insurance applications, which I think is terrific, not just the commissioner. There have been issues around insurance that have been raised. I think this is a very balanced approach to that.

The bill will clarify the power of bodies corporate to tow vehicles—another big issue in relation to vehicle parking. The bill will reform a range of administrative and procedural matters and make various other minor and technical amendments to the Body Corporate and Community Management Act and a number of other acts as well.

A key part of the bill is a new process for the termination of uneconomic community titles schemes, including provisions for situations where there is not unanimous consent from lot owners and tenants. I know that those opposite are going to play the issue about certain people, but there are a number of protections in this legislation to accommodate those concerns. I think it would be very ill-informed of any member of this House whose constituents come to them and they do not actually inform their constituents what the bill actually provides. It is a new process for economic reasons, and I believe it strikes a balance between independent property rights and the facilitation of collective sales that will boost redevelopment activity. For example, in an uneconomical titles scheme, it could be just as easily posed that there may be an older person or a person with a disability who may want to get out of that titles scheme, yet there is one person that is preventing them from doing so. They are going to possibly rely on the funds of the sale of the unit to put them in more appropriate areas, but unfortunately would not be able to do so because one person did not agree to do it. When you sell on uneconomical titles and all owners do it together, each person benefits from the sale of the complete block—anyone in property knows that—rather than an individual unit for sale. Do not shake your heads, those opposite. You know that as a fact that something is often worth more when it is considered as a whole lot rather than individually. You cannot deny the actual facts in this case. There will be a requirement that a scheme—


Mrs D'Ath: It is more valuable.

Ms GRACE: It is more valuable; of course it is. I take the interjection from the Attorney-General. Every case will be different. What has to be built into the legislation is a range of protections, including: a requirement that a scheme's apparent lack of economic viability be established through an independent expert opinion; a dispute process before a specialist adjudicator, with those adjudication costs to be covered by the body corporate, not by the individual; the need for a detailed termination plan, setting out how the scheme will be sold, at what price, what each lot owner's share will be, and what compensation will be available for tenants; the appointment of an independent facilitator to assist with the implementation of the termination plan; the requirement that at least 75 per cent of lot owners agree to the termination plan, and in some cases that may be the person with a disability who actually wants to move into more suitable accommodation; and in the event that this threshold is reached, any dissenting lot owners will be able to apply to the District Court for an order stopping or altering the termination with the reasonable costs of that application paid by the body corporate. These are in the bill. These protections are in the legislation, something which all of those opposite seem to be totally ignoring. This process provides a range of safeguards for lot owners who are concerned about a proposed termination and ensures people cannot suddenly be forced out of their homes without warning or compensation—those are the facts. That is what is in the bill, and that is what we are debating today.

I support a key part of the bill in amending the Land Sales Act to strengthen buyer protection by limiting when sunset clauses can be used to terminate off-the-plan contracts for the sale of land. Property developers will only be able to use a sunset clause to terminate off-the-plan contracts for land with the consent of the buyer, under an order of the Supreme Court or in another way described by regulation.

Pets are a big issue, and the bill reduces the barriers to keeping pets in strata schemes. It supports bodies corporate and residents to reach agreement about the keeping of animals in accordance with the law. Bodies corporate will also be prohibited from putting blanket bans on pets in the scheme. I think that is a good step forward. I know many of my constituents; I see them down at the dog parks. I actually cannot believe how many of them have animals, but they are often there for all the right reasons.

Smoke drift is a big issue. You have to strike a balance between someone who says, 'I bought my apartment. I should be able to smoke on my deck,' and the person who is upstream from it, who has to bear the consequence of that habit. We know that second-hand smoke is harmful, particularly for children or those with certain health conditions. I think the bill strikes the right balance. It addresses this tension by not banning outright but, rather, allowing a body corporate to make a by-law to prohibit or restrict smoking on certain parts of a property, body corporate outdoor areas and the like. I think alternative insurance schemes are another really good thing in the bill. This is a balanced bill with built-in protections for all residents. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (12.01 pm): I rise to make my contribution on the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. There are some really important and commonsense reforms to the management of community titles in this bill which the Greens support. We support changes that allow bodies corporate to create by-laws banning smoking in common areas and disallow by-laws that impose a blanket ban on pets. What we cannot support, however, is creating a pathway for big property developers and investors to intimidate and force unit owners out of their home to seize an investment opportunity. For this reason, the Greens will oppose provisions that allow a body corporate or community management scheme to be terminated for economic reasons with consent from 75 per cent of lot owners.

The status quo requires consensus agreement—that is, 100 per cent of the body corporate to agree—to terminate a community management scheme for economic reasons. Importantly, if they are unable to obtain that agreement, an application can be made to the District Court for termination. This bill instead lays out a process for a scheme to be terminated, even when a quarter of the owners in that community titles scheme disagree.

I agree with the several submissions from resident unit owner advocacy groups who raised serious concerns about the way this bill prioritises the profit opportunities of developers ahead of the needs and wishes of ordinary residents. It lowers the bar for the gentrification of our neighbourhoods, allowing the owner of a humble six-pack walk-up, where the average worker may have been living for years, to be kicked out so that a speculator can knock down their home and build luxury apartments there instead. It is blatantly clear who these changes benefit when you see who has offered their full-throated support for the reforms in their submissions. It is the usual suspects. The REIQ and the Property Council are full of praise and glee. I wonder how many conversations they might have had with government members and ministers at the cash-for-access meetings they are still allowed to buy their way into.

I understand that the justification for this reform is to avoid costly court proceedings where some owners want to sell, perhaps due to high maintenance costs, and others want to stay, but I put it to you that protecting the rights of people to stay in their homes is more important than the right of someone to sell it off for economic reasons. The so-called holdouts who are being used by vested interests to justify the lower threshold seem to be predominantly pensioners, single parents, retirees and other owner-occupiers who thought they were buying a forever home but who, under the proposed legislation, would be at risk of being bullied to sell and unable to afford another place in the local area—in their community. Submissions spoke of how common it is for developers to relentlessly bully these ‘holdouts’ into selling. While I understand that the extra burden involved with taking a matter to the District Court can be cumbersome for a small body corporate, I believe that it is an appropriate pathway for determining economic viability when the stakes are so high.

Although we cannot support the lowering of the threshold for a community titles scheme to be terminated, there are other changes in this bill that we do support. The bill proposes to limit a seller’s ability to use sunset clauses to terminate an off-the-plan contract for land. That is, a sunset clause can no longer automatically terminate a contract, and termination under a sunset clause can only occur with the buyer’s written consent, a Supreme Court order or through regulation. Although I share the Queensland Law Society’s concerns that sellers will have additional disproportionate rights in this situation because the bill requires the Supreme Court to consider their business viability, on the whole protection for off-the-plan buyers is a welcome amendment to the act, and I am absolutely happy to support it. However, like the Law Society, I fail to understand why apartments should continue to be excluded from these protections. I note that the department’s response to this is that they will consider maybe adding apartments as part of a second stage of reforms in a couple of years, but in the meantime they are running awareness campaigns for buyers. This pales in comparison to regulation. Education awareness campaigns simply seem like a cop-out.

Just this week, a constituent of mine came into the office to ask for help. Her daughter bought an apartment off the plan in 2021 with hopes of moving in this year. Their two-year sunset clause is set to expire in December, but the construction has not been completed. The builder has stopped all communication with this constituent, and they now feel like they have no recourse. They are understandably concerned about unfairly losing the apartment they have been patiently waiting for, despite having done everything right. I can only imagine how she is feeling today seeing the news in recent times that Brisbane unit prices have risen 7.8 per cent in the last year, now hitting record highs. Will she be able to afford a home now, two years later? Is the government seriously content to tell apartment buyers like her that they should have paid attention to a government ad warning them about

the risks? Why not do what we can right now to protect those Queenslanders from greedy, land-banking developers who will buy up the land, secure the sales and then just drop them when they think they might have an opportunity to make more profit in the future?


Another welcome change in this bill is that body corporate by-laws can no longer ban pets outright and must provide a reason for rejecting a pet application. The Greens—as we have said many times—believe that, whether you rent or own, everyone deserves the opportunity to keep a pet. For so many people, coming home and being able to spend quality time with their pet is really special. For a long time, many Queenslanders have been forced to choose between paying unreasonable rents or surrendering their pets and just keeping a roof over their heads. Last year we finally passed legislation to prevent landlords from banning pets altogether in a rental. This is something the Greens have pushed for for years now, particularly the member for South Brisbane. Everyone will recall that she introduced legislation to that effect in this parliament. This was clearly a positive step, but the legislation as passed still allowed for bodies corporate to include a blanket ‘no pets’ clause in their by-laws, essentially skirting that amendment in previous legislation. This bill will bring body corporate laws in line with new tenancy laws, and the Greens are absolutely happy to support that. As we said when the tenancy reforms passed, we believe that the onus should rest on the landlord to challenge the keeping of a pet on reasonable terms, rather than the renter to apply for one. The same logic should apply for bodies corporate. This bill is an improvement to the status quo.

I think the bill represents a missed opportunity to tackle one of the biggest developer torts unit owners face right now—that is, building management statements, BMSs. I briefly outlined during the debate on the Property Law Bill last sitting week how BMSs work. A developer, particularly in mixed-use and residential/retail developments, can retain just one unit in a high-rise and thereby retain effective control over the maintenance levies and other major decisions about the building for all of its residents.

I have been calling for reforms on BMSs for years after hearing some absolute horror stories from constituents in my electorate. Dodgy developers use the lack of oversight and regulation under our current laws to retain control over a building to screw tenants over and enrich themselves and their mates. Anyone I have spoken to about these arrangements is frankly gobsmacked that the government continues to allow dodgy developers a free ride to skirt their obligations and the opportunity to exploit ordinary tenants with no oversight or consequence under BMSs.

There are likely thousands of tenants in Brisbane alone who live under one of these unfair BMSs and they deserve better. I urge the government to consider introducing fairness requirements for BMSs and expand the scope of QCAT and the body corporate commissioner to handle disputes and review, amend or extinguish unfair agreements. Other jurisdictions like New South Wales have already done this and we are, frankly, letting Queenslanders down by allowing our laws to lag behind.

In conclusion, this bill is a real mixed bag. As I have said, on the one hand it gives unit owners greater rights to keep pets and off-the-plan land buyers greater protection from dodgy developers looking to ditch their contracts. On the other hand, it leaves new apartment buyers completely exposed to sunset clause terminations and, worst of all, it paves the way for community titles schemes to be terminated with only 75 per cent owner support. The Greens cannot support clause 7 of the bill because we believe the economic opportunities of wealthy developers and investors should never trump someone’s right to stay in their own home.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (12.11 pm): From the outset I want to acknowledge the determination of the Attorney-General to get the balance right on what is the most contentious element of this bill—the allowance for termination of a community titles scheme where unanimous agreement cannot be reached. Before coming to the nub of that question I want to contextualise this reform and the perspective I wish to bring to the debate.

Queensland’s first strata title legislation was passed in 1965, not long after Australia’s first regime in New South Wales but before Victoria moved. Queensland’s legislation was updated in 1980 and subsequently in 1997. This provision for strata title schemes provided the environment for this state to experience a significant boom in the development of multi-dwelling developments, particularly in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Inner suburbs of Brisbane and beach side communities, especially on the Gold and Sunshine coasts, are evidence of this. While my colleagues who have a taste for architecture might start thinking of Brisbane landmarks like Torbreck, this example of higher density living predates the community titles system as we know it. I am thinking of the sixpacks that we all know so well.

We all know them, have lived in, holidayed in and visited them. The sixpacks—and some larger versions—proliferated in the early 1970s and buildings with larger numbers of titles have greatly increased in number since then. They have provided an outstanding service to our community: more affordable housing, sprawl curtailment, maximising the use of pre-existing infrastructure in communities. They have provided a much more comfortable but efficient solution to the family holiday letting that a previous generation enjoyed. However, that time line is significant. The large number of these quickly constructed buildings in the early seventies tells a tale.

Before being elected into this place I served as the policy and research manager at the Property Council of Australia. At that time almost 20 years ago demands for strata title reform were being raised by the industry. They raised concern about the viability of buildings developed under schemes more than a generation previously. This has been, as we have heard during this debate, the subject of extensive policy discussion and consultation since that point. There has been extensive research, extensive exploration and references to expert groups to look deeply at the issues and a number of other issues that are dealt with in this bill. This matter in relation to the end of community titles schemes has been a matter of great debate for some time.

That concern was around the viability of the buildings developed under these schemes, as I say, 50 years ago, and 20 years on from those first issues being raised when I was at the Property Council this concern is clearly more real. I am not being alarmist. That is not to say that these buildings are at risk of collapse Florida condominium style, but the costs of maintenance, repair and restoration will become unviable for the strata title holders. Those LNP members, particularly those on the Gold Coast, who are calling for protecting this unanimous requirement are really putting at risk those strata title holders. They are putting their economic future at risk. They are putting greater burden onto them into the future.

It is interesting that we hear some of the discussion being held about this because the LNP members, particularly those on the Gold Coast, appear to be out of step with the now LNP federal member for Fadden, Cameron Caldwell, who as a Gold Coast councillor called for this reform—in fact, he called for more urgent versions of this reform—in November 2016. I agree that reform also provides a reasonable platform for redevelopment that will create an opportunity for more housing. That is something on which I would agree with the now federal member Cameron Caldwell: creating opportunities for more housing, something that we see daily calls for, especially driven by the private sector. However, this needs to be balanced with concerns that demands for such housing with a New South Wales style scheme would see individuals turned out of their homes. Again, that is why the Attorney-General has struck the right balance.

The bill allows for the termination of community titles schemes with the support of 75 per cent of lot owners where the body corporate has agreed there are economic reasons for termination which meet defined thresholds. An economic reason for termination is that it is not economically viable, or will not be economically viable within five years, to carry out repairs or maintenance to parts of the property that the body corporate is responsible for. Without action, the prospect of a property being condemned and the owners being kicked out is a real risk, something that those opposite and those on the crossbench should take into account. That is part of the risk here as well. However, we do see in the scheme protections and safeguards for lot owners to be part of the new process, including requirements for professional reports and other information to inform decision-making about economic reasons, not just—to quote and paraphrase the member for Mermaid Beach and his strange bedfellow the member for Maiwar—‘greedy developers’.

There will be minimum compensation requirements for lot owners and review and dispute resolution pathways including provisions to reduce lot owners’ exposure to costs associated with proceedings relating to a proposed termination. In all other situations termination of community titles schemes will require either that the body corporate pass a resolution without dissent or that an order of the District Court is obtained.

In contrast to this balance, the LNP in this House have demonstrated that they do not understand the concept of achieving a balanced policy outcome. The member for Nanango, when stating the opposition’s position on the strata title reform, mounted a vigorous defence of the seemingly vulnerable minority owners. She highlighted—and we have heard it since—the passion held for the topic by members of the Liberal National party room. However, was that the reason the opposition is determined to oppose the amendment? From the member for Nanango’s own speech—her own words—it would not seem to be those concerns.


The member for Nanango listed the stakeholders who supported the change to a 75 per cent threshold but criticised the bill for 'not delivering on the policy intent'. They were: my former employers the Property Council, the UDIA, the Town Planning Alliance, the Planning Institute of Australia and others. She went on to say—

There we have it: the policy intent has been completely missed. That is why we will not be supporting this element of the bill.

There was no recognition that the policy intent referred to by these stakeholders is to make the vulnerable minority strata owners utterly defenceless. Their policy intent is to facilitate quick turnover and redevelopment, not balance the needs of protecting the individuals and community from uneconomic schemes with the individual property owners' interests.

Instead of trying to have it both ways, the Palaszczuk government seeks to pursue reform which provides a balance. It might not represent the full policy intent of some or indeed stick its head in the sand—and that might be a very apposite analogy to make: sticking your head in the sand in some sandy locations of some of these building sites—and ignore the economic viability issue for the longer standing of these schemes as it seems the LNP are advocating.

Experience in government means that you understand that a policy position where all of the parties are not entirely happy might mean that you have probably got the outcome right. That is not an unusual thing to see, but, true to form, the opposition is ignoring logic and seeking to argue both sides to justify doing nothing. I am going to bleed into some comments that I have made a number of times in this House, and this debate has been a great demonstration of them. Here we have an opposition that has spent the vast majority of the past 30-plus years in opposition but has learned not one thing from that time in opposition—or indeed learned anything from its time in government, because even in its brief time in government it did nothing to develop a capability to develop good, engaged policy. Rather, it bullied and pushed its way through—ironically, something it wants to accuse industry of in this debate.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (12.20 pm): I rise to speak on the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I want to talk about a couple of the policy objectives of the bill: to deliver a key action of the 2022 Queensland Housing Summit by reforming the BCCM Act to allow for termination of uneconomic community titles schemes to facilitate renewal and redevelopment, as the previous speaker mentioned—and I will talk more about that in a moment; to modernise and improve the operation of the BCCM Act in relation to by-laws and other governance issues, including administrative and procedural matters; and to strengthen buyer protections under the Land Sales Act by limiting when sunset clauses can be used to terminate off-the-plan contracts for the sale of land.

There are two major contentious issues in this bill—one that we support and one that we do not support. It is ironic that the previous speaker, the member for Sandgate, would talk about balance in bills. The issue with both of these issues—that we either support or believe that the government does not support—is in dealing with more vulnerable people, dealing with people who do not deal with these issues on a day-to-day basis, like those in the property business do such as developers, real estate agents or whoever they may be. The member talks about balance, but those two issues of contention show that those opposite have not shown consistency in protection of people who fall into that category.

Let us talk about the first issue—that is, sunset clauses. This bill provides consumer protection for off-the-plan contracts. This follows reports of developers, as property prices rose substantially, deliberately delaying developments to invoke a sunset clause and subsequently selling at a higher price. This issue was brought to the attention of the parliament by the member for Theodore, Mark Boothman, and it was an issue that I totally supported him in raising, because I had a similar example in my electorate. A devastated family had signed a contract 18 months previous, and the developers continued to put them off. They were wondering about the progress of their dream house, and then the developer pulled out of the contract. The devastating part was that, 18 months on from when the contract was originally signed, they could not afford to get back in the market. They could not afford to buy another block of land or to buy an existing property. They were so upset by this and they did not know what they were going to do with regard to either building or buying a house.

This is a good reform. This bill amends the Land Sales Act to ensure that sellers or property developers can only use a sunset clause to terminate off-the-plan contracts for land through written consent of the buyer, under an order of the Supreme Court or in another way prescribed by regulation. This clause should be known as the 'Mark Boothman clause'. He was the one who fought for this and brought it to the attention of the parliament. It is a great example of what a good local member can do to bring about reform and bring about changes that will benefit Queenslanders.

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the Attorney-General. I think she was applauding the local member as well, so I take her interjection.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence. The member is misrepresenting my interjection—

Ms McMillan: Bully.

Mrs D'ATH:—and should withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Everton, the member has asked you to withdraw.

Mr MANDER: I withdraw. I take personal offence at the member for Mansfield and I ask that she withdraw her comments.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mansfield, I ask you to withdraw your comments.

Ms McMILLAN: I withdraw.

Mr MANDER: This is a good amendment and one that we fully support.

I now turn to the area that we have concerns about and one that previous speakers have spoken about in great detail—that is, the termination of community titles schemes. The bill delivers on a key action item—that is an interesting term to use from the Housing Summit, a 'key action item'—to reform body corporate legislation to allow for termination of uneconomic community titles schemes to facilitate renewal and redevelopment, having regard to the New South Wales approach. It establishes a new process for the termination of community titles schemes in circumstances where there are economic reasons supporting the termination. It will involve the preparation of a pre-termination report containing information to assist the body corporate to decide whether there are economic reasons for termination. There has to be a general meeting to decide whether there are economic reasons for termination, which must be voted on by a majority. If passed, then they must have passed a resolution to prepare a termination plan which is provided to lot owners 120 days before the general meeting at which the final vote for a termination resolution takes place. Some 75 per cent of lot owners must vote for the motion to succeed.


Previous speakers from the government—and I refer specifically to the member for Sandgate—have mocked those MPs who live in areas where this is a major issue as MPs representing their constituents, and the groups that spoke out against this are unit owner groups. They are the people who live and breathe this on a daily basis. The Main Beach Association thinks the 75 per cent rule will have an opposite effect of freeing up lots in Main Beach, diminishing the housing supply for the next few years, given how long construction will take. It points out that there were no public hearings in two areas with significant numbers of community titles schemes—the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. The Community Alliance Association stated—

... is very concerned that the Government, seemingly heavily influenced by the development lobby, is using the current housing shortage to justify some very ill thought out 'reforms' in its BCCM Amendments Bill.

It also raised similar issues that the Main Beach Association brought up about diminishing housing supply. The Unit Owners Association of Queensland was strongly against the termination amendments, arguing that bullying and harassment will only make the situation worse, describing the proposal as an 'abomination'. The LNP has listened to these people and, therefore, during consideration in detail we will oppose the clauses that relate to the termination of community titles schemes, and we do this for a number of reasons. We will be voting against the termination of community titles schemes because we value the property rights of Queensland. It is an instilled value of the LNP to respect and uphold people's property rights but particularly in this case, when we have older people, disabled people and people who are settled in their place of residence and have no intention or desire in their later years to move on or to face that type of disruption. There are also people who are susceptible to bullying and other unsavoury tactics to put pressure on people to leave their home.

It is ironic that this has come out of the Housing Summit. It could make people homeless, which is totally contrary to what the Housing Summit was all about. It will lead to more housing insecurity. Homebuyers have a hard enough time already entering the market, let alone coming across an unethical developer who is acting entirely for their own interests and leaving them with few options. This clause is another example of the failure of the government to listen and the failures that have come out of the Housing Summit, which took place over 12 months ago. Whether it is the granny flat announcement that has made no material difference at all to the housing situation; whether it is the Griffith University student accommodation, announced 24 hours before the summit just to have an announcement and abandoned after six months and \$2.1 million; or whether it is the Housing

Investment Fund, which, two years after it was announced, has not built a single house that a person is residing in, there is failure after failure. We urge the government to reconsider this clause and take into account the sentiments of those people who cannot speak for themselves. The LNP will stick up for the most vulnerable people in society.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.31 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I have spoken before in this House about my strong desire to see as many Queenslanders as possible stop smoking. I believe that this legislation will assist. It is great to see the strengthening of provisions around smoking. It will assist people in stopping smoking, as well as put important additional provisions in place to stop people from having to experience second-hand smoke while they are in their own homes, whether they are renting those homes or whether they own those homes.

I have previously spoken in this parliament of when I was a young girl and 80 per cent of my mother's family smoked. Of all her siblings, only one did not. I am proud of almost all of them for quitting. Watching my mum quit let me see how hard it is to give up this habit. By contrast, my children were approaching primary school age before they saw someone smoking casually. My daughter would loudly—but not rudely—exclaim when she saw someone smoking because it was such an oddity for her. This feeling of surprise often experienced by young children when they see someone smoking today is in keeping with the Queensland Health strategy to drive down smoking rates all over Queensland. This bill proposes to amend the BCCM Act to allow bodies corporate to make a by-law that prohibits smoking on a community titles scheme, common property, body corporate assets or a lot's outdoor area.

All members of this House would be aware that second-hand smoking, sometimes called passive smoking, is when somebody breathes in tobacco smoke that was created by another person's smoking product. In other words, it is not smoking that you undertake yourself. It is quite often experienced by people who are not capable of moving away from that smoking hazard. Often it is young children. I am sure many of us have memories of parents smoking and the children in the back of the car being exposed to that. Queensland Health has outlined that passive smoking is a significant and proven hazard to health. There are many hundreds of medical papers that talk about the damage that this causes. I am sure that I am not the only member of parliament who regularly gets complaints about second-hand smoke coming from neighbouring properties. It is not hard to see why people would feel that way.

Reading from a Queensland Health paper titled *A snapshot of smoking in Queensland*, it is great to see that smoking rates in Queensland halved in the 20 years between 1998 to 2018, but smoking continues to be a leading cause of premature death and disease in Queensland. About two-thirds of smokers will die from a smoking related illness. They accounted for 3,600 deaths and 58,700 hospitalisations in the year 2015-16 in Queensland alone. We know that the life expectancy for smokers is 10 years shorter than for non-smokers, that smoking increases the risk of diseases such as lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and coronary heart disease. Critically, exposure to second-hand smoke, which we are dealing with in this legislation, causes disease and premature deaths in children and adults who do not smoke. Not only do they not smoke so often we see they do not have a choice, especially when they are living in and around smokers who smoke in the home.

I will give members a real-life example of how this legislation could play out and change people's lives for the better. About five years ago my sister Genevieve, her husband and their first child bought their first home in a duplex where the couple next door were chain smokers. The smell from them smoking inside their home, which they owned, would come through the walls and into my sister's home. She was distressed when she became pregnant again because we know from the research that second-hand smoke is not good for pregnant woman. We know that women who smoke during pregnancy increase their risk of adverse birth outcomes and the risk of disease later in life. It should come as no surprise that in its review of the Queensland property law, QUT's property law research centre recommended that bodies corporate be authorised to adopt a by-law without dissent that prohibits smoking in common property or a lot's outdoor areas such as a balcony or a courtyard. When it comes to my sister and the courtyard smoke that was coming through a common wall, it would have made such a difference if that was banned and that ban was enforced.


We recognise smoking is not just a habit, it is an addiction. I believe that this legislation will help smokers break that addiction because it makes it harder to smoke in two ways. It does not just make it socially unacceptable, which is in keeping with Queensland Health strategies, but also, as I said earlier, protects the majority of Queenslanders who do not smoke, especially the most vulnerable Queenslanders like pregnant women and children who do not get a choice.

Currently under Queensland law you cannot smoke at or within five metres of a public transport waiting point, at outdoor pedestrian malls, at or within 10 metres of any part of a skate park, within 10 metres of any part of children's playground equipment ordinarily open to the public, at public swimming facilities, in a patrolled beach area or a prescribed outdoor swimming area and at or within five metres beyond the boundary of early learning centres and care facilities and residential aged care. It makes perfect sense that we would also allow people to enjoy their own home in a smoke-free way.

Further to my point about breaking the addiction of smoking, in addition to protecting young families like my sister and her children, it will help smokers break the habit. I will outline now why I think that is by turning to one of my favourite books, *Atomic Habits* by James Clear, which was recommended to me by the member for Bulimba. As I said, it is important to acknowledge the additional health benefits that this legislation will have in improving the health of Queenslanders. In addition to helping home owners and renters, it will also improve overall health. When you are looking to break or make a habit, according to this book you need to do four things. Firstly, the habit needs to be obvious. Right now you can have your ashtrays and your cigarettes outside. You can head out onto the balcony first thing in the morning and last thing at night. There is very little stopping you from engaging in your habit. It really does not get much easier. Under this legislation you will not be able to do that anymore. It is going to get a whole lot harder. Although it might not seem like much fun at the start, it will support people by breaking that habit because it will not be so obvious anymore.

The second thing you need to do is to make it attractive. It used to be really easy when you could pop out in your pyjamas, but now you will have to put on some clothes and walk downstairs where your neighbours may see you. That may not feel particularly nice. You will know that you are now one of a small number of Queenslanders. The third thing is to make it easy to make or break the habit. As I said, it used to be easy to pop outside, but there is a lot more involved for home owners. We have seen that the measures put in place by local governments throughout Queensland have lowered the rates of smoking. We know that strategy works. The final thing that helps to make or break a habit, according to the book *Atomic Habits*, is to make it satisfying. We are swimming against the tide here because people are fighting an addiction, but three out of four is pretty good.

I note that the bill has specifically outlined that this legislation will only pertain to the effects of second-hand smoking products and it limits its focus to smoking products as defined under the Tobacco and Other Smoking Products Act, which is really important to put people's minds at ease. Until recently, smoking was a socially acceptable activity and, as a result, was one of the greatest threats to public health in living memory. This legislation is another great step in the right direction to stop all Queenslanders from smoking. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (12.41 pm): I rise to speak on the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. This piece of legislation is of utmost importance to many residents of Surfers Paradise, which, as part of the Gold Coast, has the fourth highest number of high-rise residential buildings of any city in Australia. Therefore, a large number of bodies corporate are interested in how this legislation will affect them. As I understand it, between them, the electorates of Southport and Surfers Paradise have more bodies corporate than the other 91 Queensland electorates combined, acknowledging that McConnel, which used to be Brisbane Central, may well be catching up now. That is a statistic that I remember from when I was first elected.

Since 16 February, when the then attorney-general made her announcement on proposed changes to body corporate legislation without providing any significant details, my community has been left on edge. I refer to an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, dated 1 October 2023, titled 'This law was meant to solve Sydney's housing crisis. It's left owners devastated'. The article refers to the unintended consequences that the 2016 New South Wales law reform has had regarding the 75 per cent rule on owners in old buildings. I table that article.

Tabled paper: Media article, dated 1 October 2023, titled 'This law was meant to solve Sydney's housing crisis. It's left owners devastated' [[1869](#)].

The article refers to Professor Hazel Easthope, deputy director of the City Futures Research Centre at the University of New South Wales and lead author of *Redeveloping the compact city: the challenges of strata collective sales*. The article states—

Only a handful of buildings have managed to negotiate a sale.

"The big thing that changed was the unanticipated use of the safeguards put in place for the minority owners by commercial interests," said Easthope. "Now we're left in a situation where owners have told us that developers aren't interested in buying older buildings unless there's 100 per cent agreement from owners to sell."

Since Brisbane Labor's announcement in February, which contained very little detail, unscrupulous behaviour from some developers has been reported to me by residents—for example, developers using misleading information to try to bully owners into selling units. The member for Mermaid Beach has mentioned this in previous speeches. People have been told, 'This legislation is going to come in'—even though no detail has been given—'so you should take the price that I'm offering you now because you'll get less when the legislation comes in.' That is happening because of the lack of information provided by the then attorney and now health minister. If developers are using despicable tactics to force dissenting owners to sell, one can only imagine what will happen when the 75 per cent threshold is introduced if strong protections are not in place regarding buildings that are not economically viable.

I heard the member for McConnel talk about the fact that within the legislation, which I have read, appeals to the District Court will be allowed. Who does the member for McConnel think will be paying the appeal costs? It will be the bodies corporate. Often elderly owners are overwhelmed by the costs that come forth in the form of levies. They are supposedly the ones who will have to seek legal advice as part of a body corporate and that cost will be passed on to them. Similarly, the costs associated with the assessment of buildings as uneconomic into the future will be borne by bodies corporate and the owners will be the ones affected.

I refer to an article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, dated 6 October 2023, titled 'Developers using new body corporate laws to get vulnerable unit owners to sell'. I table that article by Paul Weston.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* online, dated 6 October 2023, titled 'Inside story: Developers using new body corporate laws to get vulnerable unit owners to sell' [[18701](#)].

The article refers to a letter of complaint that a Main Beach resident sent to the housing minister. The letter quotes the resident as saying—

Our unit block has been the target of developers for some time.

The article continues—

Ms Scanlon was told some developers consistently misrepresent information to unit owners when making "offers".

They targeted older, vulnerable females. Privacy breaches are common. They try to divide residents.

The article goes on to state—

"Manipulation of Body Corporate committees is happening now, let alone if the developer had more perceived power backed by legislation," the resident wrote.

Over the 20 years that I have been a member of parliament, in my electorate, apart from the current youth crime issues we are dealing with, the No. 1 issue that I deal with is body corporate complaints: complaints by residents about being victimised by managers; and complaints by members of a body corporate that other members of the body corporate are able to manipulate meetings, no matter that the government has amended legislation to affect those types of meetings. The problem is that the act was brought in by the LNP in 1998, but look how much community living has changed since 1998. Unfortunately, the review that we commissioned in 2013 led to the changes that the government is now bringing in, but we are concerned that, while they have made a big announcement, it is short on detail and that has created more distress and confusion for many elderly and vulnerable residents in my electorate.

I note the concerns of the members for Theodore, Mermaid Beach and Everton. I note that the member for Everton mentioned the 'Mark Boothman clause', as he called it. One of the primary issues addressed by the bill is the use of sunset clauses in off-the-plan contracts, a practice that developers have exploited through price changes on properties to the detriment of land buyers, many of whom will have paid for housing plans and things like that, which they subsequently end up losing because of the situation that currently exists. That is one reason the LNP opposition will support the bill, although not the amendment about the 75 per cent rule. The amendments in the bill would limit the use of sunset clauses, ensuring they can only be invoked with the written consent of the buyer or under specific court orders.

The second contentious issue, which I have already spoken about, relates to the termination of community titles schemes. The change is seen as a positive move by some stakeholders, who view it as a critical reform for the efficient management of the body corporate sector. Others have raised concerns about the complexity of the process and its applicability only to uneconomical schemes.

I have been contacted by many residents in my electorate who have expressed concerns about this legislation. In August, Main Beach residents David and Lia Hutley wrote to the committee secretary to express concerns related to the 75 per cent rule. They wrote—

Our perspective is that these changes might inadvertently give rise to more challenges than solutions.

The submission continues—

Introducing a new building to a site might not necessarily contribute to more accessible housing options. Developers tend to focus on constructing higher-end units that align with the area's market demands.

I table a copy of that letter, dated 31 August, from David and Lia Hutley.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 31 August 2023, from Mr David Hutley and Mrs Lia Hutley, to the Committee Secretary, Legal Affairs and Safety Committee, regarding the Committee's inquiry into the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill [\[1871\]](#).

As we heard from the member for Mount Ommaney, the bill addresses the prohibition of smoking in outdoor areas, pet ownership in community titles schemes and the authorisation of alternative insurance arrangements, all of which have been met with varying degrees of support and feedback from stakeholders. The original QCAT case involved Artique, in my electorate. A dispute between two unit owners led to the first ruling from a QCAT member that the person who contacted me was not able to smoke on her balcony without ensuring it did not get into the other person's unit. The person who had the ruling made in her favour subsequently summonsed my constituent to court. I found a pro bono lawyer who was able to defeat the case because there was no diary and no proof that the smoke was actually coming from where the person alleged it was coming from. That shows the complications and the frustrations felt by people. As the member for Mount Ommaney said, people are frustrated that you cannot smoke in public and you cannot smoke at a bus stop. Many people say, 'My home is my castle and I'm entitled to smoke there.'


This will lead to problems. I heard at the committee meeting that I subbed in for the member for Currumbin that we could see issues in terms of smoke coming from barbecues and fire pits being the next thing that people will complain about. That will lead to more disputation. I refer to a letter to the editor from Main Beach resident Melissa Rich, which I table, who raised the following concern—'We need to be extremely careful that we take this matter seriously.' The largest volume of complaints to the Tribunal is from Bullish Body Corporates.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 30 August 2023, from Ms Melissa Rich to the Editor, regarding new smoking ban for balconies in Queensland [\[1872\]](#).

The opposition is dedicated to increasing home ownership in Queensland and views the termination of community titles schemes with caution. I emphasise the importance of property rights and the aim to ensure Queenslanders are not left without a home due to these changes, as the member for Everton said. The bill represents a significant step forward in the reform of body corporate and community management legislation in Queensland. It addresses critical issues such as sunset clauses, community titles scheme terminations, smoking regulations and pet ownership. Finally, I refer to a submission from Deborah Kelly. She states she has been—

... an owner in strata for 25 years in 12 separate buildings ... 20 years as body corporate chairman ... 25 years in legal practice ... and town planning law.

She has had experience of a few older buildings and states that committees do not do sinking fund forecasts properly. It is very frustrating. I do not have time to address all of her concerns, but it is of concern to the LNP opposition.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.51 pm): I rise to speak in favour of the bill before us that is unamended. As I said during the recent debate of the Property Law Act, this is probably one of the only acts with which many Queenslanders have direct contact. For many Queenslanders, these laws affect their everyday life. As the member for Surfers Paradise said, there are a great number of places in Queensland where people live in strata titles and from which many issues arise.

I am clearly in favour of the provisions around the termination of community titles schemes. As the member for Sandgate said, there seems to be some division in the Liberal ranks around this. Certainly, he pointed out that new federal Gold Coast member, Cameron Caldwell, called for this exact change in 2016. My experience at a function in my patch recently where I saw a LNP party member I know was that they asked, 'What is happening in parliament?' I said, 'We are debating body corporate. Did you know that your side is actually opposing the termination of the community titles scheme


provision?’ This person was quite taken aback by the fact that their party was opposing something that they thought was clearly a commonsense provision. Even though the LNP has decided to oppose this particular clause, I do not think there is a clear mandate or consensus among them to do that.

I point out that there has been a lot of talk from those on the other side: ‘What about the poor little old ladies when it comes to this?’ Can I look at the reverse of that? Without this clause in relation to the community titles scheme, older Queenslanders may well be trapped in their own homes. They may well be denied the chance to sell or redevelop their ageing homes. They may end up in a really old community titles scheme because the old bloke down the end of the units does not want to sell up—he has his four cars down in his yard or something like that. They may be prevented from ending those old schemes. They will have no chance to rebuild. They may well be trapped in aged, unsafe residences—ageing flats—and prevented from redeveloping because all owners in a sixpack except one may want to redevelop. They may want to have the chance to get a safe, new home on the ground floor of a new development on that land. That is the reverse of what would happen if the LNP were successful in opposing this proposal. We need to make sure older Queenslanders have the chance to move on from those aged sixpack units or from those aged community titles schemes dotted throughout Queensland.

One of the things I am also in favour of in this bill—and this is something that the member for Mount Ommaney talked about—is the benefit of protecting residents from second-hand smoke. It is absolutely crucial that we do this. We are making sure people cannot smoke on balconies or in common areas. We know that second-hand smoke is a risk. It is more than a nuisance—it is clearly a nuisance—it is also a risk. I think about an older gentleman who used to be a Labor Party member in my area—now deceased—who worked in the entertainment industry. He was a pianist. He did not smoke, but he died from lung cancer because he had to work in unsafe environments where people smoked all the time.

Thirdly, I welcome the commonsense provisions around pet by-laws in community and strata titles schemes. It is correct that the bill point out that we cannot issue blanket bans across all those title schemes for all pets. There needs to be common sense. We cannot have that prohibition. There needs to be consideration of reasonable requests. Each request needs to be assessed on its merit. It is very clear that Queenslanders love their pets and want the opportunity, within reason, to live with their pet on an ongoing basis. Previously there were blanket bans and deadset prohibitions. If we move to a situation where there is a lot more flexibility that will make the lifestyle choices of Queenslanders a lot easier to bear.

I do not want to speak much more on this bill, but point out that there is much in this bill that is common sense. It has been developed over many years. I used to work as a real estate agent. I was not the best but I certainly was not the worst—I was just a middling one. There were so many issues dealing with community strata titles that it was clear that we had to move into the 21st century. This bill is a great step forward in making sure Queenslanders have some great and viable choices to move on or to move into when they need to make their next housing choice. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (12.57 pm): I rise to speak on the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. According to the explanatory notes, some policy objectives of this bill are to deliver a key action of the 2022 Queensland Housing Summit and to deliver a 2020 election commitment. Among the changes, the bill will: permit bodies corporate to ban smoking in outdoor and communal areas; prevent the blanket banning of pets; and clarify powers to tow vehicles from common property. A significant amendment will allow uneconomic community titles schemes to be terminated. If 75 per cent of owners agree and an economic unviability is established, an individual lot owner could be forced to sell their home against their will. We are in a housing crisis, and this could have serious ramifications. There is a very real possibility those forced out of the body corporate who are unable to afford a new build or find alternative affordable housing will be left homeless. While we value property rights, there are serious concerns this measure will exacerbate housing insecurity. That is why the LNP will oppose the termination of community titles schemes.

The bill also aims to protect homebuyers from developers invoking sunset clauses in contracts for land or lot sales in community title style developments. This includes the making of minor amendments about the release of deposits paid by buyers under off-the-plan contracts for the sale of land. As property prices have risen in the last few years, there were increasing reports of developers deliberately delaying developments so they could trigger a sunset clause and subsequently sell at a higher price. It is unethical and it is dishonourable. My LNP colleague the member for Theodore

championed and strongly advocated for protections for buyers. Purchasers in my electorate have been caught with this practice. One constituent wrote—

In Nov 2020, my partner and I signed a contract with Allegra Homes to purchase a 3 bedroom terrace home within our SMSF. We did our due diligence, read through the contracts, had our solicitor read the contracts etc.


Visible within the contract, it stated that should the property not be completed within 18 months, the buyer is able to terminate the contract. There is no reference to the seller terminating, but my solicitor assures me that it is buried deep within legislation.

Debate, on motion of Mr Perrett, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): Queensland Health is in crisis and it is costing Queenslanders time and money, and it is costing them their lives. The data shows it. Ambulance ramping is at 43 per cent: that remains the worst in the country and there is no line in sight when it will return to 15 per cent. There are 59,000 people on the elective surgery waiting list: that is worse than any September quarter under this government. There are 276,000 Queenslanders waiting for specialist appointments: that is higher than in September 2021. Then today we had a minister who stood up and tried to distort these figures, to somehow brush over the cries for help from patients and staff. When your priorities are fixing figures and the media coverage instead of patient safety and fixing the system, that is when you end up with a situation that a brave young woman whom I met today found herself in.

Muskaan Hussain wants answers to what happened to her dad, and the person who could give them decided not to. The health minister knew about the fungal cluster and patients were not told. It has been a fortnight since the health minister knew. There was no compassion shown. Instead, there was a focus to keep a lid on the process. Instead of informing families of what was happening to their loved ones, the minister knew and failed to tell patients until it was about to become a media issue for her. Muskaan is searching for answers for her family. She did not get them. The family deserves the truth, and the minister owes it to them to tell the truth when she is next in this House.


We also deserve to hear the truth about what the state government has agreed to on federal Labor's chopping block. For 180 days the opposition has highlighted the 'pipeline of pain'. It will cost Queenslanders roads, rail and time with their family. Finally today the Premier admitted that it is her job, so she wrote a letter to Canberra. The Premier only put pen to paper to plead our case once the ink was dry on Canberra's callous cuts.

This morning the Premier said that a federal Labor government would deliver 50-50 funding. Well, it did—not to increase health funding as promised but to reduce infrastructure funding for Queenslanders. It is the first time that I wish it was a broken Labor promise. There has been a 50-50 funding commitment delivered, but it is to force downwards the amount of money for Queensland rather than upwards, which is what our state deserves with the growing pains we are experiencing. The Premier is so blindly loyal to the Prime Minister that it took over 180 days to pluck up the courage to even have a fake fight. The LNP has called this out from day one. We will continue to fight for our fair share now, during and after the election. Queensland deserves no less.

This government has the wrong priorities, and that was on display in question time: hospital hours cut and a minister clueless—a minister who knows exactly what happened 10 years ago but is clueless about what happened 10 days ago under her watch; an infrastructure pipeline of pain and barely a whisper until it was too late, yet the government puts up a fake fight; and now a focus on hiding polling.

The Premier always says that the only poll that matters is the one on election day. Why, then, would she spend hundreds of thousands of Queensland taxpayers' dollars to save her job today? Why do we have a government so focused on its own survival rather than on what Queenslanders are experiencing in their lives? Queenslanders are living with a health crisis, a youth crime crisis, a cost-of-living crisis and a housing crisis. This government's focus is on how it can get secret polling to try to save itself from facing its date with destiny. That is when you know that a government has the wrong priorities. At a time when Queenslanders are barely surviving week to week, a government will spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to try to secure its political future. If the only poll that matters is the one on election day, why would the Premier spend hundreds of thousands of dollars today to secure her political future?

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.05 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, you will often hear members of parliament say when asked about polls, ‘We don’t comment on polls.’ That is still the case, but there are two polls that I want to talk about today in the chamber. The first is as raised by the Leader of the Opposition, and that is the poll to protect the Premier—for the Premier to save her job. If this Premier had been listening to Queenslanders over the last nine years she would not need to spend \$400,000 of Queensland taxpayers’ money to work out what the issues are.

The LNP have been listening to Queenslanders, and we developed the document ‘The Right Priorities for Queensland’s Future’ after we listened to Queenslanders. This Premier would have people believe that in her nine years—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Maroochydore, put the book down. That is a general warning to everyone. If anybody else uses a prop, you have been warned; you will be asked to leave.

Mr BLEIJIE: This Premier, who has been in office for nine years, would have people believe, ‘I’m going to concentrate on the issues that matter, but I need to spend \$400,000 of taxpayers’ money first to find out what the issues are.’ That shows a Premier who has checked out, a Premier who is out of touch and a Premier who has no interest in the job anymore. Premier Palaszczuk has no interest in the job. All the Labor Party are doing is so desperately clinging to power. They cannot bear the thought that they will lose office next year. They are getting so desperate on so many issues.

The other polling I thought was interesting was the union commissioned polling. The Premier was asked yesterday, ‘Do you need Gary Bullock’s support, the union’s support, to stay in the job?’ and she said, ‘No, I don’t.’ Yeah, right—as if anyone believes that! I would love to hear what Minister Grace, a former union official, thinks of that one. I think Gary Bullock, or ‘Blocker’, was voted as the most influential Queenslanders at some stage, and the Premier would have everyone believe that she does not need the union’s support!

The leaks against this Premier are continuing. The unions are leaking against her. The backbench is leaking against her. The Premier was overseas again and there were more Labor people leaking against her. A recent article by Madonna King stated—

“She doesn’t listen to anyone anymore. No-one.” “I’m not sure where she takes her advice from, but it’s not us.”

Two innocuous comments—except that they come from two of the party’s most senior operators, who have until recently fiercely supported the premier.

Who are the two senior Labor operatives? Is one the Treasurer?

Mr Minnikin: ‘Mr Eight Per Cent’.

Mr BLEIJIE: ‘Mr Eight Per Cent’—I take the interjection. Is it the Deputy Premier or is it the health minister? Who are the two senior Labor operatives who, when the Premier was in China, were leaking against her again?

The Leader of the Opposition has also raised the issue of infrastructure. I was flabbergasted this morning when the Premier stood up and said, ‘Today I have written to the Prime Minister about this infrastructure review.’ The deal is done! We know what is on Labor’s chopping block—\$14 billion worth of infrastructure projects. Why hasn’t the Premier fought for Queenslanders for the last 190 days? Is it because when Catherine King, the federal infrastructure minister, was doing the review the Premier did not have the time to email from Italy, or did she not have time to email from China last week? Why suddenly today? We know that the deal is done. Catherine King, the infrastructure minister, is in the media today saying it is going to be a 50-50 split on infrastructure projects. This government has concocted a fight—a fake fight—with the federal government so that when the cuts come from the Labor Party they can say, ‘We fought it. We fought it on behalf of Queensland.’ Rubbish!

Queenslanders do not believe it. No member of the Labor Party has stood up for Queenslanders and fought for this infrastructure. Talking about the Labor government and their desperation, I cannot help but acknowledge the Treasurer’s desperate attempts in relation to this infrastructure. He went on radio last week with Steve Austin and tried to blame the federal Labor Party’s infrastructure chopping block cuts on the LNP opposition in Queensland. That is how desperate he is. He is so desperate. This is my warning to the people of Queensland: you are going to see more of this from a desperate Labor Party. They are so desperately clinging to power. They are so desperate not to lose power in Queensland. There are going to be many Labor lies. We are going to hear it on the radio and see it on TV. We are going to see it everywhere! These Labor mistruths will continue—


Mr HINCHLIFFE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition used unparliamentary language and I ask that he withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will take some advice in relation to that. Member for Kawana, I would ask you to withdraw that unparliamentary language.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw. Queenslanders are over it. They know it is time for a change. They have given up on the Palaszczuk government just like the Labor Party backbench—

(Time expired)

Coal Royalties

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (2.11 pm): For more than a year now LNP politicians, led by the Leader of the Opposition, have been misleading the people of Queensland. All over Queensland they have been undermining our resources industry, making false claims about negative investor sentiment and claiming that jobs were at risk because of progressive coal royalties. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the opposite has happened because we have seen record investment and a record number of jobs in Queensland's coal industry.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Nanango, you are warned.

Mr DICK: Despite these facts, the Leader of the Opposition remains committed to his plan to attack, undermine and cut progressive coal royalties. The LNP leader will stop at nothing, including talking down investment interest and the resources industry itself, to achieve these irresponsible goals. The LNP leader even tried to enlist BHP in his campaign.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Toowoomba South is warned.

Mr DICK: Our government is not having any of this. It is why three months ago I was crystal clear in making the point that we have provisions in Queensland that ensure big coal companies must 'use it or lose it' when it comes to the mining leases they hold in this state. As a direct result of what I said, we got clarity from BHP and we got clarity from BHP's CEO, Mike Henry. Mr Henry made it clear that he saw his Queensland assets as good assets regardless of the royalty regime. Even better, Mr Henry promised that he would invest over a billion dollars a year into his Queensland mines. Now, three months later, we are pleased to see Mr Henry making good on his promise. As reported in the Mackay *Daily Mercury*, BHP is making an investment to double the intake for its Mackay academy, which trains future mine workers. Following an application from Mr Henry, the Mackay—

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr DICK: You are not even going to be here, brother.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Gregory!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order! Pause the clock. Treasurer, you will put your comments through the chair.

Mr DICK: Following an application from Mr Henry, the Mackay Regional Council has approved a development application for the—

Mr Minnikin interjected.

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


Mr DICK:—expanded training facility, allowing the company to more than double its training capacity from 72 workers to 168. These are not the actions of a company that has 'cancelled' its investment in Queensland; it is action that demonstrates BHP sees a bright future for its coal business in Queensland, and it is no wonder. Put simply, BHP has no other way of satisfying its customers' demand for coking coal other than from its Queensland mines. Contrary to what you might hear from the Leader of the Opposition or his friend and ally Ian Macfarlane, BHP is not going to open a premium coking coal mine in New South Wales, South Australia or Western Australia because the product does not exist there in any commercial sense. Nor is BHP going to countries like Russia, Mongolia or Mozambique to obtain the coking coal it needs to supply its customers in Queensland.

These facts give me the confidence to believe that the LNP's campaign on royalties will fail, but it will not stop them from trying. Only last week we saw the LNP front bench consorting with their proxy, Queensland Resources Council CEO Ian Macfarlane. They all went to lunch and enjoyed free food and

drink supplied by the coal lobby. No doubt they discussed their secret plan to cut progressive coal royalties. When you understand their plan, it is no wonder the Leader of the Opposition has been forced to promise to cut electricity rebates. 'Structural cost of living' is the euphemism the Leader of the Opposition uses to explain the fact that he does not support electricity rebates. Put simply, structural cost-of-living relief means no cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders. It means there will be absolutely no cost-of-living relief from the LNP for the people of Queensland. We know the reason the LNP leader will not support rebates; he does not support them because he cannot support them because he is going to cut progressive coal royalties.

A promise from the Leader of the Opposition is worth nothing. Just ask the First Nations people of this state. The LNP leader promised to support them, and then at the first opportunity he cravenly broke his promise and betrayed them for the sake of One Nation preferences. That is the sort of person we have as the Leader of the LNP: no cost-of-living relief and betrayal of the First Nations people of this state.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Polling

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (2:16 pm): There are grave concerns that the secret taxpayer funded polling commissioned by the Palaszczuk state Labor government, at a cost of nearly \$400,000, is being used for political purposes and not the public interest, and that is to try and entrench themselves and desperately hold on to power. If this polling was designed to deliver better services then why would they not release it? It is because it is to serve Labor rather than Queenslanders. This is an abuse of power and an abuse of public trust, and it has implications in relation to accountability and transparency. Both the *Australian* newspaper and LNP state opposition have lodged right to information requests for these polling sentiment surveys, but the government has blocked access to these documents allegedly due to cabinet-in-confidence exemptions. This flies in the face of the Premier's promise 500 days ago to release cabinet documents within 30 days under the pressure of the integrity scandal and the *Let the sunshine in* Coaldrake report. We are still waiting for this to occur. It is still pretty—not sunny but cloudy about the small print in the Premier's promise and what is or is not included in the program of release.

The government has admitted that the release of cabinet documents does not require legislative change as it only requires an administrative process, thus it is the Premier's choice to block the release of taxpayer funded secret polling today. The only barrier to transparency is the Premier. If the Premier is going to accept the Coaldrake recommendations lock, stock and barrel as she claimed, then stop blocking access to these polling documents rather than wheeling them through cabinet to bury them from public view. Is it the Premier's intention to keep using public money on polling for her government's purposes—not the public interest—and keep it secret without a legitimate reason to do so? That appears to be the case.

While the opposition's RTI request was completely blocked by the state government, the *Australian* received a heavily redacted response to their request which revealed that the polling contract was not just for budget measures this year, as the government claimed and as the Premier claimed in question time this morning. The Ipsos polling is due to run up until the state election next year—over 66 weeks—not just in the lead-up to the state budget this year. The contract says that polling would 'draw out Queenslanders' views across a range of current issues and topics'. It says—


With topics chosen where there is a need to deep-dive into understanding of the community preferences, perception, resonance, unintended meanings, thoughts on use of language, clarity, and conciseness.

Thus this was not just about the June budget; it is an ongoing piece of work. Isn't the government an ongoing piece of work!

Ipsos—which was contracted for nearly \$400,000 on 9 May this year—was engaged only a couple of weeks after public polls indicated that Labor was on the nose in Queensland. The Ipsos polling contract was signed off by assistant director-general Michelle Wellington, a former Labor political staffer who previously worked as the Premier's media adviser. This contract was on top of the \$528,000 of taxpayers' money on polling voter sentiment about COVID-19 restrictions with Ipsos before the 2020 election which the state government also refused to release. The state Labor government limits by law what its opponents can spend with non-taxpayer funds on election campaigns, while Labor digs deep into taxpayers' pockets to run secret polls which inform publicly funded advertising campaigns which in turn align with Labor's election campaign material.

Let us not forget that this state Labor government also embedded Labor lobbyists who ran their election campaign before the last election using 1 William Street, the government's executive building. They are shameless. They are like a Third World junta with regard to their culture of cover-up, bullying, whistleblowers and obsession with serving themselves rather than the people. This is a government of chaos and crisis but also of cover-up. Labor are focused on themselves rather than Queenslanders, using taxpayers' funds to fix their image rather than fix the problems. They are ruling rather than serving. They simply do not have the right priorities for Queensland's future.

Liberal National Party, Youth Justice

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (2.21 pm): In the last sitting week we saw the LNP with their new book. We saw them holding it up and they made sure every time the camera was on them they were there with it. Since that last sitting week, the opposition leader and the deputy opposition leader have been going around the state, and every time they stand up with a candidate they and the candidate are holding up the new book. They use it for all of their press conferences. I have been feeling for those LNP candidates because I thought, 'What if a journalist actually asked them a question about what is in that new book?' They would actually be worried about it because they would not know what to say because there is literally no detail in it.

I look at the youth justice section and it is a bit like their new campaign director said: 'Okay, Opposition Leader, I want 10,000 words from you and you've got to put that into a book.' He would have thought, 'Ten thousand words! Are you serious? I've only got three things to say about youth justice. How am I going to take up 10,000 words doing that?' When you read through all the words, even though there are a lot of them, you are none the wiser on what they are going to do.

It actually would be a joke if it were not so serious. We on this side of the House know that youth crime is a really serious issue for Queenslanders. If you are a victim of crime, you actually want to see some substance from a government or an alternative government. You want to know that what they are suggesting is working. Throwing three slogans at a victim of crime—and we have all heard some horrific stories about victims—and saying, 'This is how we're going to solve the complex issue of youth crime. This is how we're going to solve early intervention. This is how we're going to keep the community safe. This is how we're going to address the complex causes of crime. We've got three slogans. Is that going to do it for you? We've got this big book but it's full of words that absolutely say nothing,' is an insult to a victim of crime because I can say that slogans do not help victims.


Going back to those candidates, they actually should be starting to get a bit worried because the journalists are starting to say to them, 'Yes, yes, yes. I hear those three slogans but what are you actually going to do about it?' We have members of the public saying, 'Yes, yes, yes. We hear all of that but what are you actually going to do about it?' Now is the time for the opposition leader to put up what the LNP is going to do about youth crime. We have this select committee with the excellent member for Noosa, who will be a great independent chair. The Premier established that committee. The opposition have three members on that committee. Now is genuinely the time for the opposition leader to make it clear what the LNP is actually going to do. We need any detail whatsoever, because what they say is completely confusing.

For instance, the opposition leader says, 'We've got to remove detention as a last resort,' but at the same time they say that they do not need more detention centres. If they want to detain more people, there are actually no detention centres for them. At the same time, that member over there—the member for Burdekin, I think he is—says, 'No. We actually need more detention centres.' Then you look back at what they did when they were in government. Not only did they not build any detention centres but they did not plan for any, either. It is almost impossible to work out what they are going to do.

On the strong laws that they all agreed to earlier in the year, our strengthening community safety laws, we have been talking about them quite a lot. We are getting some strong results on some of those laws. Nearly 1,700 young people have been charged with the breach of bail offence. Nearly 1,600 have been charged with the UUMV circumstance of aggravation. We have had 57 child offenders finalised with the UUMV charges, and 100 per cent of those offenders have been convicted. These laws are in place and they are starting. Those opposite agreed with them, but now they are saying that they are not strong enough. Let us hear some detail. Let us hear what they say when they go to that select committee and they talk to those victims. Let us see if they show that they are sincere about working together and getting some outcomes, because slogans do not help victims.

(Time expired)

Health System, Workforce

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (2.26 pm): We had here in the House this morning one of the more bizarre displays I have seen by the health minister so far. So hopelessly desperate to impress her colleagues and so wilfully ready to undermine the Premier, the health minister launched into a wild tirade after being questioned about health frontline staff having their hours wound back on the Sunshine Coast. The minister frothed about hypocrites and bleated about a government 10 years gone. The only problem is that we are not talking about the actions of a government a decade gone; we are talking about the actions of this government, we are talking about the actions of Queensland Health under this minister and we are talking about now—and that was clearly lost on the minister.

The changes being proposed across the Sunshine Coast University and Nambour hospitals will result in frontline health staff who are manning the wards in these facilities having their hours slashed. Those staff are scared; they are frightened; they are fearful for what their future holds. I want to quote from the documents obtained by the opposition out of the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service. They state—

It is anticipated that the organisational change within the administration and Nambour hospital will directly impact upon 21.60 FTE positions.

The government documents go on to say—

Realigning the current workforce resources in some instances will cause changes to current work arrangements.

It is proposed that FTE will differ to what is currently allocated, in some instances a reduction of FTE.

The nurses on the wards are apparently livid with these changes. With their frontline ward clerks working fewer hours, it will mean that they have to pick up the slack. It leaves our already overstretched nurses with an even larger workload. It is absolute madness when Queensland Health is in crisis. It beggars belief.

The Sunshine Coast is not the only place where this is happening. The opposition has also obtained documents from the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service which show plans had been drawn up to reduce nursing staff at the Gold Coast University Hospital ED. In fact, it would lead to an 'approximate reduction of 15 FTE direct care nursing workforce'. It would effectively reduce the nursing staff in the GCUH ED—the busiest ED in the nation—to pre-pandemic levels. It is barely believable. The nursing staff at GCUH are beyond furious, and that contract was supposed to start today.


On one hand, the minister walks around telling anything that moves about the increases in presentations to emergency departments, and on the other hand here is the minister's department wanting to wind back nursing levels at an emergency department which is already bursting at the seams. It absolutely wrecks of a minister who is totally clueless as to what is going on in our health system beyond the media opportunities she is lining up the next day.

I say this to the minister today: get across your brief. Rule it out, and not just for now but for good. Rule out the number of nursing staff at the Gold Coast University Hospital emergency department being cut by 15. Rule out the Gold Coast University Hospital emergency department ever being forced to cut its nursing staff to pre-pandemic levels—ever. Minister, while you are at it, rule out the potentially 20 frontline hospital administration staff having their hours cut across the Sunshine Coast University and Nambour hospitals. Rule out adding to the workload of nurses across the Sunshine Coast by taking them away from patient care and loading them up with administration work.

The minister should start focusing on the job she has now, not the one she wants. Her lack of attention to the detail is deepening the crisis in Queensland Health: ramping at 43 per cent—the worst ramping in the nation; elective surgery waitlists growing to nearly 60,000; and the number of patients spending 24 hours in EDs surging by close to 400 per cent since this government came to office. This is a system in crisis, Minister!

The minister's unsurpassed eagerness to gloss over how deep the problems are in our health system tell Queenslanders all they need to know about the minister's move. The minister is divorced from reality and obsessed with self-promotion. Minister, leadership is about acknowledging the realities head-on, being open, honest and transparent, including to the member for Nicklin over there. It is not about papering over the issues to try to make things look better than they are, saying, 'Look over here, not over there. Shiny bauble over here.' Queenslanders will not cop that nonsense. They know the reality of the Queensland Health crisis because they are living it every single day under the Palaszczuk Labor government.

Cost of Living, Relief

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (2.31 pm): Imagine being the Leader of the Opposition and you are getting ready for your MPI. You have 10 minutes. You are practising the speech in front of the mirror, doing your hair but then your deputy comes in and says, 'By the way, you only get five minutes to speak on your MPI.' Instead of the full 10 minutes, the deputy pulled the lever on the leader and he had only five minutes. All those 'right priorities' and he only has five minutes. Member for Kawana, don't sit still, call the spill. Don't sit still, call the spill. You are more entertaining, I have to give you that.

When we talk about ambition, and we know that the member for Kawana has ambition for the leadership—he is ready, he has the golden mirror ready—we know that Queenslanders are ambitious as well. Queenslanders are ambitious, but they know that their government is backing them, and they are backing them in the way of rebates on our energy bills. What about for our energy efficient appliances? I met with Bundaberg constituent Brenda on Friday. She was over the moon at the fact that she received \$600 back as a rebate for the purchase of her new fridge. We are providing \$600 cash back in the pocket of Queenslanders. Brenda represents only one of over 30,000 Queensland households that have received cash back rebates because of our fantastic initiative to make sure that Queenslanders are getting cheaper electricity bills and money back in their pocket.

That is what Queenslanders want at the end of the day—a government invested in them, not invested in themselves; not invested in themselves to the point where in their own document, they mention the leader's name more than they mention the word 'health'. In fact, they are so obsessed, they mention 'Labor' over 30 times in their 'Right priorities' document; yet 'health', only about seven times.

Queenslanders know that it is the Palaszczuk Labor government delivering cheaper electricity bills: a \$550 rebate for every Queensland household, and for our pensioners and concession card holders a rebate of over \$1,000 on their electricity bills, creating cheaper electricity bills during the time of cost-of-living challenges. Why do they have that? We are backing in the progressive coal royalties. We are not afraid of the resources industry. We are not afraid of who might donate to the next election campaign. We are standing up for Queenslanders. We are saying, 'If it is coming out of our dirt, it is going back into your pocket.' That is what it is about. That is what good governments do: they back in the people of Queensland.

Why can we do this for our electricity bills? We support public energy assets in public hands. We are not going to sell them. It will be 99-year leases under those opposite. That is what Queenslanders know will happen. We are backing in Queenslanders.

During a time of cost-of-living challenges—when things are tough, when groceries are more expensive, when fuel is more expensive—what is the LNP's plan locally in Bundaberg to help those struggling families, pensioners and health workers? Oh, that is right—to break the back of unrealistic employee entitlements. That is their plan: break the back of unrealistic employee entitlements. The LNP's local spokesperson in Bundaberg is calling for cuts to the minimum wage? During a cost-of-living crisis, when it is more expensive to go to Coles, more expensive to go to Woolies and more expensive to go to the servo, the LNP want to cut the minimum wage for workers in the Bundaberg region. In fact, this is how gold the LNP are: locally they are saying that overtime rates are a disincentive to workers. They are calling for a cut to overtime rates as well. Penalty rates and the minimum wage are all to be scrapped because, according to the LNP, it is an unrealistic entitlement of a worker. The fair day's pay does not belong under an LNP government, that is for sure.


We know it is only the Palaszczuk Labor government that is backing in Queenslanders, backing in rebates on electricity bills, backing in rebates on appliances, backing in our frontline heroes, not calling them duds, not saying that they are part of union dominance and not saying that they are going to break the back of their fair work entitlements. We also know that the LNP has the plan to cut, sack and sell.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SMITH: We hear Mr Macho. We can hear him starting to get macho. He gets a little bit nervous and starts to look around. He only got five minutes. That is all he could muster up today—five minutes. Next week he will ask, 'Please, please, Kawana, give me five more. Please, Mr Kawana. Please.'

(Time expired)

Traeger Electorate, Road Infrastructure

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.36 pm): I need about 20 minutes each week to keep bringing attention to the problems we have in the western areas of Queensland, more specifically in Traeger. Today I rise to talk about the failure of the transport network and focus on roads. A Grattan Institute report released yesterday stated that there was a shortfall of about a billion dollars a year to stop local government road infrastructure degrading anymore. They are saying it is in poor condition, but to try to arrest the decline in the quality of those roads, a billion dollars more each year is needed. The further you get away from the cities, the worse it gets. Cities underspend by 15 per cent. Remote communities underspend by 75 per cent. That is obviously pretty relevant for an electorate like Traeger.

The report also says, which I find the most interesting and pointed for this government—

Taxpayers would get better bang for their buck if the federal government spent an extra \$1 billion on improving our local roads rather than on building new megaprojects in the major cities ...

That sounds familiar. I do not want to begrudge people in the cities their projects. Every time I come down I see the new footbridge coming over the Brisbane River. There is the wonderful traffic tunnel to get people to work in the city another five or 10 minutes earlier. That is great, but not when everyone in Burke Shire and Doomadgee Shire is crying about the floods and the damage caused and the government goes up there and says, 'What can we do to help?' and people say, 'Oh, we need a new bridge along there. That might be \$30 million,' and the government replies, 'That is too much. We don't have money for that.' Any time something needs to be done—something like the Gilbert River Bridge in the north near the Croydon and Etheridge shires—we are told, 'No, there is no money for that.' There was money for a \$30 million cassowary bridge along the highway which the cassowaries do not even use, and when they come off it they still fall on the railway line or onto another road. We have money for that, but we do not have money for the real things.

That leads me to the Flinders Highway. It is interesting. The Grattan Institute says climate change is the reason these roads are getting worse, which I know the government would fully support. If it is going to get worse and flood-proofing is more of a requirement, why is all this money being lumped into these big mega projects down here in the South-East? The Flinders Highway is an interesting road because about \$7 billion worth of our supply chain go along that road. Interestingly, of the business which has come off Queensland Rail in the past 12 years, 38 per cent is now on the roads. Safety has been brought to the attention of the government on multiple occasions. If we want to talk about safety and efficiency, everyone in the world would think we are the absolute laughing-stock for not putting bulk ore on a train to our major port in Townsville, over 900 kilometres away, and instead are finding it more affordable to put it on a road train.

What else happens when you start putting triple road trains, with their air suspension, over bridges? Bridges and roads fail. On the Flinders Highway we have slowdown signs, potholes and dangerous wheel tracks. Tourists contact my office saying, 'Goodness me, I smashed the trailer on that. That is a dangerous road.' The Warrigal Creek Bridge over Torrens Creek—this is really embarrassing—has been downgraded to a single-lane bridge with 20-kilometres-per-hour speed restrictions. This is a major arterial route for one of our great mining provinces because the rail has been made so expensive by the government and QCA guidelines, which are just a joke.

I have brought this to the attention of the government on multiple occasions for it to fix. It could be a cost-neutral solution. We do not collect revenue from it off the rail. It goes onto the road, where it is unsafe. People get booked on passing lanes—because you have to keep to 110 on the highway—while trying to pass triple road trains because the road is clogged with them. Unless you want to stay behind a heap of triple road trains all the way from Mount Isa to Hughenden, you have to break the speed limit. Then the response from the transport minister is, 'Let's whack some speed cameras there to capture the pensioners and the workers in Torrens Creek.'

We have had hundreds of messages from distraught people saying, 'I haven't had a speeding ticket for 20 years.' A 60-kilometre zone was put right outside of Torrens Creek—you are flat out having 150 people there—where there are no streetlights and no houses. There was no signage and no education campaign: 'Let's not tell people we're going to put speed cameras up because we don't really want to educate them; we just want to fine them.' Fine them you have! The government has done a very good job of that, but it has also ticked off everyone out there. Now everyone will blame the poor old police, who are trying to do their job in town, for these speed cameras. If the government wants to fix road safety it should fix the roads first, put product back onto rail and educate people, not send them a bill in the post two weeks later for driving in a remote area at 10 o'clock at night.

Pumicestone Electorate, Cost of Living



Ms KING (Pumicestone—ALP) (2.42 pm): In Pumicestone, as right across Queensland, the cost of living is the No. 1 issue that people are raising. Every day, people are telling us that their interest rates are going up, their insurance premiums are going up, their rents have gone up and their groceries and petrol have gone up. They are struggling to make their budget stretch and they are hurting. That is why we are listening and taking action. We are investing in every possible way we can to support hardworking people in Caboolture, retirees doing it tough on Bribie Island, families in Beachmere and pensioners in Toorbul. We are investing in the biggest cost-of-living package that has ever been seen in Australia.

Since 2017, our power rebates have given almost \$1,000 in support to households. If you are a low-income household, that rebate is getting closer to \$2,000. Our new appliance rebates of up to \$1,000 are not only helping people to replace their whitegoods but also enabling them to invest in upgraded, more energy-efficient appliances that will keep their bills lower into the future by about \$100 a year. Free kindy means that if your child goes to the best kindergarten in Australia, our Bribie Island Community Kindergarten, you are saving \$4,600 a year—100 per cent free, to attend Australia's very best kindy.

Just as you cannot plan when you will get sick, if money is tight you also cannot budget to be sick. Now the whole family can get 100 per cent free public health care at our world-first satellite hospital at Caboolture and next year on Bribie Island—something I am incredibly proud of. It helps household budgets, because when you are sick is sometimes when you can least afford care.

From our public housing big build to free period products in schools, our Palaszczuk government is working every single day to support people facing national and global cost-of-living pressures. Under the LNP, that is all at risk. Let's look at their record. When the LNP were in power, how did they support Queenslanders with the cost of living? What did they provide in terms of cost-of-living rebates on people's power bills? They provided zero. In fact, they oversaw the biggest increase in power bills in the history of Queensland—47 per cent—and they provided zero in support for those families.

They did not make kindy free; they cut 500 teaching positions. They cut TAFE. They put school ovals up for sale in Moreton Bay. When they slashed health services, the LNP forced Queenslanders to pay for private care and they created the ultimate cost-of-living crisis for the 731 local nurses that they marched out the door in Metro North.

The Crisafulli opposition leader gave his short, sharp position on our satellite hospitals very clearly when he tweeted his infamous infrastructure cuts list. Even though he deleted it three minutes later, he is not backing away. The one thing he will never backflip on is his plan for cuts. We know what the LNP think of our Bribie Island Satellite Hospital because they told us and they show us. Their leader called it an overspend. The local LNP said that we should spend the money on a private hospital.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Leader of the Opposition, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms KING: Give them the reins of government and you just know that they will privatise it. That is no help for Queenslanders who need cost-of-living help when they are sick or hurt.

Energy is where that cost-of-living fail from the LNP bites hardest. The wackjobs and the wowers in the Queensland LNP want to block our cheap, clean renewable power in favour of pushing nuclear—the most expensive power on earth—straight down Queenslanders' throats.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba North, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms KING: The LNP have Ted O'Brien, the nuclear windbag from Wide Bay. There is federal opposition leader Peter Dutton, calling for his ominous-sounding 'nuclear new dawn'. There is Canavan the 'coalition cooker', calling for small modular nuclear reactors that would cripple cash flow for households. Just this week we heard about NuScale, the LNP's poster boy for small modular nuclear reactors. It was cancelled after costs escalated from US\$3.6 billion to US\$9.3 billion and nobody would invest in it. That is the LNP's only answer to the cost of living: cuts to jobs and services and the most expensive power on earth.


People in Pumicestone who are struggling with the cost of living simply cannot afford the LNP and their toxic plans for nasty nuclear and crafty cuts. They talk about structured cost-of-living support, but that is just a cover-up for their structural cost-of-living cuts. The LNP have no plan for the cost of living except cut, sack and sell.

Dr Rowan interjected.

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

Ms KING: They want to cancel our progressive coal royalties and our mental health levy and sack workers wholesale.

Housing Supply

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (2.46 pm): I want to continue on the theme of cost of living. Reports today that Queensland has become the most unaffordable place to rent in Australia are yet another example of how Queenslanders are paying for Labor's failures. In the past year, Queenslanders have experienced the largest rent increases of anywhere in Australia, at 9.5 per cent, while also facing a record low vacancy rate of 0.87 per cent. The Queensland housing crisis is a direct result of Labor failing to release land ahead of population growth, with residential lot approvals plummeting 30 per cent during the last decade under Labor.

The Palaszczuk Labor government's chaos and crisis are costing Queenslanders dearly. Never before has there been a more difficult time to find, secure or keep a roof over your head in Queensland than now under the Palaszczuk Labor government. Queenslanders are fighting against the lowest rental vacancies on record and the biggest rental rises in the nation. The situation is dire, and it is getting worse. Some regional Queenslanders are now paying more than half of their income on rent in this Queensland housing crisis. Regional Queenslanders are paying a devastatingly high price for decade-long government failure to plan and deliver the land for the housing that we need.

Our state is in the grip of a housing crisis fuelled by a lack of new homes to accommodate our growing population, pushing rents out of reach for too many Queenslanders. New houses have gone backwards by nearly one-third, while our population continues to grow. The Queensland housing crisis has not happened overnight. Queenslanders have watched Labor fail to plan and deliver, and now we are living with the results. The LNP's priorities include improving housing affordability with more land supply and developing timely plans to identify what infrastructure and services are needed to accommodate our population.

On that theme, let's talk more about some of the problems that are contributing to the housing crisis in Queensland. A few weeks after the Housing Summit, which was over a year ago, the Premier said—

To further drive housing supply, the State Development director-general is currently auditing state owned land and buildings to identify properties that could be repurposed for social housing or crisis accommodation—this audit is expected to be completed in three months ...

What was meant to take three months actually took six months. In May the government released to the media some scant details of the audit with 27 land parcels found. The opposition dug a little deeper with a question on notice to the Deputy Premier. It has now been revealed that the audit of the state government's own land had not even determined if the land was suitable to build homes on. It turns out a quarter of the sites are not suitable to help house Queenslanders.

Does the Premier and her government not get the urgency? Does she not understand the dire housing crisis that we are currently in? The blame for the housing crisis lies nowhere else but at the feet of the Palaszczuk Labor government. The Palaszczuk Labor government continues to make promises that they cannot keep.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr MANDER: What we are saying to them is to stop peddling this misinformation and giving false hope to Queenslanders who are so vulnerable. As I said, it—

Mr SMITH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am seeking to know whether or not the Leader of the Opposition has been warned previously because he just interjected. I thought that he had been warned previously.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): The House will come to order and I will hear the point of order in silence. I ask you to resume your seat, member for Everton and I will take some advice. Member, I think you seeking my guidance in relation to that is actually disrespectful to the chair. I control the behaviour in the House. I will be the first to admit that anybody who sits in this chair does not see 100 per cent of everything that happens, but we do our best to maintain the order and the dignity of this chamber and we will continue to do that.

Mr MANDER: When is the member for Bundaberg going to realise that every time he stands up he totally embarrasses himself and the Labor Party?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Everton, I do not need your commentary on the rulings that I make.

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not talking about your rulings at all. I am talking about the member for Bundaberg—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let's move on.


Mr MANDER:—during his last 11 months in this place as a one-term wonder. He wonders whether he will get his part-time job back again at the school. That is what he left, a part-time teaching position; he has been trying to make out that he is a teacher. You are going to soon find out what the unemployment line is like if you continue to embarrass yourself in this House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your comments will come through the chair.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House will come to order.

Townsville Electorate

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (2.52 pm): God bless the teachers. Right now there is huge confidence in Townsville and its future and that is in no small part thanks to the government's backing of CopperString 2032. I have said it before and I will say it again: CopperString is not just a game changer for Townsville; it is the game. It will open up huge opportunities for developing and growing critical mineral deposits in North Queensland. When community cabinet was held in Townsville two weeks ago, the Premier announced a \$1.3 billion package to progress work on CopperString 2032. This will help unlock potentially \$500 billion of critical minerals in the North West Minerals Province. We know that when the north-west is booming so is Townsville. Whether it is through the port or through our local businesses and services, it makes a huge difference to Townsville. This means good jobs for Townsville.

It is not just the critical minerals projects that will benefit from CopperString 2032 either. The Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct is set to benefit from this 1,100-kilometre long, high-voltage electricity transmission network. There are huge opportunities at the precinct, including QEM's TECH project along with Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners state-of-the-art polysilicon manufacturing facility. This project was announced by the Townsville City Council the same week that community cabinet was held in the city. Mayor Jenny Hill put it succinctly when talking to the media. She said—

To have the renewable energy coming in through Copperstring, that announcement is really critical. It's like moving all the pieces in a jigsaw and finally getting them all together.

For the kids sitting in our classroom today, CopperString 2032 means there are jobs in their town. There are jobs that will be created now and right into the future. It is the Palaszczuk government that will continue to invest in infrastructure projects that will power Townsville and the north now and into the future. All this is at risk because of the LNP's plans for cuts. We know they do not support our progressive coal royalties beyond 2024, which means CopperString 2032 is gone. It means the fast-tracked Moranbah hospital is gone. It means the Townsville University Hospital upgrades are gone. The list is endless.

It is about time the opposition revealed what else is on the chopping block. The LNP do not support the people in Townsville getting their fair share from a commodity that Queenslanders own because they are at the whim of the Queensland Resources Council. At least the federal shadow resources minister was honest and up-front about her views on progressive coal royalties and it is about time the Leader of the Opposition had the same gumption. The Palaszczuk government is backing Townsville, it is backing our regions and, in fact, it is backing all of Queensland. We have a plan to deliver the services and the infrastructure a growing Queensland needs.

While I am on my feet and I am talking about great opportunities ahead for Townsville it would be remiss of me not to talk about the bumper year ahead for Townsville and the Queensland Country Bank Stadium. In the last seven days it was announced that the NRL All Stars game and game 3 of the Women's State of Origin will be played in Townsville next year.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Mr STEWART: Thank you. I take that interjection. These two games are collectively expected to draw in excess of 15,000 visitors to Townsville, pumping \$8 million into the visitor economy. Townsville embraced the Women's State of Origin this year with a monster crowd of 18,275 people, so to have the deciding game in the events capital of North Australia will be absolutely fantastic.


Seeing Townsville on the national stage hosting blockbuster sporting and live music events was our vision for the stadium beyond just a Cowboys home ground and the reason we built it. It is safe to say that we are now delivering on that. Next year we have Pink coming as well who will perform in two concerts, which is a huge drawcard for the north. Townsville is the events capital of North Australia and seeing it come alive with epic events is great for the local economy and engages more visitors to experience everything our incredible region has to offer from Townsville to Ingham to the Burdekin and out to Charters Towers. This is why the Palaszczuk government built the stadium, because it brings the city alive and is a huge boost for our local businesses.

BODY CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3416, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (2.58 pm), continuing: The quote continues—

Fast forward to 16 May, 2022 when I received notification that my contract has been terminated by Allegra Homes as they have been unable to complete the building.

I attended the property on 18 May, and luck would have it, an Allegra Homes supervisor was on site.

He advised me that all of the homes were complete, they were about to complete the defects stage (2-3 weeks for this stage).

Given that a similar property on the next block down recently sold for \$150k more than my signed contract, it is easy to see why a builder has delayed the completion of this home to utilise the sunset clause to benefit his own hip pocket.

Legal advice is that unless I want to spend thousands of dollars in court fees, with a protracted time delay, it would be in the best interest of the SMSF to invest elsewhere.

That means a loss of 18 months having my funds invested wisely and no asset but also a large bill of having to pay SMSF audit fees for a fund with no asset.

Changes in this bill will mean that the use of a sunset clause to terminate off-the-plan contracts for land will need either the buyers' written consent, a Supreme Court order or another way prescribed by regulation. It does not apply to sunset clauses contained within building contract terms, even when the terms are part of a linked land and house-building contract or a single house and land contract. This will apply retrospectively for contracts that have been settled to date. Many industry stakeholders opposed the changes, claiming that the practice is not widespread. The REIQ said that it was not aware of any reports. The UDIA is concerned that drastic changes are a reaction to a small number of instances which do not appear to be systemic. Matthew Derrick from the UDIA told the committee—

I think the sunset date for land needs to be a lot longer than it currently is ... if, instead of an 18-month drop-dead date, we had something that was more compatible with the apartment sunset type period, whether it is three years or 3½ years.

The HIA said that the changes were based on unprecedented market conditions and called for a more holistic and long-term approach. That is why I welcome the review into the sunset clauses schedule after one to two years. By then we should know if the changes resolve the sunset loophole and whether it has created unintended consequences. I welcome the member for Theodore's strong advocacy to protect buyers against the unscrupulous behaviour of a few.

As I said earlier, some of the bill's policy objectives come from the government's Housing Summit. The government promised more homes, more land, more construction, more partnerships and more investment. A year later, the housing climate continues to deteriorate. Despite that, the

government has delivered little more than media releases and delayed projects. You cannot put a roof over someone's head with a media release. Instead of tangible solutions it has delivered false hope and failed announcements and has not delivered many key promises.


This bill was rushed in order to appear to be doing something. Only six business days were given for public scrutiny and feedback. This is risky. The Queensland Law Society said that the short turnaround 'highlights the risks of errors in legislation which is passed without adequate time for public scrutiny'. You cannot help thinking that this bill is primarily aimed at media management. The government is clueless and has run out of ideas. It treats the housing crisis as a political problem and a media problem, not a policy problem.

The pressures on housing have been building for years. Blame for many of the underlying causes can be sheeted home to the government. It has been in power for almost nine years. It has not released enough land for new homes. Planning has been inadequate. The LNP's statement of reservation notes that tight markets across Queensland are compounded by poor planning and foresight on the government's behalf when it comes to the approval of new residential dwellings in Queensland. Residential lot approvals decreased across the state by close to 40 per cent between 2014-15 and 2019-20. Increased housing and renovation costs have directly resulted from failed timber policies spanning years of successive Labor governments. During a housing crisis the government is either incapable or wilfully ignorant about understanding the contribution of its anti-forestry, anti-timber agenda. The result is that Queenslanders continue to pay more for housing, rent and renovations.

Nearly 40,000 Queenslanders are on the social housing waitlist. The government failed to plan or forecast how many social homes would be needed. It neglects the community housing sector—a sector which is embraced in every other Australian jurisdiction. It boasts about building 4,300 social homes since coming to office, yet the Productivity Commission revealed that only 1,400 homes were added to the social housing portfolio. It claims that it has the largest concentrated investment in social housing of any state, yet the Productivity Commission found that it spent the least per capita in the last two years.

Whether you call it social housing or crisis housing, there is very little across the Gympie region. The pressure on the private rental market puts pressure on the social housing list. A healthy vacancy rate is between 2.6 per cent and 3.5 per cent. The REIQ's latest quarterly rental report for September showed that Gympie's vacancy rate was 1.2 per cent. It is a tight market for people struggling to find safe and secure housing. After almost a decade of Labor, the dream of owning your home has become unattainable for many. Queensland sits at the bottom on the home ownership table in Australia. The LNP aims to reverse that and put us at the top.

Rushing this bill will not alleviate the housing crisis. When people are living in their cars or in tents or couch surfing and families are being split and forced to live apart, the last thing they need is platitudes, trickery and legislation on the run. While I will oppose the clauses relating to the termination of community titles schemes, I do not oppose the bill.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (3.04 pm): I rise to make my contribution in relation to the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. At the outset I want to thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for welcoming me for the cameo role that I played during the inquiry into the bill, substituting for the member for Caloundra during the public hearing. I want to declare at the outset that I have never owned a property that was subject to body corporate management and it did take a bit of reading to get my head around the issues in the bill. I have, however, been a regular renter in strata title communities, as I am today.

There are the headline objectives in this bill which are relatively easy to follow and generally welcomed by all stakeholders. There is the issue of pet ownership within complexes managed under bodies corporate. I understand from speaking to residents living in them that the rules are often extremely difficult to navigate for someone to own a pet. Blanket no-pet policies are often in place, with many hurdles placed on the approval process. Whether you are looking to buy a property or rent a property—and keeping in mind that townhouse and unit living is, for many, becoming the extent of their buying power—to be able to live under one of the many current no-pet policies may mean parting with a beloved pet. Owners who do have pets find that approval is limited to a single pet detailed by breed and name, meaning that if their beloved dog dies and they want to replace them the body corporate may not approve. For renters, this entire process is even harder.

Considering that nearly 70 per cent of Australian households own pets and given the resources tied up in adjudicating applications to approve pets by bodies corporate when it has been established that blanket by-laws restricting pets are invalid, this amendment seeks to provide further clarification on

what by-laws can be set by management. It will prohibit by-laws that ban occupiers—and that includes owners and renters—from having animals on their lots and prohibit by-laws that restrict the number, type and size of animals that an occupier may have on their lot. Occupiers will still have to make an application and seek written approval; however, bodies corporate must consider each application on its merit. As such, this amendment does not change laws around pet ownership but supports occupiers in clarifying their rights against by-laws that are inherently invalid. I know many residents who will welcome this clarity and whose quality of life and enjoyment will be enhanced with their right to own a pet in their own home now a much easier proposition.

The other issue which commonly raises its head, particularly in those dense residential properties—often the hallmark of strata title properties—is that of second-hand smoke. Again, I have never owned a strata title property but I have rented many, as I currently do, and in many of these places there is a limited opportunity to have outdoor space or even a balcony to enjoy the fresh air. That simple enjoyment can often be disrupted by how others choose to use their space. While there are several laws in Queensland which determine where people can smoke, these are generally limited to public or common spaces. However, while a balcony or courtyard does represent someone's private space, its close proximity to everyone else's means that those activities will inherently drift into other places and spaces and that impacts others' quality of life and health.

Previously it has been difficult for rulings by both bodies corporate and tribunals to be made on activities such as smoking in private occupier spaces that impacted on the activities and health of other occupants. Much like the clarifications around pet ownership, these amendments provide clarity for bodies corporate to make decisions about smoking restrictions based on the configurations and density of the individual properties. These amendments have been generally well received because of the impact that decisions by bodies corporate have on the day-to-day lives of many Queenslanders, but the bigger part of this bill is in the process and decisions around the termination of community titles schemes. One of the key actions following the Queensland Housing Summit was the creation of a mechanism whereby a community titles scheme can be terminated for economic reasons.

The rationale behind this was to create the conditions for renewal and development of housing stock. Currently, older community titles schemes from developments in the seventies and eighties are facing increasing maintenance and repair costs which are being passed on to occupiers, owners and, subsequently, tenants. However, the conditions for a community titles scheme to be terminated and the properties to be sold requires unanimous support from all owners. This has meant that it would only take one resident to thwart an entire process, locking all owners into potentially spiralling body corporate fees to maintain outdated and dilapidated properties. Owners also wishing to sell out of the title are then finding it difficult to achieve good sale values when body corporate fees are excessive for older properties.


The current bill proposes that the threshold for commencing the termination process where an economic reasons resolution has been passed will be 75 per cent. Stakeholders varied on their opinions as to the appropriate percentage of assent, but the overall move to lower the threshold was welcomed. The government understands that there is a tension between the rights of property owners to have confidence in their long-term residency or investment and the rights of majority owners who feel shackled to unviable properties or investments. I believe the bill has regard to this balance with a transparent process to commence, vote on and dispute the termination of a community titles scheme.

I understand the committee made a number of recommendations after hearing issues raised by stakeholders and I commend the instances where these processes will be evaluated to determine whether the processes are valid, whether they are workable and whether there are any unintended consequences. I know many found the process to be drawn out and that the process to terminate a community titles scheme under these arrangements to be lengthy, but when one is making decisions that affect the ownership of someone else's property these processes should be detailed and with consideration.

The committee did hear from stakeholders who were themselves considered the 'hold-outs' under the current system and I reflect on instances where big money and big profits are the key considerations, where bodies corporate are dominated by developers as owners seeking to force the hand of other owners into selling, where community property is run down deliberately and body corporate rates hiked up to force older, more vulnerable owners out, where the sale of a property on the open market is affected by poor maintenance and upkeep and where the owner has little choice but to bend to the will of the majority to agree to termination of the scheme. What I heard in this instance was not necessarily commentary on the proposed amendments under this bill, rather the need for the Office of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management—admittedly an office I

did not know existed before I participated in this committee—to have greater advocacy powers and reach on behalf of tenants who are finding themselves pressured and disadvantaged by their body corporate's management team. This is not the experience of many, thankfully, but for anyone to live with the stress of being forced out of their home by the manoeuvring of those with money and influence is certainly a nightmare situation for those who find themselves in it. I commend this as one of the key actions from the Housing Summit, noting that that was over a year ago.

In terms of the timing of this bill, I do not think it is rushed. There was significant consultation post the Housing Summit in relation to this and the report went into great detail to outline the number of stakeholders that were involved and had already had input into this bill. Therefore, I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (3.14 pm): Every Queenslander deserves the opportunity to achieve the Australian dream—the dream to own their own home and to have that asset be safe and secure. There are a lot of provisions in this bill that we do support, but the termination of community titles schemes is not one of them. I will be strongly opposing these clauses alongside my colleagues. In the middle of a housing crisis, dramatically decreasing the threshold for termination of community titles schemes will only make things worse. Essentially, this bill proposes to make older apartment buildings easier to knock down and redeveloped with newer and more expensive properties. This bill proposes to undermine property rights. This will not help fix the housing crisis. In fact, stakeholders and people in my community have raised concerns that this could actually force Queenslanders out of their homes and their suburbs leading to more people facing housing insecurity and adding more pressure to the crisis.

In my part of the Gold Coast I have regularly talked about where we should have more supply in the right areas that will bring down rents and give people the opportunity to buy. We should have density around Westfield Helensvale where we have empty, cleared land next to light rail, heavy rail and a bus network. Instead this government's poor planning of the Coomera Connector, where the light rail was plonked into the road corridor without adjustments, has blocked hundreds of apartments from being built next to this expensive rail infrastructure. Then there is the block of land next to Smith Collective which has been identified in the government's land audit as part of the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct. In fact, it is the only land in that precinct allocated for housing and it has only just been put on the market with a call for proposals—over five years since the Commonwealth Games finished and this land was opened.

Again, decreasing the termination threshold is not the fix for the housing crisis. Everyday Queenslanders will pay the price for this political desperation. To add to this, a lot of these body corporate units in my electorate are older style, walk-up apartments. They often become home to young people who are finding their start in the housing market. To have these hard-earned homes ripped out from beneath them would be devastating. We heard the previous speaker and other members talk about money and influence as if the people who are the 'hold-outs', so to speak, are the ones who are massively profiting from this. Decreasing the threshold will just make that worse. It will make it easier for developers to pick up these blocks. The Main Beach Association raised these concerns. They said these changes will have the opposite effect to what the government is trying to achieve because construction will take too long. Older unit blocks will be knocked down, people will be kicked out and it will be several years before new housing is put in their place. I have also seen this in my area. These changes would force out long-term locals from suburbs like Labrador and Biggera Waters.

I represent a lot of people who live within community titles schemes and that means that laws in this space are important to the people I represent. Around one in three, or 7½ thousand, of the dwellings in my part of the Gold Coast are units or apartments. Another 27.4 per cent are semi-detached like townhouses. Older units could be more easily demolished under these changes. These properties are not being replaced with affordable housing or even housing of a similar calibre; they are being replaced with luxury, often holiday or short-stay apartments, which massively increases housing pressure in my part of the Gold Coast.

I am committed to seeing more Queenslanders, and especially more young Queenslanders, in my electorate achieve the Australian dream of owning their own home and I will not support a clause that will make it easier for these people to be forced out of their homes when they achieve this. Recently I met an extremely distressed constituent from Biggera Waters. I want to share their story because it is an example of how even having sway over 50 per cent of the body corporate can cause issues for where people call home and where even that lower figure could be a pathway to the 75 per cent requirement for termination that these laws propose. I will keep their details anonymous because they were fearful of retribution from a particular owner within their unit block. In their situation a single owner

owned a substantial number of the 30 units in their block. This owner is keen to sell the block to get a larger development onto this prime piece of land. Using their sway over the body corporate, this single owner is allowing the common property to be run down to help further and more easily facilitate a sale. This owner is well aware of the lower threshold proposed in these laws and it is the view of my constituent that they are waiting for it. My constituent even thought that these laws were in place already until she came and saw me about this. I am concerned as well that the economic reasons required for terminating a community titles scheme in this legislation are too subjective, too broad, and too easy to be crafted to justify a termination. The proposed threshold of 75 per cent is also a concern for me because it is too low.

What we are seeing through these laws is Labor cuddling up to developers at the expense of people who want to be safe and secure in the places they made their homes. I am proud to stand up for and protect the property rights of Queenslanders by opposing this watering down of the termination provisions.

The by-laws changes in the amendments in this bill have been called for over many years. One such by-law amendment clarifies the prohibition on smoking in an outdoor area that is part of a lot such as a balcony, courtyard or something similar. Mike Myerson, from Labrador, shared with the committee his view that smoking should be banned unless a body corporate passes a by-law specifically allowing it. He rightly highlighted the risk to someone's health of passive inhalation as smoke drifts across common areas and into people's private balconies and even their apartments. Mike said—


Make smokers prove the non-harmful nature of their activity, not the other way round.

These changes will allow self-management by bodies corporate to ban smoking. This will let them design by-laws that suit their individual properties. It will give committees the power to manage themselves and their community's best interests, giving the committee of owners the right to determine democratically what happens within their properties, on the common property and in the outdoor areas.

I thank Richard and Julia Szabo, also from Labrador, for submitting their feedback about dogs. In particular, they talked about the risk of dog attacks in complexes and the problems that come with irresponsible dog ownership. They raised their desire for consideration to be given to the requirement for pet enclosures and for better control of dogs in common areas. These laws will allow a body corporate to refuse a pet application if reasonably satisfied that the animal would put the safety of residents at risk and if the resident requesting to have a pet is unwilling or unable to keep the animal within reasonable conditions to mitigate any risk or if the risk could not be reasonably reduced or managed by conditions placed on the animal.

I appreciate the Szabos' feedback that they would like these amendments to have more 'clarity, guidance or even awareness about dog attacks'. They shared with me what they have gone through in their complex and it is horrific. It is something that no-one should go through in their home. I sincerely hope their body corporate, in particular, uses these new powers correctly. Much of what they are looking for is broader than the legislation before us. It is largely due to a really toxic and distressing dispute that they are having with a neighbour, which is a difficult thing to legislate against. I am satisfied that these changes will give the right powers to bodies corporate to properly regulate pets and balance that with a tenant's absolute right to have a pet within their property if they are a responsible pet owner. I also note the reported impending introduction of new laws to hold dog owners criminally responsible for attacks in order to better hold them accountable.

A final change proposed by the bill relates to sunset clauses. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the hard work of the member for Theodore. He has been fighting for this since August last year. He is an outstanding representative for his part of the Gold Coast. I am very proud to serve as his neighbour in this parliament.

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (3.22 pm): I rise to speak to the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. At the outset, I would like to thank the mighty Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for their excellent work. This is part of a series of work done by QUT over quite a period. We have been talking about much of their work over the past sitting weeks and I thank them for some of the really significant elements of this bill. When the bill was first introduced I remember saying to the Attorney-General that this is like a day in the life of my electorate office, because the issues that are contained in this bill come up more frequently than literally any other issue. Therefore, I am extremely grateful for the clarity that this bill will provide to some of those people.

I will speak in detail to the amendments about smoking, allowing pets and the towing provisions. Firstly, I acknowledge that the bill also addresses a key action of the 2022 Queensland Housing Summit by reforming the act to allow for the termination of uneconomic community titles schemes to facilitate renewal and development and strengthen buyer protections under the Land Sales Act. It also delivers on a 2020 election commitment to allow an adjudicator the power to approve alternative insurance arrangements.


The only other thing I want to say about that is that I was in the House when the member for Maiwar spoke to the bill. In typical Greens fashion, he took the very simplistic 'landlords are bad, tenants are good' approach, which they use for all of these issues. I say to the member for Maiwar and in general that many people in my electorate take great offence at the polarising view that the Greens have around any housing issue. They are mums and dads who have invested for the long term. They have invested for their children's futures. They find it extremely insulting, offensive and inflammatory to always be referred to as greedy, bad people who only have the most appalling interests at heart. I speak on their behalf and also raise my objection at that really simplistic approach that the Greens have to all of these issues.

On the other three issues in particular, I want to say a couple of things. We know that smoking is a really vexed issue for many people. The committee and a lot of the stakeholder input really looked at balancing the rights of an individual to smoke in their private space with the effect of passive smoking on people who have no control over what is happening to them. I am really proud of all of the measures that Queensland has put in place to make sure Queenslanders are not vulnerable to the effects of passive smoking. We know what an insidious impact it can have on health.

The amendments in the bill will give real clarity to bodies corporate on how they can enforce any decisions around smoking. It will mean that tenants are very clear on their rights. On each of those three matters—smoking, towing laws and the ability to have pets—there has been a lack of clarity which, in itself, can be not only distressing but also cause conflict. The last thing we want is conflict amongst neighbours. I thank the Attorney-General for providing us with a bill that gives clarity so that everyone knows what their rights are.

On the ability to have pets, again, there has been a complete lack of clarity about what is allowed and what is not allowed which has meant that it is possible that unfair decisions could be made. Many speakers on this bill have talked about how incredibly important pets are to owners. If you are an elderly person or a person on your own, sometimes being able to keep a pet in your home makes all the difference in terms of your happiness. It is very important that people know what their rights are in that regard. I thank the Attorney-General for the clarity on that.

I refer to the towing provisions. Many people come into my office to express their complete frustration and lack of power to do anything about people using car parks when they have absolutely nothing to do with the building. Significant investment is made to provide car parks. When you buy or rent in a complex, you believe that those amenities are available to you. Again, this can be a huge source of conflict, anxiety and stress for everyday people who come into my office to say that they just want to be able to preserve their own rights as citizens of this state. I thank the Attorney-General for bringing in this amendment because, as I said, this is not only about having our rights made clear; it is about reducing conflict in our communities and allowing for good and cordial relations between people who live in close proximity. I commend the bill to the House.


 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (3.29 pm): It is a pleasure to rise and speak on the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill before us. I thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for the work it has done on this bill. Some might say it is a dry bill that is not that exciting, but for people who live in a unit complex with a body corporate and community titles scheme it is a very important aspect of their lives. From the outset, I point out that I am a pet lover and I have pets, but I do believe in a process of self-determination for bodies corporate. I am a member of two bodies corporate, one of which allows pets but only after the pet has been there for a trial period of three months. If a pet lives reasonably well within the confined eight-unit environment, then the pet can stay. There are two pets, but we did have one unruly pet that was not allowed to be there. Fortunately, the owners complied. That unit block had disallowed pets forever and a day. It had been in operation since 1974. There was a change and they now allow pets, as I said, after a trial.

I want to thank Mandy Cook, who was actually part of the original study that looked into some of the issues around bodies corporate, particularly around pets. She is very concerned about the changes that will see some of the property owners' rights through the body corporate lessened. I recognise the case law around this, but I again stress my belief in the importance of self-determination for bodies corporate.

I move on to the issues around the sunset clauses. I, too, pay tribute to Mark Boothman, the member for Theodore, for the work he has done in fighting for his community. I place on record that my daughter lives in the member for Theodore's electorate. I have seen the hard work that the member for Theodore does. I was proud to be acting opposition deputy whip with Mr Boothman. No finer member of parliament do we have than Mark. His fight with regard to the sunset provisions is something all members should be proud of. In a booming market it is just a matter of developers being able to delay the sale of properties to allow time for a sunset clause to be activated. They can take the land or units off the market and put them back on the market to maximise their opportunity. Some of the property owners who have bought off plan, particularly in the member for Theodore's electorate where there are a number of slope stability issues, have had to have bespoke development and landscaping designed for their land. Some of them have spent between \$20,000 and \$40,000 to have a good plan for when their builder and landscapers are ready. I commend those aspects of the 'Mark Boothman bill'. It is something which I am sure he will be proud of.

While I am paying tribute to people I also place on record my thanks to the member for Mermaid Beach, who has been a member of this House for a lot of years. I listened to him—and I suggested other members of the House should have listened to him—when he said that this is the worst law he has seen in his 17 years in this place. He said that this is activating a private person's ability to acquire a person's home—it is not something for a state interest. I understand the body corporate system and the provisions of this bill in terms of the economic impacts and affordability with regard to body corporate expenses when a building is run down. A smart owner-developer and a cohort of those within that property can very easily over a period of time see the property lose its value and not spend on maintenance of the property to see its value forced down. The member for Mermaid Beach spoke about that and the importance of that. The government has put in place a potential stopgap of 75 per cent of owners. Driven developer-owners can very easily manipulate that over a three- or five-year period to drive down the price and to see it affect the affordability of that complex.

As has also been said, I cannot see how this bill will fix affordability and housing availability issues at this time. I quote the CEO of the UDIA, Kirsty Chessher-Brown, who said that in a housing crisis we should not be putting in place laws. She said we should be leaving things the same so that people can get on, build and provide more housing stock. Having said those few words, I once again commend member for Theodore Mark Boothman for his work. I appreciate the opportunity to contribute.

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (3.35 pm): I rise to address the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. This a bill that seeks to reform and update the legislative framework around body corporate governance and administration. It is an important issue that has been left unaddressed for far too long, particularly when we consider that over 528,000 properties in Queensland sit in a community titles scheme. I should disclose at this point that I am one of those property owners and that my principal place of residence is a townhouse in a body corporate arrangement.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: Only one. The bill deals with several contentious issues, the first being changes to the provisions that facilitate the termination of an existing community titles scheme which currently can only be implemented with the 100 per cent agreement of all owners. Secondly, the bill makes changes to the powers that the body corporate committee has to make by-laws, specifically as it relates to the regulation of smoking and pet ownership within the body corporate environment, among other issues. The third significant aspect of this legislation involves measures that strengthen buyer protections under the Land Sales Act by limiting when sunset clauses can be used to terminate off-the-plan contracts for the sale of land. Like so many bills that we see the government introduce, there are provisions that we support and provisions about which the LNP has concerns.

I will start with the positive. The measures to improve buyer protections under the Land Sales Act to prohibit sunset clauses that automatically terminate an off-the-plan contract are a welcome and important measures to ensure that young families in particular, but also others buying land in new developments, are protected from the unscrupulous behaviour of some property developers. I know that all members are aware of the strong advocacy of the member for Theodore, Mark Boothman, who has on many occasions raised this issue both in the media and in the parliament after hearing of the plight of young families who had their contracts for the purchase of land cancelled under the existing laws. It is testament to his tenacity that we are here debating these provisions. We might call it the 'Boothman clause'. Young families had valid contracts to purchase land on which to build their first house only to have developers and their marketing agents cancel contracts because land prices had increased in the period between when the contract was signed and when they chose to cancel it.

Contracts were cancelled and then, in many cases, the buyers had the same property offered back to them at a grossly inflated price. I am pretty confident that most of my constituents, if not all, would consider that to be unconscionable conduct, and it should not be allowed. It is good to see that that loophole is finally getting closed. It should be noted, though, that this exact same issue was prohibited by the New South Wales government in 2015. It is disappointing that it has taken so long for the state Labor government to act and that it took the member for Theodore to raise the concerns of the community.

One aspect of the bill that is more contentious is the issue of the termination of existing community titles schemes. As has been noted, the bill provides for a community titles scheme to be terminated in circumstances where there are economic reasons supporting the termination and with the agreement of 75 per cent of lot owners and the body corporate, whereas the current requirement to terminate the community titles scheme requires 100 per cent agreement. While the intent to simplify the process to terminate a community titles scheme seems reasonable, the LNP has concerns that the individual rights of property owners will be infringed because of this change. Indeed, the committee report addresses this issue and acknowledges that clause 7 of the bill will likely result in a circumstance where a lot owner who does not wish to sell their property is forced to do so because of the decision of at least 75 per cent of lot owners. One of the fundamental values of the LNP is private property rights, so any measures that infringe such a right need to be carefully considered.

The government's position that winding up existing community titles schemes will help drive new housing stock for me is not sufficient justification to override a property owner's rights. Additionally, it is clear from submissions to the bill that there are justifiable concerns about how such measures will work in practice. At a time when there is a critical shortage of housing, it would be a perverse outcome if the state government were to force elderly property owners out of their home against their will for economic reasons.

Such concerns have been raised by many members, including the member for Mermaid Beach and the member for Surfers Paradise today. It was particularly disappointing to hear some of the contributions from senior government ministers such as the member for McConnel and the member for Sandgate, who sought to ridicule the contributions of those LNP members who were raising legitimate concerns of voters in their electorates. Indeed, the concerns of LNP members in relation to this issue are reflected in a number of the submissions to the inquiry and in the committee report.

While a number of lobby groups such as the Property Council, the Law Society, the REIQ and the Strata Community Association support this provision, groups representing property owners are predominantly opposed to the provision. The Unit Owners Association Queensland stated that the proposal shows 'a lack of consideration for the interests of all participants in the Queensland strata industry'. The Main Beach Association and the Community Alliance Association both stated that the bill is 'grossly unfair' and that it 'favours the interests of property developers over the wider community'.

Concerns were raised about how these particular provisions will work in practical terms. The suggestion was made in committee submissions to increase the threshold to 90 per cent, which was dismissed by the government on the basis that such a threshold would exclude schemes with nine lots or less. Surely, in order to achieve the policy outcomes that the bill seeks to achieve, if that is the concern a clause could be included that provides for 90 per cent of lot owners agreeing, or in the event that the scheme has less than nine lots, all owners except for one agree to the termination.

In the short time remaining to me I want to address the provisions that amend the BCCM Act to allow bodies corporate to make a by-law that prohibits smoking on a community titles scheme's common property, body corporate assets or a lot's outdoor area. This is a measure that I believe is appropriate to protect the rights of residents' use of common property, body corporate assets or a lot's outdoor area from the impact of second-hand smoke, which has been clearly proven to have deleterious health impacts.

As has been identified, a number of mechanisms already exist to limit smoking in community titles schemes, but a shortfall in the existing legislation means that that restriction does not extend to outdoor areas within the property. Many residents have told me that frequently the actions of short-stay tenants who have booked through Airbnb or similar platforms cause behavioural issues within body corporate residences. This has certainly been my experience as well. It is appropriate that bodies corporate should be able to make a by-law to restrict such actions.

Finally, I want to address the issue of education for strata managers. Strata managers deal with a complex legislative environment and they frequently deal with large financial transactions. The average amount of funds that a small strata manager deals with on an annual basis is between

\$2 million and \$3 million. Lot owners in those strata schemes should have confidence that strata managers have the skills and attributes to manage such complex arrangements, and Queensland's existing provisions in this regard are not sufficient, in my view.


In conclusion, the LNP supports action to relieve the current housing crisis and to ensure more Queenslanders have the security of owning their own home. However, there are important aspects of this bill that do not achieve that goal and unfairly infringe the rights of property owners. This is why we will be opposing those aspects of this bill. I call on the government to get serious about addressing the issues of poor planning and a lack of foresight and a lack of investment which have contributed significantly to the chronic shortage of residential properties across Queensland.

Regional Queensland has the highest level of housing unaffordability or mortgage stress of any locality in the country. Thirty per cent of incomes are going into either mortgage or rental payments and regional Queensland is the worst in the country. Rental vacancy rates in my part of the world on the Sunshine Coast are 0.93 per cent. They have been below one per cent for many months—years, in fact. Queenslanders deserve a government that is serious about addressing the housing crisis. Press conferences are not going to get it done. We need a genuine commitment to addressing this issue.

It is only a Crisafulli LNP government that will take real steps to build the homes that we need and provide a real pathway for all Queenslanders to own their own home. If those opposite are looking for some ideas, they could always read 'The Right Priorities for Queensland's Future'. There is a whole section dedicated to housing. If they are devoid of ideas, as they were on youth justice, they should read page 24, 'Securing our housing foundations'. We have plenty of ideas there, Minister. I encourage you to have a look.

Mr Mander: Gold standard early intervention.

Mr MICKELBERG: Yes, gold standard early intervention. Let's talk about home ownership. We should be making home ownership a priority for all Queenslanders, not discriminating against those who seek to invest and build a future for themselves, as is currently the case in Queensland.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (3.45 pm): Those opposite always talk about how they want to address the housing crisis, but let's have a look at their track record. Who did they preselect in Noosa? They preselected a nimby mayor who has come out against the draft SEQ plan, which proposes a modest increase in housing for Noosa. I have heard the current member for Noosa talk time and time again about the housing needs in her local area. What does the opposition do? They preselect a nimby mayor who will not allow the draft SEQ plan to increase—

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

Mr BROWN:—a modest increase in the SEQ plan to allow more housing in that area.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Pause the clock. There is a point of order. Member for Capalaba, take your seat and I will hear the member for Burleigh's point of order.

Mr HART: On relevance: this bill does not talk about preselections in any way.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh, I am not going to take that as a point of order. The member for Capalaba has just started. This debate has been broad ranging, so I will allow him to speak to this for a few moments.

Mr BROWN: It takes a range of options to address the housing crisis. Let's look at another aspect. When it came to the federal government supporting the HAFF, what did the opposition do? They voted against it—against more social and affordable housing. When it comes time to vote on each individual measure—it does not matter what level of government—the LNP are against it. This bill proves that again. The termination of community titles schemes came out of the Housing Summit as one of the many measures that Labor has put forward. Whether it be at the federal level, the state level or even the local level, the LNP have come out against it time and time again. They preselected a nimby mayor for Noosa. They are against the termination of community titles schemes in this bill. They voted against the HAFF in the federal government. At the local level the LNP mayor in the Redlands did not do a housing strategy for a decade. They come in here and say that they want to address the housing crisis, but they do not want to do—

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr BROWN: I take the interjection. It is the mayor who drink-drives. It is the mayor who does community service. It is the mayor who does not show up to anything anymore. It is your LNP mayor.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr BROWN: I take the interjection from the member for Buderim. I am pretty sure I have a pretty good track record of saying it outside as well.

Mr Crandon: Now you're denying the housing crisis.

Mr BROWN: No. You are denying the housing crisis.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Direct your comments through the chair, member.

Mr BROWN: Every single measure that Labor brings forward they are deadset against. Going against the termination of community titles schemes in this bill is another example.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BROWN: I take the interjection. The member for Sandgate understands that we are doing it in a balanced fashion to ensure the termination of a scheme is to the benefit of everyone, to ensure the benefit is spread across the whole community titles scheme. Over 75 per cent ensures that terminating the scheme will be to the benefit of each home owner in that scheme because guess what? They live in a community. I entered into a strata title as a first home buyer. My mate and I bought one of those old style sixpacks in Bulimba.

Ms Grace: Probably built by good Italians.

Mr BROWN: Yes, it was. The body corporate manager was spending more and more money until one day we said, 'No. We can't have this anymore.' I then became the treasurer of the body corporate of that sixpack at Kenthurst. The president was a neighbour of mine—an old BLF organiser. It was a workers' utopia. Guess what happened to the administration fund and the sinking fund? It went from the red into the black. I was proud—

Mr Whiting interjected.

Mr BROWN: I take that interjection. My track record of economic management of Kenthurst is one to be proud of. The following year I was able to cut the fees that came out of home owners' pockets to go into the administration fund because we were able to better manage that aspect of the administration fund.

When you look at all of the different measures, be it at the local government level, the state government level or the federal government level, when Labor comes forward with solutions to bring in more stock the opposition opposes them. They say, 'We want to fix it, but we don't like that part.'

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr BROWN: No, we are coming with solutions and you are knocking it back. You are knocking it back right now.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Direct your comments through the chair, member.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr BROWN: You are knocking it back right now.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, direct your comments through the chair.

Mr BROWN: In this situation the termination of community titles will enhance more stock. We need more stock because there is more demand at the moment. It will give local communities a chance to have better designed properties. It will enhance the local community.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr BROWN: I will take the interjection. Seventy-five per cent is not an unreasonable number.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr BROWN: Again I will take the interjection. It is done in a balanced way that takes care of everyone's needs across the negotiation.

Mr Mickelberg: What if you're a battler?

Mr BROWN: It is going to get harder for the battler—I will take that interjection—if you keep on stopping measures that will increase the amount of stock in the community. This is another measure that will increase stock in our local communities. These guys are getting in the way of it. It just shows they are not fair dinkum when it comes to addressing the housing crisis in our local areas. I want to go on to the next part of the bill. I have obviously wound them up on this.

The next part of the bill deals with towing in local community car parks. I have been through this a number of times when I owned a property in a strata complex. It was particularly around visitor car parks. I know how important it is to have a visitor, particularly for elderly residents, to ensure they have someone to come and visit them. Sometimes those car parks are taken up by an owner's additional car and then you get into a situation. This bill will create better communities by allowing bodies corporate to strengthen the process by which they can tow cars from car parks.

It is a similar situation with regard to smoking laws. This will ensure that second-hand smoke is not experienced by neighbours. I have lived through this myself as an asthmatic. I remember that one particular neighbour would smoke a lot and we would cop the second-hand smoke, so then we would have to shut the doors and turn the air conditioners on. Again this is an important measure—


Mr Mickelberg: Cough for effect!

Mr BROWN: Cough for effect. It is an important measure that looks out for the health of the whole community. These laws strengthen the body corporate's ability to ensure that health and wellbeing is at the forefront. The amendments in this bill will not only ensure that property owners can have pets on their property for the benefit of their mental health and companionship but also that a balance is struck in a way that ensures the safety of the community.

I also want to address the sunset clause, which I think a lot of members have been through before. I have never heard of one letter changing so much. Credit is being given to the member for Theodore for one letter changing this whole clause, but this was obviously in the pipeline. We have all heard stories in our electorates. This has obviously been raised by—

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr BROWN: We do not have to write letters: we talk to the minister. We just go to the caucus room and say the change, which we did, and this is in the bill right now. This bill is a great step forward to ensure the community gets a better benefit out of having a community titles scheme and a body corporate. It contains measures which will enhance the amount of stock in the local community. I would like to highlight again that it is this side of the House that wants to put more stock into the housing market. We want to address rental needs. We want to address affordability, but time and time again—you will see the vote soon and it will demonstrate it—the LNP will vote yet again like they did down in Canberra with the HAFF and like they did in Redlands City Council when they did not want a housing strategy for a decade. They will vote against a measure that goes towards having more stock in our local community, bringing down rents and bringing down housing affordability. I support the bill whole-heartedly.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.55 pm): I too rise to speak to the Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I have sat here today and listened to a lot of speeches by Labor members. After listening to their contributions you have to wonder whether they have read the bill. Maybe they do not understand the bill. Nothing could highlight that more than the speech we have just heard from 'Defamation Don' over here, the man with the track record—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Member, I remind you to use people's correct titles in the House.

Mr HART: I withdraw. The member for Capalaba maintained his track record: he engages his mouth before he engages his brain. We have seen that now, with a court apparently awarding a \$50,000 plus costs defamation case against him for things that—

A government member: Relevance!

Mr HART: I am speaking to the member's speech, Madam Deputy Speaker. The record of the member for Capalaba in this place is atrocious, and we have seen that over and over again. Like a lot of other members, they come in here and try to completely rewrite history. There are some good things in this bill that I fully support but there is one—the 75 per cent vote to extinguish bodies corporate—that I will not support, and I will explain my reasons for that later in my speech.

There are, as I said, some good things in here around the ability of bodies corporate to make by-laws to change the way people may smoke on premises. Under these changes it is possible that by-laws may be made to prevent people from smoking on their balconies. That is not to say, as some members of the Labor Party have said today, that these laws will instantly put that in place. By-laws will have to be put in place to make that happen, and I would have to tell you that on some bodies corporate there are a lot of smokers and they will not want to see this put in place, so who knows whether some of these things will come to fruition.

I would like to declare that my residence is in a body corporate scheme. If there is one thing I have learned from owning a number of units over my time of investing or living in one myself, it is that there are lots of issues with body corporate by-laws. A lot of people do not understand them. They do not know how they work, and the first interaction they have with them is when they get a letter from the body corporate saying that they have to do this or that. There are lots of issues around that, especially when it comes to pets. We have a dog in our unit. We love our dog. I am very pleased to see that people are able to have dogs, cats, birds, fish or whatever pet it may be, and that will be clarified by these changes. Mind you, these changes come about from an inquiry conducted by QUT in 2013. We are now 10 years down the track, so it has taken quite a while for these to come through.

I am also going to congratulate the member for Theodore for the sunset clause provisions contained in the bill. As I said before, the Labor Party is very good at trying to rewrite history. We all know—and we all saw—that it was the member for Theodore who raised this issue, and he should be commended for getting the government on board to get this done. Member for Theodore, very well done on getting this through!

That only actually applies to land, and there have been a number of issues around that. It does not apply to purchases of units off the plan, and this may be something that we need to think about for the future. That could have some hairs on it if we go down that track, but it is something that we need to really look at because I can say that on the Gold Coast we have seen a number of—

Mr BROWN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I understand that the member for Burleigh used improper titles when it came to me. I take offence to that improper title and I ask him to withdraw. The member for Burnett interjected and used the title as well, so I ask him to withdraw as well.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will take some advice on that. Member for Capalaba, I hear your point of order. It was an issue I raised at the time and the member has withdrawn so I believe the point of order has been dealt with.

Mr BROWN: The member for Burnett interjected as well.

Mrs D'ATH: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I was in the chamber at the time. My understanding is that you drew the member's attention to using proper titles but the member was not asked to withdraw so it is still on the record. That is my recollection. I am happy to be corrected, but my understanding is that he was not asked to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did hear the member withdraw so I will accept that as a withdrawal. I believe the matter has been dealt with. Unless there are further points of order, we will return to the member for Burleigh.

Mr BROWN: I took personal offence to the interjection from the member for Burnett as well.

Mr BENNETT: I withdraw.

Mr HART: Maybe the members should pay better attention to what is going on in the House. They would then know that I withdrew at the time.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Member for Burleigh, I ask you to come back to the bill and remain relevant.

Mr HART: I was talking to the possible changes which were discussed at the committee around body corporate off-the-plans and saying that we need to consider that. There have been a number of units under construction on the Gold Coast where a sunset clause has been implemented, and those off-the-plan contracts have been terminated and people have lost the ability to buy units at the right price. As I said, there could be problems with this so it is something we need to look at very carefully. I would hate to see, as is actually happening on the Gold Coast at the moment, more developers going broke because prices have increased suddenly. With a block of land and the sunset clause, usually that is a long process. There is a lot of infrastructure being put in place, and the possibility of not having that sunset clause is more open to that than it is to off-the-plan.

The real thing that I want to talk about is my objection to extinguishing the body corporate scheme for a vote of over 75 per cent. I listened to the member for McConnel, the member for Bancroft and the member for Sandgate, and I have said that their contributions were completely ludicrous.

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence and I ask that he withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken offence.

Mr HART: I withdraw. The member for McConnel and the member for Bancroft, I think, both said that by taking away this 75 per cent vote and reverting to a 100 per cent vote some people may lose the opportunity to sell their units. Maybe the minister in her summing-up could explain exactly how that would happen. How is it that somebody could not sell their unit if they decide to sell it because of the changes that the LNP is proposing? Seriously, what are these members thinking? There is no possibility that someone would not be able to sell their unit if that is what they decide to do. For the members to say that is completely ludicrous. The member for Sandgate went on about the financial—

Ms GRACE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr HART: Madam Deputy Speaker, I did not mention the member for McConnel directly.


Ms GRACE: He said it in the same paragraph as mentioning 'McConnel' and 'Bancroft'. I take personal offence and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh, the way I did hear it was that you had named several members.

Mr HART: I withdraw. For the sake of the House, I withdraw. The member for Sandgate put forward an argument that the financial viability of schemes will be affected by this process somehow. If a unit complex is not financially viable, it is pretty obvious to everyone that that is the case at the end of the day. Can anybody here tell me that a developer will not be able to go and find somebody somewhere who will write a report to say that a scheme, a unit complex, is not financially viable in order to enact what this legislation allows; that is, for a 75 per cent vote to come forward? Of course they will. In fact, we already have developers on the Gold Coast who are planning exactly that. They are hunting around for someone to write them a report that says their scheme is not financially viable.

In the case of a four-unit complex where a developer owns three of those, they have the majority vote already and they can push through a report being written by somebody whom they decide to pay to get the right result. It does not matter what the fourth person wants; they will have to pay for it anyway. That is what happens in a four-unit complex, obviously. I have already been contacted by developers who have said, 'We're ready for this. We're going straight ahead and we want to knock down these places.'

I had not thought about what the member for Mermaid Beach put forward—that this is the first time we have ever seen legislation where a developer is going to be able to take a unit off someone. The government has always been able to do that. They have always been able to reclaim property in response to the right sort of compensation, but this is the first time we have ever seen a developer being able to manipulate somebody out of their property. I think this is a very dangerous slope if we go down there. It is something the government has to seriously look at. On the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast, this is exactly what is going to happen. We are going to see little old ladies out on the street.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (4.08 pm), in reply: I thank the members for their contributions on this bill. I do understand that there are elements of this bill that are very significant. They will have consequences to people's property rights and they need to be thought through very carefully, which has occurred in the development of this bill. I briefly want to touch on what the member for Burleigh has just said. I hope I am not verballing the member when I say this, but my understanding of what the member for Burleigh just said is that he has been told directly by developers that they are already planning to do this. They are planning on manipulating it and getting reports to suit their needs to terminate these schemes. That is what I understood the member for Burleigh just said.

Ms Grace: Yes, he just said it.

Mrs D'ATH: The member for Burleigh said he knows there are developers right now who are planning on using this and sourcing reports to meet their needs to get rid of it. My view is that if the member—

Mr Hart: You need to be very careful about what you say.

Mrs D'ATH: I am happy to go back to *Hansard*, but what I say to the member for Burleigh is: if the member for Burleigh is saying to this House that he is aware of developers who are going to do the wrong thing in relation to these laws, he should stand up and name them now. You are covered by privilege. You have a responsibility. If you deliver the—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Direct your comments through the chair, member.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the House should surely know the rules of the House and, please, I ask you to direct her—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member. I have just reminded the member to put her comments through the chair.

Mrs D'ATH: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is extraordinary members coming in here, making statements, and then saying, 'But I have no responsibility to divulge'—

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: Are you finished? Madam Deputy Speaker, talking about going through the chair, I have no interest in listening to the member for Currumbin. I am responding to the member for Burleigh. The member for Burleigh has made statements in this House, and my view is if members are aware of wrongdoing or claim that wrongdoing is going to occur, then by all means use this opportunity to identify them.

Mr Hart: When it happens, we will report it to you.

Mrs D'ATH: That is interesting. I take that interjection. 'When it happens, we will report it.' They would rather wait and see if someone is harmed by wrongdoing by a developer to prove a point than actually doing it and naming them now. It is really very interesting. Thank you to the member for Burleigh. I am sure your constituents would love to hear that. The member for Mermaid Beach said real estate agents and developers are already using these laws before they are passed. Then state who, because it is not lawful to do that. If they are already doing it without the laws, it is illegal. Divulge who is doing that; give actual examples. They should state the facts, not just make broad, sweeping statements.

I do have to thank the members from the other side for acknowledging the member for Theodore and his contribution. I do want to thank them for that because if they had not made their speeches, I would not have had a clue that the member for Theodore had raised this issue, because it was not while the bill was drafted. Thanks, because I was not listening to the member for Theodore—

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: In relation to when all of this started, it is interesting the number of members on the other side who have talked about consultation, who have talked about this all coming out of the Housing Summit. It was raised in the Housing Summit, but this was raised through the QUT review—the QUT review that started under the member for Kawana when he was the attorney-general. It was a recommendation of QUT to put in place a termination scheme at 75 per cent. I heard one of the members acknowledge the QUT review, but only in relation to pets. They conveniently ignored the QUT review when it came to the termination scheme because it did not fit their narrative in this debate. It did not suit their fear campaign in relation to this debate. The consultation goes back many years. Issues papers, discussion papers—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: I see the member for Nanango laughing. I want to make the point that those on the opposite side—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and I ask that the member withdraw. I was simply yawning, not laughing.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Attorney-General, the member has taken offence.

Mrs D'ATH: I withdraw. The member for Nanango finds parliament boring, but that is okay. Many of those on the opposite side have spent this debate talking about how they are on the side of the pensioner. They are here to ensure the most vulnerable are looked after in body corporate.

An opposition member: Now you've got it!

Mrs D'ATH: I hear the interjection: now I've got it. Do you understand that we all want to protect pensioners and those most vulnerable in a body corporate. I have to ask: where were those members in 2013? I am just wondering. A *Courier-Mail* article states—

Pensioners fight body corporate laws ... Pensioners are to mount a last-ditch fight against controversial new body corporate laws they fear will dramatically drive up the cost of unit living and force them out of their homes.

...

Pensioners and retirees were among dozens of unit owners who rallied on the Gold Coast this week against the Newman Government's plan to 'equalise' body corporate levies.

...

But pensioners and retirees say it is unfair to slug them the same fees for their small units as penthouse owners with sprawling apartments requiring extra window cleaning and facilities such as private lifts.

They have accused the LNP of bowing to pressure from wealthy supporters.

That is funny: it is what they have been claiming in this debate. The article goes on—

'It's a bloody disgrace and I'm cranky as hell,' said 81-year-old retired police officer Don Avery—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Attorney-General, that is unparliamentary language. I ask you to withdraw.

Mrs D'ATH: I withdraw.

... said 81-year-old retired police officer Don Avery, who lives on the third floor of a Surfers Paradise highrise. 'If this goes ahead, my body corporate fees will go from \$1 180 a quarter to \$1800 a quarter. That's a lot of dough. We've got pensioners living in this building who are battling to survive as it is.

Mr HART: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. Again, reinventing history is wonderful, but the bill does not talk about body corporate fees as such, to my memory anyway. That is definitely not what was happening in 2013.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member. There is no point of order. The Attorney-General has the call.

Mrs D'ATH: This directly relates to the impact on pensioners. If the member for Burleigh wants to talk about relevance, they were talking about their little plan or policy—their piece of paper that they had been circulating and carrying around. If they want to stray to that, then do not talk about relevance in this chamber.

There is article after article in March 2013, including one from the former chair of the Legal Affairs Committee, LNP member Ray Hopper, who said, 'The bill is deeply flawed and favours the millionaires. It's just looking after rich Liberal mates.' He said he could not speak up because you would get the sack. Of course, we know he left the LNP. Jarrod Bleijie said the bill would only affect about 130 people, body corporate lots, so who cares? An article of 20 March states—

... owners of small units voicing fears they will have to pay the same amount as overseas property investors of penthouses.

But Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie remained adamant the changes would not force unit owners to fork out the same fees as penthouse owners.

I met a lot of those pensioners in 2014 when I was the shadow housing minister. Did their fears come to fruition? An article in January 2015 stated—

High-rise unit owners urged to vote out LNP after law changes force body corporate fees to skyrocket.

...

Some owners—many of them retirees—

the same retirees that those on the opposite side have been claiming they are on the side of through this entire debate—

Mr Lister interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Southern Downs, I am going to warn you for calling out. I will just issue a broad caution to all members from here, I will start issuing warnings.

Mrs D'ATH: The article says—

Some owners—many of them retirees—had their fees double overnight in 2013 when the Government allowed millionaire penthouse owners to pay the same levies as owners of small units.

They claim a three-part review of the changes, commissioned by Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie—

Mr HART: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order, again on relevance to the bill.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you have raised this. I have responded. The doors have been opened through the debate where alternate plans have been put forward and the Attorney-General is responding. I am going to warn you to not interject on that issue again during this contribution.

Mrs D'ATH: There was one Ms Zilli, a unit owner in the Sonata Apartments complex in Broadbeach, who saw her body corporate fees double in 2013-14. She said—

There are a lot of things we have to do without now, and the value of our property has gone down—people are not interested because you're paying about the same as you would in a bigger unit.

Another unit owner, Michelle Hunt, was forced to leave, rent out her Broadbeach apartment and move to a higher paid job in Roma after her fees jumped from \$70 to \$120 per week. She said—

... there are a lot of people in the building on pensions who have had to go back to work to cover these levies ...

Those are the sorts of things that happened under the LNP when they jacked up body corporate fees. Members opposite come into the House and say that they are speaking on behalf of vulnerable pensioners. In this debate we are talking about not only where 75 per cent of owners say that they want to terminate the scheme but also where 75 per cent of the owners want to terminate the scheme because the body corporate is either already economically unviable or will become so within the next five years due to the repairs and maintenance required to maintain the property or the assets of the body corporate in good or structurally sound condition. So we are now saying that it is okay to let a building become structurally unsound and for residents to continue to live in that?

Unlike the other jurisdictions in this country that have legislated for termination schemes, we are the only one that has a threshold for economic viability. In New South Wales, it is just 75 per cent—it does not matter the reason. The member for Nanango did state that the UDIA do not like this and that it was part of their reasoning for not supporting this, but the UDIA do not want us to have a threshold. They just said, 'Let us be able to terminate schemes'. We do not believe that is appropriate. We believe that only in circumstances where it is economically unviable to maintain that building within the next five years are there grounds for termination, not just because someone wants to cash in because developers are offering big money. We have put in additional rights for objectors to have mediation and then go to the courts, and have the body corporate cover those legal costs as well. We believe that we have the balance right.

This came out of the QUT review. Those on the other side have not acknowledged that at all. It is a review that started under the LNP government. Those opposite have failed to acknowledge that review and its recommendations. They conveniently refer to it when it comes to pets or smoking but do not talk about it in this context, because they do not want to acknowledge that they themselves would have had this report to deal with. In fact, it was unit owners who were calling for some of these reports to be released before the 2015 election and they were not. What would the LNP have done with such recommendations? It would be interesting to know. It was a review that they initiated, but I guess what we are hearing now is that they would not have followed through. I wonder. It is, I guess, easier to be in opposition and oppose things than to be in government and have to make decisions and work through the complexities of those matters.

Yes, the sunset clause is complex. We have said that we will review it to see if it can be extended, but there are challenges around that and that is why we have limited it in this particular bill. I thank members for supporting other elements of this bill. It is an important bill. It has taken a lot of time and work to develop and work through these issues, including with the working group. I thank the stakeholders who were on the working group working through all of the property law and body corporate issues. Of course, there is more to be done in this space. I thank members for their contributions, but I reflect on the fact that those on the other side who come in here saying that they are on the side of pensioners refuse to acknowledge what they did to pensioners when they were in government around body corporate fees.

Mr O'Connor: You were the member for Petrie back then, it's so long ago.

Mrs D'ATH: I take the member for Bonney's interjection. No, I was actually the shadow housing minister, because I had won the Redcliffe by-election. Do you remember that? I remember the Redcliffe by-election—a 17½ per cent swing, and it was the start of the downfall of the LNP government. 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 6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7—

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (4.26 pm): The way the Attorney-General just finished her speech is quite surprising, but it does point to why the LNP will be voting against clause 7, the termination of community titles schemes. It is obvious that the Attorney-General and the Palaszczuk Labor government have

completely missed the point in relation to this clause. As I stated in my speech, we will not be supporting this clause. We cannot stand by and allow Queenslanders to be driven out of their homes and out of their communities.

Home owners should have their property rights protected. It was interesting, because the Attorney-General started her speech by saying that she acknowledged the problems in relation to many of the clauses of the bill and that that is why they consulted with the community. They have been doing that for about eight years and they still have not got it right. That is exactly why the LNP will be standing up for not only pensioners but also other people, like the youth and anyone who has a right to have their property rights protected. Just like the members for Mermaid Beach and Burleigh said, there are certain reasons for a government to take a property from an individual property holder, but to give that right to a developer is quite unheard of. This is exactly why we will be standing up and seeking to protect the property rights of Queenslanders.

It is crystal clear to anyone who is actually listening to Queenslanders—rather than talking at them, like those opposite have—that if you sell your apartment in an aged three-storey walk-up with low annual levies, it is highly unlikely that you would be able to afford the levies of the high-rise that replaces it. You would be lucky to be able to even afford to buy an apartment in that block, but the ongoing fees will very likely put that out of reach. It is not as simple as the government has led us to believe.

I have also noted the many people on the other side of the House who said, ‘Just take it to court.’ It shows how out of touch this government is if they genuinely believe, in a cost-of-living crisis, that a person who is being pushed out of the apartment they have lived in for over 20 years can afford to ‘just go to court’. That is why the LNP will be standing up and voting against this clause.

Mrs D’ATH: To respond briefly—I am sure that other members will speak to this—the position of the LNP is unclear. Yes, they are opposing the termination of schemes as proposed by the bill, but I have heard differing views. Some have said that they should not be able to do it at all. Then the member for Mermaid Beach said that there is a simple fix around a seven-year rule. The member for Nanango would lead us to believe that she not supportive of termination of schemes other than with unanimous support, but in the debate she said that she understands the need to reduce holdouts from preventing the right redevelopment and renewal.

What is the right redevelopment and renewal and what is the opposition’s position to reduce holdouts from preventing that redevelopment and renewal? We actually have not heard, other than from the member for Mermaid Beach, what the alternative proposal is. There have been no amendments moved and no position put. It is very unclear exactly what the opposition’s position is. Do they completely oppose any termination scheme unless it is unanimous, or do they believe there are alternatives? If so, why have they chosen not to put those forward? There has not been anything put forward.

When it comes to the costs, again, the member for Nanango stated that we have said they can all just go straight to court. No, because they have access to the specialist adjudication. If they are not satisfied with the outcome through that adjudication process, which is a less formal avenue for resolution of the dispute, then they can go to the court and their legal fees are covered by the body corporate, not them as the individual. It is misleading when those opposite keep saying these individuals are not going to be able to afford to go straight to court. It just shows either they have not read the bill or they are being deliberately misleading.

Mr NICHOLLS: In talking to clause 7, firstly, I thank the member for Nanango for stepping in to fill the void, a smaller void than it would have been a year ago. Nonetheless, thank you for jumping in to do that and for putting the LNP’s case so clearly and so succinctly in her contribution to the debate.

There are a number of problems with this part of the legislation, and the Attorney asks: ‘What is the LNP’s position?’ Our position is to leave the legislation as it stands. That is what we are saying. That is why we are opposing this bill. The legislation as it stands requires 100 per cent of unit owners who have bought into that unit knowing the condition of it, having done their searches and their surveys and having been advised of their contribution. That is the LNP’s position as we go through this debate. The other alternative does not preclude anyone from going to the District Court and making an application for termination of the scheme. Both remain available to people should they choose to go down that path.

The Attorney has spoken about the ‘obvious’ need for this because it will be so overwhelmingly obvious that it is uneconomically viable for the scheme to continue. Here is the question: if it is so overwhelmingly obvious, why do they only need 75 per cent? Why would not 100 per cent of people agree to that which is so obvious that the cost of the body corporate levies, the cost of the repairs and

the time and inconvenience make it abundantly clear that this is the only course? If that was the case, if it was the economic argument and it was abundantly clear that the cost to the owners, the cost to tenants, the time and delay made it only sensible for the scheme to be terminated, surely 100 per cent of people would do it. However, it is not and it is not to all owners in the scheme and I know.

There are schemes that go back to the fifties and sixties. There are schemes that still use company title in order to run their businesses. These are from before the 1965 Building Units and Group Titles Act. Honourable members have only to look over the river at Torbreck to see that is exactly the case. The owners there have continued to put funds into it to maintain it and look after it and to keep it going. There are many other apartments in my part of the world along Hamilton Hill that are equally as old. There is no doubt there are difficulties; they are getting old. However, there are people there for whom that is their only house and there is no way they would be able to build or buy on Hamilton Hill again. Yet this bill would throw them out if 75 per cent of investors agreed on it and that is why we are not supporting it.

Dr MacMAHON: This clause is pretty much directly written by the property developers, who are going to be able to exploit this rule to get access to low-cost housing right across Queensland. To say that that is not the case is extremely naive. I would not be surprised if the property developers had a hand in writing this section of this legislation. It is remarkable to see the Attorney-General stand up and try to defend a provision that will allow developers to push people out of their homes purely on an economic basis. Obviously the Labor Party are so deep in the pockets of the property developers that they are willing to defend this rule.

The Attorney-General cherrypicked one example of someone who wants to terminate their scheme on an economic basis. The current laws already provide a pathway for people to go to court for an order for this. This is exactly what the Attorney-General is arguing people should have to do to avoid getting kicked out of their homes. The starting point should be that people are not forced out of their homes. The onus should be on bodies corporate to get an order to the contrary. This bill is Labor shifting the dial at the starting point in favour of developers and against ordinary people who just want to stay in their homes. Surely the right of people to stay in their home is more important than the right of someone else to sell off that property so they can put in a new high-rise.

The Attorney-General does not seem to know the difference between landlords and developers. She said that the Greens are only in favour of renters at the expense of landlords when we are looking at one of the worst rental crises.

Mrs D'ATH: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Firstly, the member is being misleading. I did not say any of that in my speech. Secondly, I take personal offence to her comments and I ask that she withdraw.

Dr MacMAHON: I withdraw. To close, this clause is written directly to benefit property developers who are going to be able to turf people out of their homes so they can benefit from the upzoning that Labor is putting in place right across the country. What does the government think is going to happen in Kurilpa now that the Labor Party approved the LNP council's TLPI that allows buildings of up to 90 storeys in a flood zone? What do they think is going to happen to low-cost housing in Kurilpa with this rule when developers are going to be able to swoop in and kick people out of their properties?

Mrs D'ATH: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. We are speaking to clause 7 of the bill in consideration in detail. I ask the member to be relevant and that she be brought back to the clause.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Member, you do need to be strictly relevant to clause 7.

Dr MacMAHON: This is relevant because the result of clause 7 passing is that property developers will be getting exactly what they want.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Unfortunately, it is not relevant to clause 7.

Division: Question put—That clause 7, as read, stand part of the bill.

AYES, 46:

ALP, 46—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Farmer, Fentiman, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

NOES, 33:

LNP, 29—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts.

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

KAP, 1—Dametto.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

Pairs: Butcher, Stevens; S. King, Camm, Howard, Weir; Furner, Nicholls, Enoch, Krause.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 8 to 24, as read, agreed to.

Clause 25—



Mrs D'ATH (4.43 pm): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 25 (Insertion of new s 205AAA)

Page 50, line 15, 'new s 205AAA'—

omit, insert—

new s 205AAB

2 Clause 25 (Insertion of new s 205AAA)

Page 50, line 16, 'After section 205'—

omit, insert—

Chapter 4, part 2, division 2

3 Clause 25 (Insertion of new s 205AAA)

Page 50, line 18, '205AAA'—

omit, insert—

205AAB

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

Tabled paper: Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [[1873](#)].

Tabled paper: Body Corporate and Community Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [[1874](#)].

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 25, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 26 to 56, 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) (4.44 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) (4.44 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.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR CONDUCT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 13 September (see p. 2615).

Second Reading

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (4.45 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

This bill is the culmination of an extensive consultation process with the local government sector and the broader community to address concerns about the operation of the councillor conduct complaints system. Across the local government sector, we have many hardworking councillors who are dedicated to their communities and who are delivering on their commitments to them. Queensland communities deserve to have confidence in their elected representatives at all levels of government. In instances where a councillor's conduct comes into question, our communities also deserve to have a streamlined system that responds quickly, fairly and in the best interests of all involved.

For this reason, in October 2021 I wrote to the chair of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee conveying stakeholder concerns about the performance of the functions of the Independent Assessor. On 14 October 2022 the committee tabled a report making 40 recommendations for changes to the system. The government support or supports in principle all 40 recommendations. Since then we have undertaken a recruitment process to appoint a new Independent Assessor. Whilst this recruitment process is ongoing, I have appointed Ms Bronwyn Blagoev to act as interim Independent Assessor. She has a wealth of experience across all areas of local government. She will perform an important role during the implementation of the bill. In addition, I am pleased to inform the House that Mr Russell Hood commenced in the role of President of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal this week on 13 November. Mr Hood has most recently been a senior Crown prosecutor in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The bill before the House today seeks to recalibrate the councillor conduct framework to make it more effective and more efficient and to ensure that only matters of substance and in the public interest proceed to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal for determination. It addresses 19 committee recommendations requiring legislative amendments. The remaining recommendations are either fully implemented or are operational matters. The bill also enhances the conflict of interest requirements and modernises councillor advertising obligations. Minor technical amendments provide for recovery of election costs and make consequential amendments reflecting the change of classification of the former Moreton Bay Regional Council. Appropriate transitional arrangements will ensure the new and streamlined complaints system operates more efficiently.

I want to thank the members of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for their thorough examination of the bill. The committee tabled its inquiry report on 27 October 2023. I also want to thank all stakeholders for their contributions, particularly the Local Government Association of Queensland. I note the committee's acknowledgement that there was general support for the bill during its development and that this was largely consistent with feedback received by the committee through its inquiry process. It is important to note that consultation on this bill was in addition to the consultation undertaken by the committee to inform its 2022 report which included consideration of 59 written submissions, eight regional public hearings and multiple public sessions here in Brisbane. The committee was satisfied that the consultation process on the bill has been comprehensive. The committee made five recommendations, the first being that the bill be passed, and I am pleased to table the government's response to the committee's report.

Tabled paper: State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 48, 57th Parliament—Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, government response [\[1875\]](#).

I will address the detail of our response and some of the committee's comments in its inquiry report as I outline the key elements of the bill. I also inform the House that the government will move amendments to the bill during consideration in detail to correct two minor drafting errors and make one minor clarifying change. Additional amendments will address an unintended consequence of the electoral expenditure caps legislation passed earlier this year in relation to the operation of local government candidate campaign accounts.

Recommendation 1 of the 2022 committee report included target time frames to be applied by the Office of the Independent Assessor and the Council Conduct Tribunal. While this part of the recommendation is not being prescribed, the recommendation also included adoption of a statute of limitation to accept complaints unless they involve matters to be referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission. To implement the government's policy in relation to recommendation 1, a key feature of the bill is to introduce a statutory preliminary assessment process for complaints, notices and information about councillor conduct, including time limitations for receipt. Under this process the assessor must dismiss a complaint or take no further action in certain circumstances. These include that the complaint, notice or information was received outside of the prescribed time period unless the conduct is suspected corrupt conduct or the time limitation was not met because of exceptional circumstances. The assessor must also dismiss a complaint or take no further action where dealing with the matter would not be in the public interest or where the conduct was to comply with a guideline made by the department.

Providing for compliance with a departmental guideline addresses the government's policy in relation to recommendation 39 of the 2022 committee report. The same obligation to dismiss or take no further action applies where the conduct clearly does not constitute a conduct breach or misconduct or where the office of the councillor is vacated, unless the conduct is suspected corrupt conduct. Similarly, the assessor must dismiss a complaint or take no further action where the conduct relates solely to behaviour by the councillor in a personal capacity unless the conduct is suspected corrupt conduct. If a person who makes a complaint has been declared a vexatious complainant the assessor must dismiss the complaint unless it has been permitted. The assessor has discretion to dismiss a complaint or decide to take no further action if the assessor is satisfied of any one of a range of matters. For example, the conduct has already been dealt with by another entity or it would be an unjustifiable use of resources for the assessor to deal with the matter. The discretion also applies where the complaint, notice or information is frivolous or vexatious or was made other than in good faith or lacks substance or credibility.

For a suspected conduct breach, the assessor may also dismiss the complaint or take no further action if at least six months have elapsed since the conduct occurred and it would not be in the public interest to take action. The same discretion applies where there is insufficient information to properly make a preliminary assessment. The bill also provides options for the assessor to make appropriate recommendations—for example, that the councillor attend training, counselling or mediation. In addition, the bill provides for a range of matters to which the assessor may have regard in making a preliminary assessment. These include any reason for or factors relevant to the conduct, any steps taken by the councillor to mitigate or remedy the effects of the conduct and the consequences, both financial and non-financial, resulting from the conduct. Importantly, the bill also provides examples of reasons for or factors relevant to the conduct. These include training completed by the councillor or First Nations cultural customs of the councillor. The committee in its inquiry report on the bill noted strong support expressed by participants for the introduction of the preliminary assessment process.

In relation to the specific issues faced by Indigenous councillors, the committee conducted a private hearing with the Indigenous Leaders Forum at the Local Government Association of Queensland annual conference in Gladstone in October. The committee heard of the challenges faced by Indigenous councillors in applying certain conflict of interest provisions, particularly around declaring family and kin relationships. The committee acknowledged the recommendation proposed by the LGAQ that the assessor must consider Aboriginal traditions and Islander customs during the preliminary assessment process. Further, the committee's recommendation 2 was that the department take further steps to ensure that the councillor conduct framework is operating as intended and fit for purpose for Queensland's Indigenous councils. I note that the committee intends to conduct further consultation on this matter with Indigenous councillors as part of its ongoing oversight responsibilities. The government's response supports recommendation 2. The department has developed a suite of tools to assist Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander councillors to manage the councillor conduct issues they face in their unique context dealing with law and traditional responsibilities. These tools are in the final stage of production following review by the Office of the Independent Assessor.

I turn now to the issue of the personal conduct of councillors. As I mentioned, the assessor must dismiss a complaint where the councillor engages in behaviour in a personal capacity unless the conduct is suspected corrupt conduct. The committee noted a mix of views expressed on this amendment. The committee was satisfied that the amendment to limit the assessor's jurisdiction to consider personal or private conduct is reasonable and appropriate. The committee's recommendation 3 is that the department, in consultation with the tripartite forum, prepare and update training materials

to assist stakeholders to interpret the distinction between private and public conduct. Membership of the tripartite forum comprises the department, the Office of the Independent Assessor and the Councillor Conduct Tribunal.

The government supports recommendation 3. The department has a full suite of information, training and guidance material in development to support the incoming cohort of councillors over the course of the next term. This includes the clarification of the distinction between public and private conduct of councillors. The department will continue to consult with the tripartite forum during the development of this material. As part of this work, the code of conduct for councillors in Queensland will also be updated to reinforce that a councillor's conduct in their capacity as a candidate for election is not subject to the complaint system. Moderating a social media account, including blocking certain individuals, is not a breach of the code of conduct. However, it is important to note that engaging in defamatory or offensive remarks could breach the code of conduct and have wider ramifications.

In relation to the preliminary assessment process and time limitations, all inquiry participants agreed that the timeliness of complaint resolution was of utmost importance to ensure that the system is operating as intended. The committee welcomed the introduction of a preliminary assessment process to ensure only the most serious conduct complaints moved forward for determination. It should also be noted that the bill addresses recommendation 22 of the 2022 committee report by ensuring that councillors are notified of potential disciplinary orders as early as possible.

As I have mentioned, the preliminary assessment process requires dismissal of a complaint where the complainant has been declared a vexatious complainant. To implement the government's policy in relation to recommendations 28 and 29 of the 2022 committee report, the Independent Assessor may declare in certain circumstances that a person is a vexatious complainant for a period of not more than four years. The assessor must be satisfied a person has repeatedly made complaints and at least three of the complaints have been dismissed as being frivolous or vexatious or have been made other than in good faith. The committee in its inquiry report noted broad support for this amendment by several local government representatives at the public hearings in Gladstone as well as in written submissions. The LGAQ submitted that it appreciated the changes, noting that this would ensure that the councillor conduct system does not become a political weapon against individuals, which is critical in maintaining the confidence of the sector and the integrity of the role of the assessor and the tribunal.

The bill does not limit vexatious complainant declarations to just members of the public. Any person, including a councillor, may make a complaint to the assessor about the conduct of a councillor. Councillors can be declared vexatious complainants for making complaints. However, to promote integrity, transparency and compliance, a councillor cannot be declared a vexatious complainant for referring complaints or giving a notice about conduct to the Independent Assessor where the act requires them to do so. Under the preliminary assessment process, the assessor may take no further action if a notice or information is frivolous or vexatious. Further, the Local Government Act 2009 currently provides that a councillor must not give a notice about conduct vexatiously. A penalty of 85 penalty units applies.

I turn now to issues around the Councillor Conduct Tribunal. Recommendation 4 of the committee's 2022 report was that the president of the tribunal be appointed on a full-time basis to drive the performance of the tribunal and that a deputy president be appointed on a part-time basis to support this work. The bill provides for the appointment of a deputy president of the tribunal and for the deputy president to act as the president during periods of absence. The basis on which the president or deputy president is to be appointed full-time or part-time is a matter for Governor in Council.

The committee was of the view that structural amendments to the tribunal's resourcing model are necessary for the tribunal to operate effectively and to set a strong framework to support the determination of misconduct allegations in the future. The committee's recommendation 4 was that the department take steps to ensure the Councillor Conduct Tribunal is adequately resourced and has representatives from regional Queensland and First Nations communities, where practicable. The government's response supports recommendation 4. Following recent appointments, membership of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal will consist of a full-time president and 14 casual members. A number of casual members are from regional Queensland.

In relation to the constitution of the tribunal, recommendation 8 of the committee's 2022 report was to allow one tribunal member to hear and determine matters such as uncontested or expedited matters and that a panel of three members continue to hear and determine complex, serious or contested misconduct matters. The bill provides that the tribunal may be constituted by up to three

members for hearing a matter about councillor conduct and by one member for dealing with administrative or procedural matters related to a hearing. Determining whether a matter is complex, serious or contested will be dealt with administratively by the president of the tribunal. The committee was satisfied that the amendment in relation to the constitution of the tribunal was appropriate.

To reflect recommendation 17 of the committee report and address duplication, the bill removes the requirement for the assessor to undertake a natural justice process before deciding whether to refer suspected inappropriate conduct to the council. The committee, in its inquiry report, noted mixed views on this amendment. The committee commented that it remained of the firm view that conduct breaches should be resolved locally and that the capacity of councils should be developed to enable them to do this. The committee welcomed the amendments to ensure that councils undertake appropriate natural justice processes prior to consideration. The committee also welcomed the change to terminology from 'inappropriate conduct' to 'conduct breach'.

Turning to matters of misconduct, recommendation 23 of the 2022 committee report supported that a breach of a council's acceptable requests guidelines should no longer be a category of misconduct. The bill makes this amendment. New additions to the definition include an unlawful direction by a mayor to a council CEO and certain conduct in relation to declarable conflicts of interest. In addition, the bill removes from the definition the concept of breach of the trust placed in the councillor. This is replaced with wording indicating that a councillor has complied with an act. In relation to this specific change, the committee canvassed a range of stakeholder views. The committee was satisfied that the amendment is appropriate in the circumstances and the policy intent is sound. However, the committee suggested that this matter be considered as part of any further review of the system to ensure that the amendment is operating as intended and there are no unintended consequences.

I will address the important issue of councillor training. Recommendation 27 of the 2022 committee report was for the department to make training and professional development on the councillor conduct system, including conflicts of interest, compulsory for all local government councillors, mayors and senior council managers. The government supported this recommendation in principle. The bill establishes a mandatory training scheme for councillors with a regulation to prescribe a range of matters, including the period for completion. Consequences for noncompliance include suspension without remuneration or dismissal at the discretion of the minister.

The bill also implements recommendation 36 of the 2022 committee report by removing training from the functions of the assessor. The committee noted there were mixed views from stakeholders. The committee remained of the view that an enhanced training regime in conflict of interest provisions, amongst other elements of the system, is vitally important. It also believed that the department needs to further its work in training and building capacity in the sector.


The committee noted that consultation with the local government sector and the tripartite forum will be important in determining the content of the regulation. The committee acknowledged that the penalty for noncompliance in this instance is substantial, but was also of the view that the impact of councillors failing to understand requirements around conflicts of interest, for example, are also substantial. The committee was satisfied that the amendments relating to councillor training have sufficient regard to the rights and liberties of individuals in respect of penalties, administrative power and natural justice. Further amendments to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the councillor conduct complaints system include limiting the system's application in relation to former councillors. This will allow the resources of the assessor to concentrate on substantive conduct matters in the public interest.

Finally, the bill amends the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Act 2016. The amendments provide a simpler and more transparent process for freehold declarations and will ensure that the state can comply with its obligations under the various development agreements and grant the necessary tenure within the original contractual time frames. The committee was satisfied that the amendments to the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Act are reasonable.

In conclusion, I echo the sentiments of the chair of the committee that local government councillors play a fundamental role in their communities and that Queenslanders expect high standards of conduct from their elected community leaders. An effective independent councillor conduct and complaints framework is vital to maintaining public confidence in local government and providing positive outcomes for communities across the state. The committee and many inquiry participants welcomed the amendments proposed by the bill. I am pleased to note the committee's comments that there has been a noticeable improvement to the manner in which the system has been operating. It is important that we continue to build on this momentum. The committee, therefore, made recommendation 5 that the relevant parliamentary committee conduct a review of the councillor conduct

complaints system in the next parliamentary term to ensure any amendments introduced by the bill are operating as intended and without unintended consequences. The government supports recommendation 5.

Again, I thank all stakeholders for their engagement with these reforms over an extended period, particularly the LGAQ, the Local Government Managers Australia (Queensland), the Office of the Independent Assessor, the Councillor Conduct Tribunal, the Queensland Law Society, the Crime and Corruption Commission and all those who took the time to make submissions and appear before the committee. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (5.06 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Before going into detail on the bill, I would like to mention the incredible work that many local governments and their staff are doing at the front line of the bushfire disasters across Queensland. Many have worked around the clock at evacuation centres, feeding animals left behind or supporting distressed residents who have lost their properties or their homes. On behalf of the LNP members in this House, I extend a thank you to all of the local government mayors, councillors and their staff who have supported those who have been impacted by the recent bushfires.

Turning to the bill, there are two core matters for all councils in Queensland. One is sustainability in all of its forms and the other, of course, is integrity. The LNP supports integrity and transparency in government and that includes local government. The LNP will not oppose this legislation as the bill provides improvements to the local government complaints system. However, we have some concerns about the bill, which I will outline later. I note that the government has circulated some amendments in relation to tidying up some of the renumbering and the transitional provisions. A further amendment deals with a case example that has arisen in relation to the expenditure caps legislation. It is timely that the government deal with that because we are getting very close to the local government elections, which will be held in March next year.

I thank the departmental staff for the briefings that were provided in regard to the bill and in relation to the amendments. It is incredibly important that complaints made against mayors and councillors are handled appropriately and in a timely manner. In 2018, the reform to the councillor complaints process came from the government's response to the independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel report, *Councillor complaints review: a fair, effective and efficient framework*. This report was to provide a simpler, more streamlined system for making, investigating and determining complaints about councillor conduct in Queensland. We are debating the bill before us today because the intent outlined in that reform did not materialise to the expectations of local government under the Palaszczuk Labor government's watch.

At the outset, I wish to note that the 2018 local government councillor complaints legislative changes did not arise because of a large number of complaints. In fact, the Councillor Complaints Review Panel found that at that stage only 30 of the total 245 complaints received by the then department of infrastructure, local government and planning over two years were ultimately upheld. That is only about 12 per cent so we are talking about a very small number.

The Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 was introduced by the government; however, unfortunately we find the government is now back again amending the legislation to address a broken system. The Office of the Independent Assessor and the Councillor Conduct Tribunal were established in 2018 as a result of that legislation. Following those establishments, unfortunately chaos and delays ensued. Over the following years—and to this day—countless reports of investigative overreach, intimidation and year-long backlogs continued to emerge. I recall one complaint quite distinctly that took 2½ years and resulted in a penalty of one hours training for the councillor. It is hard to justify the time frame given the outcome was at the lowest end of the scale.

Another case was that of Sean Dillon, the mayor of Barcaldine, who was sensibly and calmly raising concerns about the vaccine rollout plans of the local hospital and health service at that time, only to be hauled before the Office of the Independent Assessor for months for raising this concern on behalf of his community in an open council meeting. This was a bizarre and dangerous war on free speech and Mayor Dillon's democratic rights. There are other cases, for instance, dealing with often frivolous complaints that have cost ratepayers in the Gold Coast City council more than \$200,000. Dan Stewart of the Gympie Regional Council was fined \$700 for a post on Facebook announcing the city's showgrounds would be able to host a popular caravan rally. Some councillors were referred to the Office of the Independent Assessor for blocking abuse on Facebook, looking disinterested in a council meeting or raising their voice in a council meeting.

Elected local government representatives should not have to be investigated for simply moderating their social media sites to protect themselves from racial abuse or for helping a local pastor access a spare set of keys to conduct a Sunday church service. There was also a case where the Office of the Independent Assessor overreached and threatened a journalist to sell out a source or face a fine. At first, the government washed their hands of these concerns and said that any complaints should be taken to the Ombudsman. It was only after repeated cases were published in the media that the government finally agreed to fronting up to the problem they had caused.

The State Development and Regional Industries Committee was tasked with an inquiry into the Independent Assessor and the councillor conduct complaints system. The committee tabled its report on 14 October 2022. The parliamentary committee came forward with 40 recommendations. This was showing that the system was broken and in need of an overhaul. I would like to thank the members of the parliamentary committee for their inquiry. During this inquiry, mayors and councillors told me they were fearful of telling their stories and could not bring themselves to either appear or make a submission. They were very fearful of repercussions. Many mayors and councillors did step forward to present to the committee, and I thank them for doing so. It took courage on their part to do this. The government officially responded on 12 January 2023, either supporting or supporting in principle all of the 40 recommendations. It was then eight months later that this bill was introduced.

On a separate issue of conflict of interest requirements, councils have been arguing for a long time that the current requirements regarding conflicts of interest are overbearing and stopping them from performing their duties for their local communities. On 28 July 2021, the Deputy Premier promised conflict of interest reforms in a media release. It has taken exactly 777 days for the reforms to be introduced via this bill. That is 777 days that mayors and councillors have been trying to go about doing their jobs for their local communities whilst burdened with onerous conflict of interest laws and fear of being referred to the Office of the Independent Assessor. This is what happens when local government is not a priority for a government. This legislation being debated today is a response to the parliamentary committee's 40 recommendations.

The bill intends to improve the local government complaints system; however, the LNP still has some concerns. Some concerns have been raised by industry groups. I will outline those individually. The bill seeks to limit the complaints system in relation to former councillors so the system only applies to those former councillors suspected of corrupt conduct. Further, the bill clarifies and enhances the councillor conflict of interest requirements—unfortunately some 777 days after they were first promised. It modernises the local government advertising requirements, because in many communities we do not have newspapers and it is quite difficult to comply and put ads in newspapers when we do not have a newspaper.

The bill provides discretion to the Electoral Commission of Queensland in relation to the recovery of local government election costs. It does give the opportunity for the Electoral Commission to decide not to actually recover election costs. It also makes consequential amendments resulting from the change of classification of the Moreton Bay Regional Council. It provides appropriate transitional arrangements for the commencement of the improved councillor conduct complaints system. It also makes minor amendments to the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Act 2016.

These amendments effectively enable the state government to freehold its own land by legislation. The explanatory notes state that the proposed amendments resolve the identified issues to facilitate the redevelopment of the Queen's Wharf Brisbane precinct under the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Act. It does this by inserting a new process for creating freehold grants in respect of the identified Queen's Wharf development parcels, which avoids the need for subordinate legislation. It would be appreciated if in his summing up the Deputy Premier could advise the House of the identified issues. Further, the bill aims to improve the triage of complaints by introducing a preliminary assessment process, including time limitation for accepting the complaint notice or information.

In summary, there are a number of reforms to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal regarding the appointments, operations and functions of the tribunal. The reforms also allow the Independent Assessor to withdraw an application to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal. That was not able to happen under the previous legislation and that is a good improvement. The bill allows the streamlining of the requirements for notifying councillors of the Councillor Complaints Tribunal hearing details. It removes the Councillor Complaints Tribunal function of investigating suspected inappropriate conduct on behalf of a local government. The reforms introduce additional annual reporting requirements for the Independent Assessor and local governments. There is also an update to the natural justice requirements in relation to suspected conduct breaches. The reforms include publication of suspected conduct breach investigation reports and summaries and clarifications relating to meeting requirements.

There are further reforms to the Office of the Independent Assessor with regard to the process of disciplinary orders, acceptable request guidelines and removing the training functions of the Office of the Independent Assessor and requirements to publish certain details in the local government councillor conduct register. The reforms also establish that compulsory training requirements for councillors must be undertaken and recognise the provision of an official department advice to councillors. The bill also introduces administrative processes to declare a person a vexatious complainant, which has been an issue that has certainly been on the radar of many elected representatives in the local government sector.

There are still some concerns. Whilst the reforms could see an improvement, there are still some areas that could be improved. The Independent Assessor must dismiss a complaint or take no further action for the notice or information about councillor conduct in certain circumstances—for example, if it is not in the public interest to proceed. It was raised by submitters that it would be preferable if there were a clear definition of the public interest with respect to this provision. That is something that was clearly raised in some of the submissions.

With regard to publication notices, these will not contain the name of a complainant or the other person, yet there is a proposal to publish an executive summary of the investigation report in the council's agenda papers. In the smaller communities where we have councils, the reputational damage to a mayor or councillor will be done regardless of the investigation outcome. There has been considerable concern raised about this particular provision. Even if the mayor or councillor is completely innocent, this information in smaller communities will be difficult to manage as some in the community do not understand these processes. Unfortunately, reputational damage could quite easily be done by simply publishing this in the agenda papers. It is concerning and also slightly inconsistent.


Of concern to local governments is the lack of a mechanism for filtering out the vexatious complaints to the Office of the Independent Assessor where the complaints are anonymous. This is a very difficult area for local governments. This is a significant loophole which could be easily exploited. For instance, there could be two complaints and then the rest of the complaints could be made anonymously and there would be no mechanism by which to declare the complaints vexatious. I do hear from numerous mayors and councillors that quite often they find that the complaints just keep coming in a slightly different way but they are quite sure they are coming from the same person. Unfortunately I think further work will need to be done in relation to this particular provision in the future.

The bill does not provide for the creation of an independent local government integrity and conduct advisory service. This was a recommendation of the committee. It would be far better to have that sort of prevention element rather than a cure when it comes to integrity. It is disappointing that the government has not further considered this particular recommendation of the committee because I think that would provide a way to enhance dealing with integrity issues for mayors and councillors.

The bill amends legislation which could enable the use of QCAT for the re-prosecuting of cases rather than reviewing the conduct of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal and the Office of the Independent Assessor processes. QCAT should be used to review what has come forward. We have seen numerous applications to QCAT from mayors and councillors. It should not be used for re-prosecuting; it should be used for reviewing.

With the changes to the unsuitable meeting conduct of the chairperson, there is concern around the misuse of this provision for political purposes given that the mayors are popularly elected in Queensland. Mayors could be excluded from the meeting by political opponents. This is a far-reaching power to eject a mayor from a meeting. There was no parliamentary committee recommendation in relation to this change. When we look at some of the political influences that there are—not everybody agrees in local government; sometimes there are factionalised councils—mayors could find themselves in very difficult positions if there is any intent to misuse that particular provision.

This legislation is an improvement to the system. It is not perfect. I look forward to hearing the debate on this bill. I also want to mention the improvements for the Indigenous councils in Queensland. It is very difficult for them. Often they all come from different families. They are often in a situation whereby it is very difficult for them to operate as councils. I think that continually working to try to make the system better for them should help them in making good decisions for their communities. I look forward to hearing the rest of the debate in the House.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (5.22 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak on this bill. I want to start by thanking the Deputy Premier for introducing this bill in response to our inquiry. I think he has brought forward an excellent bill—one that really goes above and beyond what is needed to help improve the system. Just to recount, our inquiry was nearly a year long. That is because we

considered very carefully—we examined in depth—all of the issues that needed to be considered. I point out that four of our six committee members are former councillors. We had 14 hearings and we heard from 47 witnesses. I note that I read through 15 documents and 50,000 words as we drafted our report.

I want to start by saying that I reject what the member for Warrego has said that this system is broken. This is not a broken system. It has generally worked well but has needed improvement. To say that it is broken I think is an implicit criticism of the hardworking public servants who work in this department, and I reject that criticism. It is not a broken system.

I want to talk about a couple of things. The first is the introduction of a preliminary assessment process. This is probably one of the most important parts of the bill. Let me recount: if a complaint is not in the public interest, or if the person was acting in accordance with departmental advice—by the way, I think this goes a long way to addressing our recommendation about an advisory service—or if the councillor was acting in a private capacity, or if the complainer is declared a vexatious complainer, the complaint can be dismissed. This will be a huge relief for councillors. It means that the complaints can come in. There is a clearing house. They can be dealt with quickly. The complaint may go further or not, but the council can get on with what they need to do.

We heard from mayors and councillors about the constant fear of being caught up in this complaints system with minor or vexatious complaints. We think that the preliminary assessment system will go a long way to addressing that fear. What is more, through this process training can be recommended. If there is an issue, the councillor can get some training and the problem will be sorted. It also takes into account First Nations cultural customs. I think this is hugely important. At the conference—and I cannot talk about it too much because it was in a private setting—it was very clear that operating in those First Nations councils is like being in a different world. We need to know more about them and we need to hear what they are saying a lot more.

The second thing that I really appreciate seeing in this bill is the changes to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal, the CCT. It is great to hear that we now have a permanent head—congratulations to Russell Hood. We recommended that we have one. If need be, one CCT member can hear straightforward issues and they can be resolved quickly. That is very important. We think that this will help even more to clear the backlog that the CCT has at the moment. I congratulate the OIA and the CCT for their work over the last year in clearing that backlog of complaints more and more. We saw what was needed to help the CCT. We made recommendations and the minister has picked them up.

The third issue that I want to talk about is that of conduct breaches that the minister has talked about. We think that 'conduct breach' is a better term than 'inappropriate conduct'. Councillors are more comfortable with that. I make this point: we on the committee believe that minor level breaches need to remain with councils. Councils need to do better in dealing with the complaints before them. They need to deal with the complaints themselves. They need to be transparent and report on how many issues they have dealt with. It is very important that there is a natural justice process as well. This is a really important part of the councillor conduct system. We are saying to councils, 'It is important and you need to work hard to make sure that you do this better.' I commend them on already making great progress with that.

One of the other issues that is dealt with in this bill is mandatory training. From the committee's point of view—and it is in our report—we see this as the key. It is a hugely important thing that needs to emerge from this. There are so many issues that go into the councillor conduct system and if there had been a greater training regime in place they would not have ended up there. It is really important—and it is the state government and local government responsibility—that we make sure that there is better and more comprehensive training for councillors. The ebb and flow of the councillor conduct complaints system will be much better once that training is in place. I sincerely believe that.

It will also help councillors deal with the conflict of interest provisions. We have heard that many councillors have struggled with that, and I cannot blame them. It can be quite tricky. Once again, it is something that the state and local governments need to work together on with better training to make sure that councillors are conversant with it and they can deal with it when it happens.

Finally I want to talk about the use of the councillor conduct and complaints system by political activists. When I was in local government I remember our IT manager Shane Hinchliffe—a great fellow—saying to me, 'You cannot use IT to solve a HR problem.' I was constantly reminded of that lesson by another IT person—Sian. I actually ended up marrying her and she has always given me great advice.


Mrs Mullen: That's a HR issue.

Mr WHITING: It was a HR issue. There was a complaint. She reminded me that you cannot use IT to solve a HR problem.

What that means to me is that you cannot use a councillor conduct complaint system to solve a political problem. Let me say that again to everyone out there: you cannot use this councillor conduct system to try and get out of a political problem. You have to resolve this at a council level. For all of those councils that have a huge number of complaints coming in, they have a lot of conflict and a lot of problems—this is a political problem. You need to work harder to make sure you are not using that councillor conduct system as a way to try and beat out or find a resolution to these political problems. If we are doing that, that will help the operation of our councillor conduct system within the state.

Let me repeat: I think we already have a great system which has emerged over the years. Some issues needed to be dealt with. The point we have made about moderating Facebook pages should not be subjected to this regime, but if you use it to make comments that are unacceptable you are going to go into the system. I think we have resolved so many issues in this year-long inquiry, and consequently this bill has come forward and the government has taken on our 40 recommendations. As I said, if you have a nearly year-long inquiry it is no surprise you are going to get 40 recommendations. Some of those are larger and some are smaller. I want to thank the government for taking on, with this bill, 19 of those recommendations.

Finally, I want to say thank you to the deputy chair and all members of the committee. I think this is an example of what you can achieve with the committee system and what you can achieve in a parliament when all actors are focused on creating a better outcome. The committee worked together really well on this. We are all dedicated to making sure that our councillor conduct system works more effectively. As I said, we put a lot of time and effort into this. I also want to thank all members of our secretariat who helped us with this report. Thank you once again to all of the councillors and mayors, the LGAQ, government and local managers—everyone who was involved in talking to us. I found that they were quite willing to come forward and give us their views and tell us how they felt. I did not feel that any of them were backwards in coming forwards, if you know what I mean. They gave us their opinions very readily. I want to thank them; they engaged with us thoroughly. They engaged with us in a way that was constructive. I think we have ended up with a bill and a system that is going to serve us for many years. I look forward to working on this system in the years to come.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (5.32 pm): It is a privilege for me to rise and speak on the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is some time coming, but it has been a pleasure to be the deputy chair of the committee working on this bill. It goes back to the reasons this bill came about, and that was because of an inquiry into the processes of councillor conduct, particularly what has been called the overreach and perhaps weaponisation of some of the councillor conduct systems. I will talk about that a little bit later.

I must firstly give thanks to all of those mayors and councillors right across the state and the 77 local governments. They are true community champions. We want to put in place a system of councillor conduct that is simple to understand and easy to negotiate for those councillors and mayors who are proud to be community leaders and serve in local government. We want to stimulate opportunities for them to be there. As we heard from the many inquiry witnesses and submissions, there is a lot of fear out there in local government about the Councillor Conduct Tribunal. Throughout the process we have seen there are many delays in the system, including delays of up to 2½ years for very simple training, apology or education processes, so that has been a great challenge. It was quite an eye-opening revelation for the committee when we understood those delays were in place.

As the committee worked through the 40 recommendations from the initial inquiry it talked about having a tripartite forum. That might be a new term for some, but basically it is the department of local government as well as the Office of the Independent Assessor and the CCT meeting on occasion to work out problems of interpretation. It was something that I was very keen to see happen, because if this place of legislature is determining a legal position on something and it has an interpretation, and we are giving that to the executive to put in place, if that system is closed—which I believe it is on many occasions from the information that came back to us from the department—then when it goes to an independent body, being the assessor and then the CCT, they have to be aligned with the executive and this legislature. If they are not, then the system is broken. We discovered many occasions when the Office of the Independent Assessor had a different interpretation from the department and then the CCT also had a different interpretation. That caused an enormous amount of grief for many good, hardworking councillors and mayors and they had to deal with that very personally. It actually affected their lives, and some of them have chosen to no longer continue in the role of councillor or mayor. That is something that is very sad to see.

We tabled the report with 40 recommendations—a very broad suite of them ranging from time frames through to interpretation through to training—I am pleased that the government has picked up 19 of those recommendations in this bill. Would there be some things I would change if I were the only person on the committee? Yes, there would be, but I am very proud of the work that my colleagues, the member for Burleigh, the member for Bancroft, the member for Ipswich West, the member for Traeger and the member for Bundaberg did on this committee and the genuine intent and spirit of cooperation we had to get the best outcome—not politically—for councillors and mayors across the state.

While I pay tribute and give thanks to all of those true community champions, I will give a shout-out to Mayor Tania Milligan and her council in Lockyer, who are right now dealing with the LDMG and disaster management provisions as a result of the freak hailstorm last Friday night and the tragic loss of Colin Greenwood's wife, Joy, on Friday evening. It was a terrible tragedy. They are dealing with not only the devastating loss of property but also the tragic loss of a wonderful life at the moment. Local governments right across the state deal with disasters. I also pay tribute to all those who are dealing with the fires that have been sweeping across the state and say a great many thank-yous. That is why we had a spirit of cooperation driving us to make the system of local government—which is an animal of the state—better so that more people, those champions in the community, want to be a part of it.

I do want to stress to the House that we wanted to set high standards of integrity, but we also wanted to make sure that the legalistic interpretation and misuse of these processes is kept under control. I believe that the work with the tripartite forum to see that alignment of interpretations will go a long way to assist with that. I also believe that mandatory training to get people to an understanding of these sometimes complex issues will be a good step in the right direction.


I also want to stress the uncovering of different standards of controls in councils across the state which were put in place by those councils to protect—which is the word that was used in some of the submissions—councillors and mayors from meeting with developers or doing things that could be misinterpreted by the committee. Some of those things are absolutely not necessary. The law as it stands and the way in which it is interpreted by the department is that there is no reason councillors and mayors cannot meet with submitters to development applications, DAs, in the local government context as well as applicants and hear them and go to site visits and see these things. That is not a breach of any conduct, but some councils have made it a rule that an officer from the council has to accompany those councillors or mayors.

I can understand why they are doing it but it is actually an overstep. Then we had people being referred because they were not complying with the new system that those local governments put in place. Again, there was an overreach in that regard. Removing the issue and aspect of social media unless it is something very unkind or illegal is a good step in the right direction. Making sure there is minimal opportunity to weaponise this use is a great thing.

It would be remiss of me if I did not give out a shout-out to Councillor Sean Dillon from Barcardine. Sean Dillon faced a very challenging time in his leadership in council when talking about the rollout of immunisation for his community and then faced an inquiry and confidentiality issues. I believe wholeheartedly that all of those things could have been dealt with by the Independent Assessor right at the start. They could have said, 'No, don't touch this. This is a matter of freedom of political speech.' A good officer could have reported that there were concerns about the immunisation rollout in this community and I am sure that the necessary department could have taken that forward.

Seeing these five recommendations put in place and making sure there is an initial preliminary assessment of the matters will be a great step forward. The Office of the Independent Assessor is dealing with things now by sending letters to those councillors who have had complaints made against them and outlining to them that, although this is a misconduct matter, it is at a level that should see an educative or training process put in place or an apology if it is a very low level. There was some context given to the seriousness of the misconduct, and that already has taken away the fear that many of those councillors and mayors have faced.

A misconduct charge can have a very minor penalty through to ultimate dismissal if the Deputy Premier sees fit. I really appreciate that the operationalisation of these changes is going to be very critical. I recognise the new appointments that are being made and I look forward to seeing those put in place. This will see the good people in local government across Queensland supported through their conduct management system so that they can have confidence when doing their job, being true community leaders and delivering for the people of Queensland.

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (5.42 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill was introduced to the Legislative Assembly by the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure on 13 September 2023 but the bill was preceded by an inquiry into the Independent Assessor and councillor conduct complaints system by the State Development and Regional Industries Committee, the committee on which I serve, with the chair, the member for Bancroft, tabling the committee report on 14 October 2022, with the committee making 40 recommendations.

The committee found that the Office of the Independent Assessor was broadly sound but improvements were needed. Specifically, the system needs to align with the intent of the legislation and public interest more closely and efficiently. The committee's task was to consider the functions of the Office of the Independent Assessor and the performance of those functions and identify any amendments desirable for the more efficient operation of our local government complaints system.

The Independent Assessor undertakes the initial assessment of all complaints about councillor conduct in Queensland. It investigates misconduct complaints about mayors and councillors and, where appropriate, prepares applications for hearing by the independent Councillor Conduct Tribunal, which decides misconduct matters. The Office of the Independent Assessor has jurisdiction over the assessment of complaints made against all councillors and mayors in Queensland. Previously, complaints about councillor conduct were assessed by the council's CEO or the chief executive of the department of local government.

The committee resolved to conduct an inquiry into the functions of the Office of the Independent Assessor and the performance of those functions, including: the performance by the Independent Assessor of the Independent Assessor's functions and whether it is consistent with the intent of the local government complaints system; whether the powers and resources of the Independent Assessor are being applied in accordance with the public interest; and any amendments to the Local Government Act 2009 or changes to the functions, structures or procedures of the Independent Assessor considered desirable for a more effective operation of the Independent Assessor and/or the local government complaints system.

I proudly served as a local government councillor with the Somerset Regional Council from 28 April 2012 until I was elected to state parliament on 31 January 2015 so I know firsthand what governance issues local governments face on a day-to-day basis. In Queensland, local government councillors are responsible for the good governance of both local and regional communities. In performing this role, councillors execute a range of functions, including planning and monitoring, service delivery, and law making and enforcement. They also play an important role representing the interests of their community in negotiations with state and federal governments and the non-government sector.

After the tabling of the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure on 13 September, the bill was referred to the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for review. The bill implements 19 of the 40 recommendations of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee as detailed in its report titled *Inquiry into the Independent Assessor and councillor conduct complaints system* tabled on 14 October 2022, being report No. 28 of the 57th Parliament.

The bill also seeks to modernise government advertising requirements by replacing requirements relating to print newspaper to other media, including online publications. The amendment reflects declining readership of print newspapers, increased costs associated with print advertising and the termination of many regional newspapers.

As well, the bill amends the current laws concerning local government election costs. Currently, pursuant to the Local Government Electoral Act 2011, a local government is required to pay the costs incurred by the Electoral Commission of Queensland for conducting an election in its local government area, but there is no ability for the Electoral Commission of Queensland to absorb any direct local government election costs and it is required to invoice a local government for the full amount. The bill amends the Local Government Electoral Act to provide the Electoral Commission with discretion to determine which election costs are passed onto a local government, which is all or part of the Electoral Commission of Queensland's costs.

As well, the bill deals with the reclassification of the Moreton Bay Regional Council. In July 2023, the Local Government (Moreton Bay City Council) and Other Legislation Amendment Regulation 2023 amended the Local Government Regulation 2012 to change the classification of the Moreton Bay

Regional Council to the Moreton Bay City Council, as well as other subordinate legislation to update references to the Moreton Bay Regional Council. The bill makes consequential amendments to various acts to replace references to the Moreton Bay Regional Council with Moreton Bay City Council.

Lastly, the bill makes amendments to the Queens Wharf Brisbane Act 2016 to enable the state to grant the necessary tenure to meet its obligations under various development agreements with Queen's Wharf Brisbane. The construction of Queen's Wharf Brisbane is dependent on complex tender arrangements agreed to by the state and relevant developers. Tenure arrangements include declarations under the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Act, the revocation and creation of new reserves, multiple easements and the granting of long-term leases. The amendments in the bill provide for a new process for creating freehold lots within the Queen's Wharf Brisbane precincts which identifies all specific parcels of land and continuing interests and dealings.

In closing, I would like to thank my fellow members of the State Development and Rural Industries Committee, the committee secretariat, Hansard, the submitters to both the inquiry into the Independent Assessor and councillor conduct complaints system and the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I commend the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, as well as any other proposed amendments by the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure to the Legislative Assembly.

Mr McDonald interjected.


Mr MADDEN: However, I hear some words behind me and I think I need to thank the members of the State Development and Rural Industries Committee directly—our wonderful chair, the member for Bancroft; our wonderful deputy chair, the member for Lockyer; the member for Bundaberg, who is here—

Mr Bleijie: This is filibustering.

Mr MADDEN: They were insisting that I do it. It was your member who asked. I thank the member for Burleigh who does a sterling job, and last but not least the member for Traeger who brings a wonderful element to our committee and is another former fellow councillor, as well as the member for Lockyer and the member for Bancroft.

Mr Whiting: Congratulate yourself, too, Jim.

Mr MADDEN: We all did a wonderful job. It was an interesting exercise. I would like to particularly thank those councillors who attended our hearing in Gladstone who went to the trouble to come down and speak to us and told us firsthand what their concerns were with regard to the current councillor complaints system. We took them on board and, as I told those people, we put a lot of effort into our final report and that led to the bill that was tabled by the Deputy Premier. Thank you.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (5.52 pm): Following the sentiment of the last speech, I feel like we should all bring it in for a big hug.

Mr Madden: Bring it down.

Mr KATTER: I do appreciate that and I do agree it was well conducted by the chair of the committee and fellow committee members indeed, because it was pretty in-depth and I took a lot out of the contributions of other members and their interest in it, so it helped people like myself get abreast of it. To be blunt, I probably echo the sentiment of some commentators and some of the more significant stakeholders in this at the start when asked, 'What do you think of this?' and they said, 'I would probably just throw it all in the bin.' However, I do not like saying that unless I have a better solution, and I am not sure I have a better solution to how things should run. My thoughts are with a lot of people involved with this. I can see the purpose it serves, but sometimes the antidote is just as bad as the problem that you set out to address in the first place.

I cast my mind back to some of my own negative experiences in the council. I remember there was one situation where we were looking at an issue on the riverbank in Mount Isa. Trying to be a diligent councillor, I went to the files and the lady from filing pulled me up and I said, 'I am just trying to find this environmental study on the creek.' The Breakaway Creek runs into the river. She said, 'I will do that for you.' I thought, 'Fair enough.' I was hauled into the CEO's office a week later where he said, 'What the hell are you doing? Mate, we should be reporting you to the CCC, but we will let this one slide.' For me, being a new and young councillor—I had been to the training et cetera—it is a fair disincentive to apply any initiative when that is the culture that is created. Maybe I was in the wrong, you could say, but there is that culture now of, 'Don't touch anything. Stay in your lane.'


I think I may have contributed this in one of the hearings, but one of my observations is that it is all about councillors staying in their lane. There is a very strict regime and there is so much focus on that, but then you have CEOs and council officers who do not want to stay in their lane and who often indulge in the policy side. They are quick to give their opinions in meetings, and they are not elected officials. You think, 'Hang on, where does it come from when they have to stay in their lane?' It was news to me, certainly through this process. This was all focused on the councillors, so there was not much in the process that turns it back on the officers who sometimes step outside their ranks and make it harder than otherwise. Those were just some observations I made.

Who could disagree that it is good to have a system that keeps checks and balances in place? In my experience in my own electorate, a lot of that still gets missed. It is not like this solves everything in terms of cutting corruption and collusion with industry and council and that sort of thing. There are still things that would make you question whether this is doing its job in terms of bringing issues to the surface and exposing things. It certainly is not rock-solid.

I did acknowledge and thought there was merit in the suggestion from the Mount Isa City Council about attributing a fee for the complaints which I guess was targeted to say, 'If you are going to follow through on a complaint, you better make sure it is right because if you going to make 10 of these, it is going to cost you.' You would want to be certain there is value in that. There are arguments both sides of that, but I thought it was worth raising again because there was merit in the sentiment behind that. I have no problem with the recommendations by the committee, of which I was a part obviously. I think those were done in the best interests of trying to get to where we were.

I will go back over some of the sentiments expressed by some councillors about the situations that were created by this process. Former Livingstone Shire Council mayor Bill Ludwig was reprimanded by the tribunal almost three years after he left office over a sustained misconduct complaint first raised in 2017. Mayor Greg Campbell of Cloncurry Shire Council spoke about the cost impacts of alleged vexatious complaints and how much it was costing council. A similar thing was expressed in Mount Isa, that some of the rules are so complex and that declarations of interest were chewing up a lot of the council time, as they tried to grapple with those problems. I think it was mentioned before the weaponising of the system for personal political reasons. Creating an environment of fear and intimidation, is the downside of it all. I think there is a lot of people in the system who are working hard to mitigate that.

From our perspective, especially in those bush councils, we want more autonomy at the local level, less big brother, less Brisbane imposing rules and guidelines, and people sorting themselves out, which is not how it is. I would say in the context of this bill and what it has tried to address within the existing framework, I do not have a better way to operate it, so I cannot be too negative. These amendments will improve the situation and are done in the best interests as far as we are concerned. Once again, thank you to the committee for the collaborative work in putting that together.

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (5.59 pm): I want to echo the sentiments of previous members in acknowledging the work of councils, especially in recent weeks around the fires. I acknowledge the work in the Bundaberg region by council members and their staff in making sure they were responding to the emergencies across our region. With the indulgence of the House, I pay tribute to Councillor Wayne Honor, who has decided not to recontest the next election for the Bundaberg Regional Council. I thank Wayne for his friendship over the last few years and pay tribute to his longevity in that role. I know that he is very well respected. Wayne, to you and your family, I wish you a happy retirement. I know that there will be lots of travel ahead.

As has been mentioned, this was an inquiry that lasted some time—and rightfully so, because it brought together the thoughts and contributions of not just government, opposition and crossbench members of the committee but also a vast range of councillors, mayors and even CEOs as well as important stakeholders. It felt like this committee toured the length and breadth of Queensland. We went to the Gold Coast, to Cairns and to Karumba, where I put my life in the hands of the member for Traeger as he flew me from Karumba to Mount Isa.

Mr McDonald: It was the first committee hearing in Karumba.

Mr SMITH: I will take that interjection from the member for Lockyer. I note that the member for Warrego said it had been a long time coming, but I suggest that it was the right time coming, as all of the members on the committee wanted to make sure we pursued this in the best way we could.

There was quite a lot that came up from councillors, different stakeholders and committee members. That is why our inquiry made 44 recommendations, 19 of which are being applied in this bill. I will speak from my point of view around the OIA. The initial conversations we had with councillors and

mayors about the OIA related to weaponising of the system and overreach. One of the concerns was around the freedom of political expression. I think in the early days that was very much a focus for me and my fellow committee members—the way in which the OIA envisaged what political expression looked like.

Part of the difficulty may have been that the Independent Assessor was coming from a different cultural set-up in terms of the CCC body and there is a difference between inappropriate conduct and misconduct compared to crime and corruption. I think the code of conduct for councillors and local government may have had an overly literal view by the OIA when they were making those assessments and judgements around political expression. Blocking a constituent from your Facebook page being perceived as denial of political expression is something that, quite frankly, in my view—members of the committee may agree—goes beyond what political expression is, because local councillors have their own right to political expression.

Something that came out through this inquiry very clearly is that local government members are elected to represent a portion of their community. When they are elected, they do not need to get 100 per cent of their division or ward; they just need 50.1 per cent. To suggest that they could not have disagreements or that they had to always take on board and be almost in agreement with complaints from constituents they disagreed with politically could potentially see them before the Office of the Independent Assessor for investigation. It was found very clearly by the committee that there needed to be a change of consideration by the Office of the Independent Assessor. I think members of the committee may agree that we did see a difference in tone and I would say growth from the Office of the Independent Assessor in the way that they started to view what political expression means. Whilst some councils as a whole may disagree with a federal or state government, that does not deny that they are representing a portion of their community and that they should have the right to express that.

I will touch on anonymous complaints. This was brought up at a range of different hearings. Some mayors and councillors were for anonymous complaints; many were opposed to anonymous complaints. I put on record that I believe that anonymous complaints are important and are a fundamental right of democracy. I think denying an anonymous complaint has the potential to deny justice being sought and justice being eventually delivered. I raised the issue of anonymous complaints with the OIA. Ms Florian said—

As soon as we receive a complaint, we undertake a preliminary assessment and, based on that preliminary assessment, 65 per cent of complaints are dismissed and communicated to the councillor, which will be the first time they know of it, within 21 working days of the OIA receiving the complaint. Ultimately 95 per cent of complaints and notifications do not make it to the CCT.

When I asked whether an anonymous complaint was just as valid as a complaint with a name attached to it, Ms Florian did agree. She went on to say—

We already report on this to a significant degree in all our annual reports. In the last financial year, 72 per cent of all anonymous complaints were dismissed or NFA-ed on assessment, 22 were investigated, one was referred to the CCC, two were referred to councils as potential inappropriate conduct, and nine were dealt with as inquiries only.

I will not go into what the matter before the CCC is or what it could possibly be, but if an anonymous complaint has been assessed by the OIA as important to go to the CCC, then I believe that is a justification for anonymous complaints remaining. As I said, we cannot deny an individual's right to call out what they believe may be wrong in the system. We know that there is a great sense of power imbalance when we think about people who may be in a low socio-economic environment. Ms Florian noted that a lot of the anonymous complaints come from the Indigenous councils, where there are a lot of family ties and relationships. We want to empower people, not take away their power to be an active citizen in a democracy. That is why I believe it is so important for anonymous complaints to stay.


I will comment on the CCT. I note that it was a ring-in in the member for Capalaba who brought up this element.

Mr Whiting: I agree.

Mr SMITH: I take the interjection. Thank you, member for Bancroft. I welcome more!

This was about the CCT being able to have one tribunal member make adjudications. I raised this with the then president of the CCT and with councils. At the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission one commissioner can adjudicate on a matter. In Queensland when there is a non-jury matter it is before a judge, and the judge is able to make those decisions in complex matters. I do not understand why the CCT would not be able to meet similar expectations. It is good to see that this has been included in the provision. I understand that the president may want to make a decision around the complexity of a matter before them and have more than one commissioner but no more than three. However, I note that the former president, Ms Anstee, when asked in our last public hearing about how

many times the CCT had a result that was not unanimous—where it was two to one or one to one—did mention that only once had that occurred. That is, the CCT had only once not come to a decision of 3-0, so I do not believe that the fear is warranted. This is a great bill. Well done to the Deputy Premier and all of the members of the committee.

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (6.08 pm): I, too, rise to speak to the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Honourable members can see from the members of the committee who have spoken so far that this was a bipartisan inquiry and we all pretty much came to the same conclusion. As members of parliament, we all work very closely with our councillors. With the indulgence of the House, I too would like to mention that I have a couple of councillors retiring as well. Councillor Pauline Young on the Gold Coast has served diligently the people in my area and she is retiring at the next election. Also retiring is Councillor Hermann Vorster, who has been preselected to replace me in the seat of Burleigh. The members here will hear that name and work closely with him for the next 20 or 30 years.

We are quite fortunate on the State Development and Regional Industries Committee that when we look at something like local government we have four former councillors working with us: the members for Bancroft, Ipswich West, Lockyer and Traeger. Then there is the member for Bundaberg and me who are diametrically opposed on a number of issues, but we all came together with the same view. I went into this inquiry originally—

Mr Smith:—with a sizzle and a shake!

Mr HART: I take that interjection. I went into this inquiry with a view that councillors should not be under any more scrutiny or conditions than a state member. They certainly were at the time and this legislation will assist with some of that. We all pretty much agreed on the committee, so I was interested when the member for Bancroft said that the system was not broken and then went on to say that members of council are in constant fear about issues being raised by the OIA. I would have to say that if councillors are in constant fear, then the system is probably broken, and it was broken. This legislation through the good work of the committee will start to fix some of those things.

The committee made five recommendations. The first one was that the bill be passed. This bill is not perfect, but it will go a long way to fixing some of the concerns that we heard from local councillors and mayors were creating real issues for them. Councillors were actually in tears over what was happening to them. A lot of councillors expressed the view to us that they just did not want to be councillors anymore and were reconsidering whether they, in fact, run at the next election or not because of what was happening in this realm. If this bill passes, as it should, I think it will go some way to fixing those problems.

The second recommendation—and I am glad to hear from the minister that the government is accepting all of the recommendations—is—

That the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning take further steps to ensure that the councillor conduct framework is operating as intended and fit for purpose for Queensland's Indigenous Councils.

The committee heard from Indigenous councils in Gladstone; that was a private meeting. The Deputy Premier has already talked about the fact that the Indigenous councils talked about kinship and those sorts of issues they have which are different to issues faced by other councillors. I do have some concerns that if we put in different rules for some councillors that there may be issues with other councillors. We need to be very careful about that. I am glad due to the discussion we have had in the committee that we are going to talk to Indigenous councils over the next 12 months and just figure out for ourselves where those sorts of problems are and exactly what we should be recommending to the government about how they should fix them. That is a concern and it is something the committee needs to continually look at.

Our third recommendation is about updating the training materials, and I am glad to hear from the Deputy Premier that that is all in place. If the proper training materials are available to councillors, that will also provide them some comfort as to what they can and cannot do.

The fourth recommendation is that the Councillor Conduct Tribunal be adequately resourced. I was glad to see a press release last week that 14 new members were appointed to the councillor complaints tribunal and a permanent chair. One thing we learnt when we looked at the statistics around the complaints that were going through the OIA and the councillor complaints tribunal was that things were being held up. They were being held up significantly in the councillor complaints tribunal for a number of reasons. One was that they needed all three members to sit on every investigation that they undertook. We considered that and thought that for straightforward issues, maybe just one complaint


tribunal member could sit. That would obviously need to be decided by the president or the vice-president. They should decide what is a straightforward case and then just appoint one member. That would definitely speed up the number of outcomes the councillor complaint tribunal gets through. I was glad to see that has happened.

The fifth recommendation is that the relevant parliamentary committee—and obviously there will be a different parliamentary committee in the next term—look at that. Unfortunately, I will not be here to see that and be involved in it, but I will be watching from the sidelines to see what happens there.

Mr McDonald interjected.

Mr HART: We will see, member for Lockyer.

I have spoken numerous times in this House about the OIA and the investigation that the State Development and Regional Industries Committee conducted. It was a yearlong process. We spoke to many councils and mayors. We heard all their issues. I do think that this legislation will assist on some level, but it definitely needs to be reviewed to see whether or not it is working completely and maybe just tweak it along the way to make sure we have got it entirely right. We are not going to get it right the first time, but maybe the second time we will get it right.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (6.17 pm): I rise to speak to the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, a bill that the sector is warmly welcoming to strengthen, clarify, streamline and reform the councillor complaint and conduct system here in Queensland. Since the review was referred to the committee on 25 October 2021 I have travelled to 94 regional locations in my capacity as the Assistant Minister for Local Government. Many of those locations hosted regional groups of councils, so I have had no shortage of conversations with the local government sector about the current system and the potential improvements that can be made.

The objectives of this bill are shared objectives: to create a system that is improved, functions in an effective way and provides confidence to the community. The review was, as I have said before in this place, truly bipartisan in its nature. The report clearly articulated the issues and comprehensively stepped out sensible solutions and processes going forward. The Palaszczuk government's response to that report supported in full and in principle all 40 recommendations made by the committee. While this work around integrity was ongoing, there was also a process being worked out around conduct for councillors—work that considered the practical implications of the conflicts of interest for elected representatives and clarified and enhanced the requirements.

Local government is the level of democracy that is closest to our communities. When it comes to elected representatives, it is expected that the type of person who would put their hand up to represent their community is someone who is an active community participant, an active leader, prior to election. It is not uncommon that these people are owners of land, hold business interests, have family and community involvement and even, in the instances of remote or very small councils, hold down a regular job in addition to their elected position. The culmination of these factors of course means a much higher frequency of encountering instances of complaints around a conflict or a perceived conflict. While conflicts or perceived conflicts will no doubt be a certainty in the sector, our role in this place is to ensure that we create and implement a robust system that is clearly understood and properly utilised.

Natural justice must be provided and the weaponisation of this system plays no constructive role in community development at all. In fact, it undermines it. There will be legitimate issues that should be rightly raised through these processes, but from what I have seen from the 2016 election on is a dramatic increase in the number of complaints against councillors and a system that is entirely weaponised. There are a couple of big changes in this legislation that will, in my view, directly influence a reduction of the weaponisation of the system, including, but not limited to, preliminary assessment processes, time frames of assessment and the expansion of the definition to include vexatious complainants rather than just complaints.

Timeliness will be improved through a change to process that means that the Independent Assessor must undertake a preliminary assessment process to make a determination on how to best deal with a matter. This change will also include time frames to expedite matters. Timeliness is also improved through the appointment of a Deputy President to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal and the constitution of the CCT for matters. Confidence around the process and findings will be strengthened through the publishing of tribunal decisions. Feedback from the sector regarding delays in assessing and investigating matters have been all too common and a key component in leading to a diminished faith in the system. This bill addresses and remedies that through legislating time frames for assessment and investigation of complaints, with seven days to three months being expected time frames to see matters through to fruition.

This legislation clearly recognises the provision of official department advice to councillors. I have often had councillors contacting me looking for the right avenue to seek legitimate and reliable advice to complex matters. The Integrity Commissioner does not provide this role for councillors and the OIA is not appropriate, so I am pleased to see that there is clarity provided in that the department is the right and proper avenue to seek advice when required.

Ongoing training is essential. This bill establishes compulsory training requirements for councillors. Further, it removes the function of training from the OIA. It is clear that councillors struggle to identify what constitutes a conflict of interest breach for them. Compulsory training is often a matter raised outside the candidate training with me, so I am pleased to see that it was raised in the inquiry and comprehensively covered in this legislation. Experience demonstrates that the best central port of training, advice and information is the department. This bill clearly defines that and highlights the importance of the OIA in focusing on its key roles and functions. The committee recommended a tripartite forum that will be responsible for the important role of developing and providing training and clarity in this space.


In the local government sector we appreciate that it is difficult in a vast and varied state like Queensland to design systems that provide for a 'one size fits all'. That is why the department has been working to develop clear and tailored frameworks like in the areas of financial sustainability frameworks. Similarly, it provides a challenge to have a system designed from scratch that encompasses all of the variances and nuances from each LGA. This process was particularly informative in what we can do better to clarify the process for our First Nations communities, acknowledging that they are in and of themselves unique. First Nation elected representatives often have additional family and community obligations, balancing the law as contained in this legislation and cultural lore. Often the elected officials are traditional owners. In particular, the sensitivities that surround cultural adoption and kinship should also be especially considered and I am pleased to see that the committee made recommendations in that regard that have been endorsed by the government.

I commend the committee for the work that it has done both through the inquiry and also through this legislation. It has been an enormous body of work that it has been doing in a collaborative and professional way and it has conducted itself in the utmost and should be recognised and acknowledged for that. Also, I specifically highlight the expedient work of the department in this bill. It was a big ask to get this drafted and in place within a year. It was a request that the local government sector made of the Palaszczuk government and it is through the hard work of many public servants that we find ourselves here still with one sitting week remaining in the parliamentary calendar for the year, so well done to all of our phenomenal local government department staff.

I was a member of the relevant committee when these bills first came to this place operationalising the Operation Belcarra report and I have been watching these reforms and processes with keen interest. These measures have widely had bipartisan support, so it has been wonderful to see the maturity with which the committee has dealt with these matters. I make a stark observation just in relation to this afternoon's contributions in this place. All of the committee contributions that have been made thus far have all been cooperative, have all been collegial and have all been professional. The stark difference has been the partisan politics that the opposition spokesperson, the member for Warrego, has made in relation to this bill and the process that surrounds it. Partisan politics degrade and downplay the value that the sector and public servants have in not only this place but elected officials as well as the work that the Palaszczuk government has been doing in this space. They are negative, they are criticising and quite frankly I think in some instances even confusing. With that on the record, it is important to move forward in a cooperative and collaborative way with the local government sector. We have much to achieve together and I think that we have a very bright future as well.

In my closing minutes I want to recognise one of my local councillors and really good friend Councillor Mick Gillam. Mick was recently recognised up in Gladstone at the local government annual conference for the 30-plus years that he has had in the local government space. He has been a fantastic supporter of mine and a supporter of our community more broadly. From the days when he was a teacher at Bray Park State School and also a part-time councillor through to today where he has a full-time gig and is a large mentor in the organisation of the City of Moreton Bay, I want to acknowledge Mick and his family for the tremendous contribution that they have made to our community. As a funny little anecdote, we were opening a time capsule at the Bray Park State School just recently and 20 years ago Mick had written a letter to the councillor for 20 years into the future. He himself had to open and read his own letter that he had penned to the future councillor. I think that that speaks volumes to

the contribution that he has made to our community and the love that our community members have for him as well. Congratulations, Mick, on a really tremendous career in the local government. I know when you resign we will all very much miss you.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (6.27 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The primary objective of this bill is to amend the councillor conduct framework to make it more effective and more efficient and to ensure that only matters of substance and in the public interest proceed to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal for determination. According to the explanatory notes, this bill will implement the government's policy in relation to 19 of the 40 recommendations of the councillor conduct report, *Inquiry into the Independent Assessor and councillor conduct complaints system*. The numerous amendments include making changes to the complaints system and transitional arrangements, clarifying and enhancing conflict of interest requirements, modernising local government advertising requirements and giving the Electoral Commission of Queensland discretion relating to recovering local government election costs. The councillor conduct report, which was tabled in October last year, revealed a broken system. It revealed elected representatives were being prevented from doing their jobs by an overbearing complaints system operating beyond its brief. It revealed that the complaints system and conflict of interest provisions were found to be needlessly complicated.

This bill is being debated in the shadow of the next local government elections, which are less than six months away. We are debating this bill more than a year after we were told that the system was broken. We are debating this bill more than two years since the Deputy Premier promised in July 2022 to reform conflicts of interest issues. It is evident that the complaints framework established by the government in 2018 has failed. Five years ago the government established the Office of the Independent Assessor to handle complaints of inappropriate conduct, misconduct or corrupt conduct referred to it by the CCC. It also established the Councillor Conduct Tribunal to hold hearings regardless of these allegations and deciding on any potential disciplinary actions. It is always disappointing when the conduct of a few councillors contributes to the erosion of Queenslanders' confidence in their local representatives and councils. The OIA was established because of the dreadful behaviour of a few councillors, including the corrupt behaviour of the former Labor mayor of Ipswich, Paul Pisasale. Unfortunately, during the past five years chaos has been the hallmark of the complaints system. There have been countless reports of investigative overreach, intimidation, flawed processes and complaint backlogs of several months continue to emerge.


Without question councillor conduct must be beyond reproach. However, it also means that complaints are not frivolous or vexatious. It means that complaints are not used to re prosecute elections or override the ballot box by destroying the careers and reputations of elected representatives. I doubt there is a member in this House who has not dealt with councillor complaints. Local government is at the coalface of the delivery of services so it means it also, unfortunately, attracts much criticism.

Among the many petty complaints investigated by the Office of the Independent Assessor is one from my own region. A Gympie Regional Council councillor was fined \$700 for posting on Facebook after a council committee meeting that Gympie Showgrounds would host a popular caravan rally. Other examples include a Cassowary Coast councillor who was fined \$100 for voting to award a contract to a company whose principal had three years earlier, during a 2016 local government election, donated \$200 to a registered group of candidates of which he was a member; a Moreton Bay councillor who was found to have engaged in misconduct when she failed to declare her husband was employed by the Christian Outreach Centre; and for months the Mayor of Barcaldine, Sean Dillon, was investigated because he was concerned whether COVID vaccines would be available to all members of his rural community.

Debate, on motion of Mr Perrett, adjourned.

MOTION


Member for South Brisbane, Finding of Contempt

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.30 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That this House—

1. notes the Ethics Committee report No. 216, tabled in the House on the morning of 26 October 2023;
2. notes that the Ethics Committee recommended a finding of contempt be made against the member for South Brisbane for wilfully disobeying an order of the House and disrupting the orderly conduct of the business of the House;

3. notes that the Ethics Committee recommended that the member for South Brisbane should take it upon herself as soon as practicable to apologise unequivocally to the House and the Speaker, on the floor of the House, for her conduct;
4. notes that the member for South Brisbane has not apologised, on the floor of the House, for her conduct despite:
 - (a) nearly two sitting days having elapsed since the report was tabled; and
 - (b) the member for South Brisbane making contributions on other matters in the House between that period of time; and
5. finds the member in contempt as particularised by the Ethics Committee and, in accordance with the Ethics Committee recommendation, suspends the member for South Brisbane from the services of the House and the precinct until 9.30 am on 16 November 2023.

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (6.32 pm): I will not be apologising for fighting for Queenslanders. I will not be apologising for fighting to put more money in the pockets of Queenslanders than in the pockets of the gas corporations, the property developers and the big banks. I will not be apologising for trying to force property investors to put empty homes back into the rental market in the middle of one of the worst rental crises that we have seen in a generation. I will not be apologising for using every tool that we have available to us in parliament, in the community and in the media to fight for everyday Queenslanders.

I am not going to let the gas corporations win. I am not going to let the property developers win. I am not going to let the big banks win. Every Queenslanders has come to expect both Labor and the LNP to put big corporations first and everyday Queenslanders a distant last. The price gouging corporations, the CEOs and the lobbyists come first every time and everyday Queenslanders come a distant last.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would ask for you to consider and rule on relevance. This is about the motion before the House. The member for South Brisbane seems to be using this as an opportunity to debate other matters and not the actual motion itself and the Ethics Committee report.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, I am listening to your contribution. If you are able to come back to the Ethics Committee report to ensure that you are being relevant to the motion before the House.

Dr MacMAHON: To clarify, the Ethics Committee report deals with my tabling of three separate private members' bills: the big bank levy that would have put \$1 billion each year into the healthcare system, the empty homes levy that would have brought tens of thousands of empty homes back into the rental market and the gas levy bill that would have raised royalties on gas corporations to put \$500 in the pockets of everyday Queenslanders when they need it most. The Ethics Committee report deals with my tabling of three bills that would have directly benefited everyday Queenslanders as opposed to big corporations.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, can I give you some guidance. This motion that has been put forward by the Leader of the House is related to whether the Ethics Committee findings should find you in contempt. It is not a chance to re prosecute the arguments for which you were found to be in contempt of parliament. I ask you to come back to the motion before the House.

Dr MacMAHON: Mr Speaker, as I have communicated—

Mr SPEAKER: I am not debating the topic with you, member. I am asking to you ensure that you are being directly relevant to the motion before the House as is custom in this place.

Dr MacMAHON: On numerous occasions the Ethics Committee has asked me to justify why I put in these bills. Is that not relevant to the debate?

Mr SPEAKER: It is not a debatable question. The question before the House is that the report be noted and whether you are to be found in contempt, not the reasons the Ethics Committee investigated in the first place. I am just trying to give you guidance.

Dr MacMAHON: The motion outlines that unless I apologise I will be banned from the precinct and I am outlining why I will not be apologising for putting Queenslanders first. I am failing to understand how this is not relevant to the content of the motion.

Mr SPEAKER: Member, you cannot use it as an opportunity to re prosecute all of the reasons why there was a discussion by the committee in the first place. This is about whether you are found in contempt or not. You have to stick directly and be relevant to the motion before the House. I am just trying to give you that guidance. I will give you one more opportunity. If you are unable to do that I will ask you to resume your seat.

Dr MacMAHON: As I have communicated to the Ethics Committee on numerous occasions, I do not feel that I should be found in contempt for putting in bills that fight for Queenslanders.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for South Brisbane, this is not a question of whether you should or should not have been found in contempt. You have been found in contempt.

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

Mr SPEAKER: I am speaking, member for Maiwar. Please resume your seat. I am trying to give guidance to the member for South Brisbane. I have been quite lenient and have given you latitude but you keep coming back to the same point. I will give you one more opportunity. I will ask you to resume your seat otherwise.

Mr BERKMAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My point of order goes directly to the question that is before the House right now which is whether or not this House will find the member for South Brisbane in contempt. The Ethics Committee's report that has been tabled and that is supposed to be noted in line with this motion—


Mr SPEAKER: Member, you are now arguing the point as well. That is not the motion before the House. The motion before the House is that the member be found in contempt. That is the structural essence of the motion. I cannot be any more clear. I have tried to give guidance. Member for South Brisbane, if you can be relevant to the motion before the House I would very much enjoy hearing your contribution. Otherwise I would ask you to resume your seat.

Dr MacMAHON: To clarify, the motion says that unless I apologise I will be found in contempt and be excluded from the precinct.

Mr SPEAKER: The House is the master of its own destiny. This is the motion before the House. There is always a question before the House. In this particular instance it is about that. I will now ask you to resume your seat and not contest the point with me. I can only be so clear.

Member for South Brisbane, under standing order 276, now that you have finished your contribution, you will need to remove yourself from the House so that the House can consider the matter in your absence.

Whereupon the honourable member for South Brisbane withdrew from the chamber at 6.39 pm.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (6.39 pm): I begin my contribution to the debate by noting, first of all, that we have been given absolutely no notice that this was coming on and have been given no notice of the terms of the motion.

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr BERKMAN: We have been given no notice of the terms of this motion. For the member for South Brisbane to be so tightly constrained in the debate when the terms of the motion have not been made available to us and for the Leader of the House to take points of order on it is genuinely disappointing. I ask that in future we are at least given the courtesy of knowing the terms of a motion that purports to eject a member from the precinct.

I also want to raise the point initially that this House is responsible for making a finding of contempt. The Ethics Committee makes recommendations on which this House acts. You said it yourself just a moment ago, Mr Speaker: this House is the master of its own destiny. It is the master of its own proceedings. It is the House that makes that determination, not the Ethics Committee. Until such time as this House, based on the Ethics Committee's report, makes a finding that the member for South Brisbane is in contempt she, indeed, is not in contempt. It is vitally important that the issues that were considered by the Ethics Committee—

Mr SPEAKER: I will stop you there, member. This is not an opportunity to re prosecute the reasons the committee made its finding. It has given its report to the House. It was tabled at a previous sitting, allowing ample time to consider what may have been the consequence of there not being an apology. I will give you the same courtesy as the member for South Brisbane: if you can be relevant to the motion before the House I encourage you to do so, otherwise I will also ask you to resume your seat.

Mr BERKMAN: Mr Speaker, I can only reiterate how surprising I find it that the House is being asked to make a decision to suspend a member from the precinct for a day and that it is being asked to do so without any debate being allowed on the contents of the report that makes that recommendation. Frankly, I find that kind of surprising. Indeed, the contribution that I had intended to

make was based precisely on the contents of the Ethics Committee's report. What else is there that we might use to contribute to a debate other than the contents of the report that the motion says we are to note and that the motion says we are to act upon? I will proceed as I was intending to and see how far I go, I suppose. That is all I can do.

The very first page of this committee report sets out, as the committee does in almost every piece of correspondence I have seen from it—

The committee has established procedures and practices for dealing with referrals which ensure procedural fairness and natural justice is afforded to all parties.

That is a reference to chapters 44 and 45 of the standing orders. Chapters 44 and 45 do no such thing. They absolutely do not ensure procedural fairness before the Ethics Committee. There is no body to which the Ethics Committee is held accountable beyond this chamber, so they can conduct themselves as they see fit and we are at the whim of the committee. Whether or not we are given adequate particulars of an issue that we are considering is entirely up to them.

I will say this very carefully, referring only to matters that the committee has reported back on, I believe. When I have sought from the committee additional particulars in the course of an inquiry to be able to make the case as to why a contempt has not been committed, I have been told by the committee, in essence, that their deliberations are out of bounds for any discourse within the committee and, in fact, this House in this very debate is the body that is responsible for considering all of those leaps of logic that I would suggest the committee has made in this report. I will move on.

The committee has made the observation that you, Mr Speaker, in your referral suggested four examples of contempt under standing order 266 that might be relevant to the member's conduct. It goes on to state that it is 'the committee's role to determine any potential contempt, that is, satisfaction of section 37 of the POQA, based on the referral and the information it gathers'. That is kind of shorthand for saying that the committee can quite literally make up new types of conduct that are a contempt as long as they fall, as far as the committee is concerned, within the definitions of 'contempt' under section 30 of the Parliament of Queensland Act.

Those examples within the standing orders are not in any way a constraint on the actions of the Ethics Committee and it can, in effect, just make stuff up. Let us remember that all of this happens behind closed doors. We do not have any opportunity for these issues to be aired until right now, when these reports come back to the House. That is the point at which the arguments that the Ethics Committee has adopted, the rationale behind any recommendation of contempt, are to be considered in its entirety. Up until that point we are simply told that the facts are the facts, we can make our submissions based on that and that is essentially all we are going to be allowed to consider.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Maiwar, I refer to standing order 211 regarding the confidentiality of proceedings in terms of committees and requesting information from a committee that has not been released publicly. You need to be very careful in terms of not breaching that standing order. I want to make sure you understood that clearly.

Mr BERKMAN: Indeed, Mr Speaker. I took great care that I was only referring to the one matter in respect of which the report had been tabled. I had to go to some lengths to ensure that the Ethics Committee, in publishing that report, included all of the correspondence—all of the toing and froing in the background—because my previous experience is that that has not been the case. You can, if you would like, see all of the relevant correspondence appended to the Ethics Committee report which was tabled alongside this one that I am holding.

The committee makes the observation again that one of the fundamental questions here is whether or not your ruling, Mr Speaker, can be considered an order of the House. That is a fundamental question. There is no precedent for that, as I understand it. Your rulings are your rulings and the committee has had to go to some length to convince itself or to provide a rationale that they are orders of the House for the purpose of this contempt.

Mr SPEAKER: Member, can I clarify: I have been trying to follow your contribution. Are you speaking to report 216 or 217? It appears that 217 is being brought into your contribution.

Mr BERKMAN: I am speaking to report 216. The important point here is that, as the committee has acknowledged, rulings from the chair—from you, Mr Speaker—are not binding. You are not bound by your own decisions. You could have made an entirely different decision about each and every one of the bills that was introduced, as to whether or not it is in order.

Mr SPEAKER: Member, are you now asking whether my rulings were in order? I would ask you to be very careful in terms of reflecting on the chair. I have made my ruling and there are Speaker precedents that come into effect. I ask you to be very cautious.

Mr BERKMAN: I am endeavouring to be as cautious as I possibly can within the terms of the committee's report. At paragraph 45 the report states—

With respect to the nature of Speaker's rulings, the committee acknowledges that while authoritative, rulings from the Chair are not binding.

That is the point that I am making. It is an observation made directly by the committee itself. As I said a moment ago, Mr Speaker, your rulings are not binding on you. Therefore, until such point as a private member's bill is introduced and ruled in or out of order, as is discussed in here, the member for South Brisbane's position, as I understand it, was that they must be ruled out of order. Yet, before a ruling was made by you, it says here that they consider that these non-binding rulings create a proactive duty for members to comply with them.

I move on to a further paragraph in the committee's report, which states—

Further, the Speaker's ruling in respect of the Member's previous revenue bill had been upheld via the Member's failed motion of dissent, confirming the Speaker's ruling—

So again we have this additional element of the House making a decision on that dissent motion, but again the House is the master of its own destiny. It is the master of its own proceedings. The House could have made a different decision on a subsequent dissent motion, unless we are going to assume that each and every one of the decisions made by this Assembly is stitched up before we get here. Heaven forbid anyone think that there is no real scrutiny here! In reference to the failure of the dissent motion, the committee continues—

thus, making it a higher, more authoritative source of procedure than a Speaker's ruling alone. In introducing the Empty Homes Levy Bill and Royalties and Cost of Living Relief bill, both revenue bills, the Member for South Brisbane disobeyed the order of the House.

As I understand it, this is quite literally the first time that the Ethics Committee has come to that conclusion. Throughout the committee's inquiry, the member for South Brisbane had no capacity to make submissions to the contrary, to say that it is not an order of the House, because this is a new—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Maiwar, the House has ruled on a dissent motion—you are correct—and that is binding. I have made rulings as Speaker which if it is the first becomes a Speaker precedent in terms of how future Speakers may consider. I will ask you again to come back to report 216 of the Ethics Committee or I will ask you to resume your seat.

Mr BERKMAN: The Ethics Committee process has some fundamental flaws in it, Mr Speaker. I want to put that to you and to every member of this House directly. It does not provide for a member who is referred to the committee to understand the arguments that the Ethics Committee is going to include in these reports before they come back to the House. If that is to remain the status quo—that is, that members whose matters are referred are not to be provided any insight into the committee's reasoning before this point—at the very least these debates need to be treated as more than just a tick and flick. As I understand it, the Leader of the House did not even expect that anyone would speak on this. The intention was for it to be simply waved through. We have 10 minutes before adjournment. I have five seconds left on the clock. Had we had more notice of the motion, had I had time to—

(Time expired)

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

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

MOTIONS

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.56 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in the standing and sessional orders for this day's sitting, the automatic adjournment does not occur at 7 pm and that the House consider a motion in relation to Ethics Committee report No. 217, to be followed by a 30-minute adjournment debate.

Motion agreed to.

Member for Maiwar, Finding of Contempt; Referral to Ethics Committee



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.56 pm): by leave, without notice: I move—

That this House—

1. notes the Ethics Committee report No. 217, tabled in the House on the morning of 26 October 2023;
2. notes that the Ethics Committee recommended a finding of contempt be made against the member for Maiwar for misconducting oneself in the presence of the House or a committee and reflecting on the actions or decisions of the chair;
3. notes that the Ethics Committee recommended that the member for Maiwar should take it upon himself as soon as practicable to apologise unequivocally to the House and the Speaker, on the floor of the House, for his conduct;
4. notes that the member for Maiwar has not apologised, on the floor of the House, for his conduct despite:
 - (a) nearly two sitting days having elapsed since the report was tabled; and
 - (b) the member for Maiwar making contributions on other matters in the House between that period of time; and
5. refers back to the Ethics Committee the issue of what action should be taken against the member for Maiwar given his failure to apologise for his conduct as recommended by the Ethics Committee.



Mr BERKMAN (Maiwar—Grn) (6.57 pm): Here we go. We are not now even just debating the recommendations of the Ethics Committee; we are now debating another additional referral to the Ethics Committee to consider matters it has already considered. The committee has already received submissions on the penalty and it has not recommended that any penalty be dishd out, but that is not good enough for the House.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BERKMAN: I take the interjections. I am not going to apologise for standing here and calling out this government's pride in locking up kids. That is what this all boils down to. It was the Leader of the House making a contribution when I interjected, speaking about how proud the government was of its policies of locking up children.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock, there is a point of order.

Mrs D'ATH: I rise to a point of order, Mr Speaker. The member for Maiwar has just repeated the same comments he made in the House that I took personal offence to and he was asked to withdraw and refused to at the time. The member has showed utter contempt by standing here tonight and repeating those same words after the Acting Speaker at the time told him to withdraw. I ask that he withdraw again.

Mr BERKMAN: On the point of order, Mr Speaker—

Mr SPEAKER: I have to deal with this point of order first. The member has found it personally offensive and asks that you withdraw.

Mr BERKMAN: On that point of order, in this instance—as was the case many months ago—I made no personal reflections on the member herself and no comments about—

Mr SPEAKER: This is not an opportunity to debate it, member. There is convention in this House that if a member has found something personally offensive, you will withdraw.

Mr BERKMAN: The committee report that is before the House—

Mr SPEAKER: Member, I am dealing with the point of order from the Leader of the House. I do not wish for you to continue to argue the point with me. I will ask you to sit down. You have nine minutes remaining for your contribution. I will ask you to withdraw as per the point of order by the Leader of the House.

Mr BERKMAN: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member. Thank you, for the dignity of the House.

Mr BERKMAN: If the House cares to have a look at the report—maybe I can take a survey. Has anyone here who is expected now to vote on whether or not I am to be found in contempt of the House read it?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BERKMAN: Ray has. Jim has.

Mr SPEAKER: It is not a time for rhetorical questions. You will direct your comments through the chair or I will ask you to resume your seat, member. The standing orders are here for a reason. I am giving you eight minutes and 42 seconds to make a contribution which is your right to have a right of reply. It is now your turn to use that time wisely.

Mr BERKMAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am endeavouring to. Members are being asked to vote on whether or not I am to be found in contempt of the House and no more than a handful of them have actually read the report. We can go back to the contents of that report. The fundamental point here is that I did not withdraw my comment directed at the Leader of the House because (a) it was true. This government is proud of its record. There are countless examples on the record in here and in the public domain about how proud they are—how excited they are at their record of keeping kids behind bars.

Mr SPEAKER: Member, there are elements of the report that you can speak to, but I will ask you not to stray into arguing the point about whether something is correct or otherwise.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for McConnel, I am providing a ruling.

Mr BERKMAN: I do not resile from the comments I made. At that point in time I took issue with the fact that I had not made any personal reflections. This is another example that has played out right now of where the terms of the standing orders themselves in the interests in the dignity of the House apparently do not mean much. I mean I might have spent more time trying to argue the point—which, in fact, the committee said I should have. In making its recommendations, it said that there were opportunities for me on my feet to take the point with the Speaker in the chair at the time and say, 'They weren't personal reflections. There is no point of order under the standing orders. I shouldn't be required to withdraw.'

Mr SPEAKER: Member, are you using this as an opportunity to now question whether the standing orders, which are what I must interpret and enforce in this place, are correct? If that is your point, it is not the appropriate time to do so. You can write to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly and you can make your points, but that is not for this particular time.

Mr BERKMAN: Mr Speaker, I am not challenging the correctness or otherwise of the standing orders. The standing orders are what they are. What I take issue with is the way members in this House use the standing orders. Standing order 234 provides for comments to be withdrawn where they make a personal reflection on another member and where a member takes offence. When I have not made a personal reflection on another member and they claim to take offence because of some impugned offence to the government at large, that is not something—I feel like I have to have some integrity in the way I conduct myself here and not bow to the misapplication of the standing orders.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will be heard.

Mr BERKMAN: Anyway, we all know how this is going to go. It makes sense that the Leader of the House did not intend for there to be any time allowed for debate on these motions because they do not think that there should be any debate. We are supposed to just kowtow to whatever it is that the government thinks is going to happen. They have absolute control in here. This state is only going to be better off when there are no clear majorities, when we get to the point where power sharing is normal and where this kind of despotic approach to the business of the House and government generally is not the norm. We can all just look forward to the next election for that.

The Ethics Committee has already considered my conduct. It has come to the conclusion that no penalties are warranted. It made no suggestion that there should be further penalties if I did not apologise, yet now the House, in a predictable fashion, is going to come to the conclusion that it should go back to the Ethics Committee for them to make that decision again or a different decision. We can only assume it is going to go back to the Ethics Committee and they will make a different decision because that is what the Ethics Committee do. They find ways to punish naughty, naughty members who do not do whatever it is that they are unhappy with at the time.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr Stevens: Heard of the rule of law?

Mr BERKMAN: The rule of law, Ray asks.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock, member for Mermaid Beach, you will direct your comments through the chair. I am waiting for the member for Maiwar to continue his contribution.

Mr BERKMAN: Anyway, I suppose I am going to be asked next time around to make an apology for not apologising and, if I do not apologise for not apologising, will I be suspended from the precinct for a day? I do not know. It is all just bunkum. I think at this point it is probably—everyone is a bit unhappy about having to be here at five past seven, so I might just finish my contribution and leave the chamber, and find me in contempt.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Pine Rivers!

Mr BERKMAN: If the member for Pine Rivers is so upset, I could use up the remaining four minutes.

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Pine Rivers will cease her interjections. Member, you have the floor.

Mr BERKMAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I really do not know where to take this. Honestly, it is obscene that the committee can have gone right through its process and it can have concluded at the end that an apology is appropriate but make no recommendation for further penalty if an apology is not given, yet the Leader of the House has decided to send it back to the committee. What are we to make of that other than that the Ethics Committee is being used to bludgeon members that they do not like?

Mr SPEAKER: The term 'bludgeon' may be considered to be unparliamentary, member. Could you please withdraw?

Mr BERKMAN: Sure. I will withdraw that.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member.


Mr BERKMAN: Let me rephrase: it is clear that the Leader of the House, in putting together and moving this motion, has simply sought to punish. She has in and of herself decided that it is time for me to get a punishment, so it has to go back to the Ethics Committee even though the Ethics Committee decided no punishment was appropriate. Anyway, we will see what comes out of it. Maybe the Ethics Committee is able to exercise a little independence having been called out at the point of the motion being put up. Maybe I should just flag at this point that my engagement with the committee in recent times has felt so incredibly futile, so pointless just trying to engage in meaningful dialogue with them, that I do not know that there is much point in engaging in future referrals. We will see how we go though, I suppose.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT


Lockyer Electorate, Natural Disasters

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (7.13 pm): It is a privilege to stand and speak tonight on behalf of my community, which is feeling terrible loss. Last Friday night a freak hailstorm hit the Lockyer and many people were injured; one lady lost her life. Our thoughts and love go out to Colin Greenwood and his family on the loss of Joy. The devastation of that storm saw \$50 million worth of damage—\$30 million worth of crops and \$20 million worth of infrastructure. There was so much havoc that night. I pay tribute to the first responders and the wonderful leadership shown by the Lockyer Valley Growers and the Lockyer council in responding to that storm. That storm means there are 10 to 12 weeks of lost income for our farmers. That lost income means workers are out of jobs. There are now hundreds of workers out of work in the Lockyer. That means families will go hungry, and that means people will leave and shops will struggle. The government needs to assist us in these times. There is such a feeling in our community of being left isolated, but the destruction that occurred across the Lockyer is something you would not be able to appreciate unless you were there. Crops were absolutely flattened by the hail.

We are calling on the government to provide assistance in the form of waiving the state levy through the environment department. I recognise that the Lockyer council has already done that with dump fees and other costs for farmers to make it easier with the clean-up. I call on the minister for agriculture to quickly get the assessments done so we can get assistance from the federal government through the Deputy Premier's office. Again I call on the Deputy Premier's office to see that this is addressed quickly so we are not waiting weeks for assistance.

Whilst I am addressing that matter, there is a review happening at the moment in terms of support from the Commonwealth. I call on the Deputy Premier to seek assistance to unlock the timely provision of assistance for these disasters. It is very clear that what has happened is an absolute tragedy, but we need to make sure these solutions are scaleable, because at the moment a farmer with 40 acres gets the same as a farmer with 400 acres and some get none. The system must also consider the compounding effects of events that have happened in the Lockyer. We have gone through years of drought and then floods in three years—one flood, a clear year and another flood—and now this storm in terrible trading conditions. Our farmers are on their knees, and I plead with this government and the federal government to urgently give us timely assistance so we can get back on our feet again and feed the nation, which the farmers of the Lockyer proudly do.


Member for Rockhampton, Retirement

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (7.16 pm): It is with mixed emotions that I announce my decision not to contest the next state election in October 2024. After a career spanning nearly 45 years in public service and what will be seven years as the member for Rockhampton, it is time for me to take a step back. The decision not to seek re-election has not come lightly and is mainly based on health considerations. In recent years I have encountered a couple of minor health issues which, although manageable, have made me realise the importance of prioritising my own wellbeing. I must say that I am looking forward to the opportunity to spend more time with family and loved ones as well as dedicating more energy to my health and personal wellbeing. These are areas of my life that I have at times neglected due to competing priorities, and it is time for me to rectify that.

I thank my wonderful wife, Sue-Ann, and our family—Jim and Kelsey and Harry and Hannah—for their love, understanding and support. To the people of Rockhampton and Gracemere, I say thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you. It has been an honour and a privilege to work with you to address the issues that impact people's lives: creating local jobs and training opportunities; investing in schools; and investing in local health care and housing.

There have been many challenges and there is still a lot of work to do, but I am extremely proud of the more than \$4 billion worth of projects that have been delivered or are being delivered locally with the support of the Labor government. There are so many to list, including: Rockhampton Ring Road; Rookwood Weir; the new \$91 million mental health facility; Browne Park upgrade; Rockhampton to Mount Morgan water pipeline; Rockhampton rail yards redevelopment; Alliance maintenance facility; Lawrie Street upgrade; Capricorn Highway upgrade; the alcohol and drug centre; Rockhampton Neighbourhood Centre; Rockhampton Special School upgrade; Rockhampton North Special School upgrade; and the new multipurpose hall for The Hall State School—just to name a few. There has been an unprecedented investment into our community, and we all know that it is Labor that delivers for Rockhampton and Gracemere. I am proud of what we have achieved, and I will spend the next 12 months working hard to make sure that Central Queensland is well represented in the future.

Clermont

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (7.19 pm): The 2017 state redistribution saw Clermont added to the Burdekin electorate, and not long after that the local community raised the issue of a permanent doctor—or the lack thereof—at the Clermont Hospital. On the day the issue was raised with me, I gave a commitment to that community. I told the people of Clermont that I would fight for a permanent doctor no matter how long it took.

A study by Sir Denis Gray and colleagues from the University of Exeter and University of Manchester reviewed 22 studies before concluding that continuity of care—that is, seeing the same doctor—results in patients following medical advice more closely, a better uptake of preventive measures and fewer emergency admissions, and it can reduce mortality. It is somewhat ironic that this study was published at around the same time that we began our campaign to secure a permanent doctor for Clermont. The study concluded—


... the human side of medicine is still very important and even a matter of life and death.

With that conclusion in mind, I am pleased to advise that we have won that fight. Last Friday in Clermont I met Dr Tim Lane, who, along with his family, recently relocated to Clermont to take up the position as the town's permanent doctor. To say that Dr Tim has been welcomed with open arms would be a gross understatement. There is almost a different feel in Clermont since Dr Tim's arrival. While the residents appreciate the locums who did their best, the locals now have their very own doctor.

In a striking similarity to the findings of Sir Gray's study, today there is a feeling of confidence in Clermont—confidence that their doctor will get to know them, get to know their health challenges and be in a position to know when things are not right. While we may have won the fight, there is still more to do. The next steps are getting the doctor's surgery at the Clermont Hospital up and running—a goal Dr Tim hopes to achieve by late January. I am sure all members would agree that in this job you have to work hard for the wins, but for the people of Clermont this fight was well worth it. Thank you to the residents of Clermont for your faith and for your help in winning this fight, and a huge thanks also to Dr Tim.

On the same day that I met Dr Tim, I delivered a birthday cake to Clermont identity Bill Pointon. It was not just any cake. Bill was celebrating his 100th birthday at the home he lives in with his wife, Maureen. I am sure Bill would agree that Dr Tim was the perfect birthday gift. Bill and Maureen are still living in their home, Bill still goes up the street every day to exercise and he still gets out there in the garden. That is a real credit to him and Maureen. When you sit and listen to the story of his life, you appreciate what a great little community Clermont is.

Australian Trade College North Brisbane

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (7.22 pm): I want to talk about the difference that education and flexible learning makes. Last Thursday I had the privilege of attending the Australian Trade College North Brisbane's annual awards and the year 12 graduation where we heard from Caleb, who spoke on behalf of the year 12 cohort. Caleb has just completed his schooling and, with the support of the Australian Trade College, secured a school-based apprenticeship in May at Brisbane Yamaha at Burpengary and commenced a Certificate III in Marine Mechanical Technology. I was so moved by Caleb's speech that I asked if I could read an extract from it for tonight's adjournment. Caleb said—

I was a troubled kid back in the day, mum you can back me there. Suspensions and detentions were a regular occurrence for Caleb. The only clean sweep I've had has been the last two years I've been here at Australian Trade College. Honestly, it's the school. The school was right for me, it kept me out of trouble and pushed me to a goal I wanted to reach. And with the right people at the tips of my fingers it became a reality along with I'm sure plenty of other students here tonight.

The shaping of my journey to become the man I am today also came from many people outside the school community. As many of you may know, I'm a race car driver traveling Australia often. Poppy Pete, who when I first met him was just a random person asking me questions about my racing, played a huge part in my journey. Little did I know he was fighting cancer and didn't have long left. Poppy Pete was a smart man and had raced nearly every car in the book. He was a racing legend. He travelled with us and lent his knowledge wherever he could. He chose to help a young person chase the same goal he had when he was my age. One thing Poppy Pete taught me was that kindness doesn't always have to be in a physical form.


Which led to my next journey. I had received, and now I wanted to give. Give kindness to the knowledgeable. I towed my race car down to the local retirement home where I spoke to many elderly people about my journey through racing. I spoke to them for hours and hours on end. I was rich. Not money rich but happy rich.

My next journey involved yes, that filthy mullet. Believe it or not that hair meant a lot to me, but at the cost of showing the love I have for my best mate it meant nothing in the long run. My best mate Charlie was diagnosed with cancer not long after my retirement home journey. Myself and a couple of others came together to show our respect and shave our heads with him. I nearly cried cutting it off.

Year 12s, if you can take a few key messages from my speech I want it to be that being rich in yourself is not always money and physical objects, it's the good deeds, the wonderful people you meet along your journey, the legacy you leave behind and the happiness you bring to others.

Caleb's story is that children who are disengaging still want to learn. They just need the pathways to get there.

Moggill Electorate

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (7.25 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, 2023 has been another great year for our local community groups, sporting organisations, schools, P&Cs and not for profits in the electorate of Moggill. As their local elected representative in the Queensland state parliament, it is a privilege to be their strong local voice and help secure vital funding and infrastructure on their behalf.


Having secured last year over \$25.5 million for new classrooms at Kenmore South State School, as well as over \$18.8 million for Kenmore State High School, including funding to finally commence planning and provide for their much needed new school hall, this year I was delighted that an additional \$11 million for state schools across the electorate of Moggill was allocated in the 2023-24 Queensland state budget. This includes more than \$6.5 million for additional specialist classrooms at Kenmore State High School, over \$2.3 million for additional classrooms and an updated outdoor interactive learning area for Moggill State School, as well as almost \$300,000 for Kenmore State School for a new outdoor learning area. Our community, environmental, sporting and not-for-profit organisations in the electorate of Moggill are the backbone of our great community and they absolutely deserve every extra assistance and an ongoing financial investment.

I want to again acknowledge and congratulate the many groups across the electorate of Moggill which were successful in obtaining grant funding this year. This included: the Cubberla-Witton Catchments Network to purchase equipment; the Moggill Football Club, which received almost \$24,000 to purchase new portable goals; the Karana Downs and Surrounds Community Garden Hub, which were recently successful in obtaining \$35,000 to upgrade their garden hub; Kenmore Little Athletics, which received over \$23,000 for athletic equipment; and the Moggill Historical Society, which successfully obtained over \$8,000 to complete important surveying work.

The electorate of Moggill is fortunate to contain a rich and diverse array of native fauna and flora and to be serviced by many dedicated environmental, nature refuge, conservation and creek catchment groups which are committed to preserving and enhancing our local environment. To that end, I wish to also congratulate and acknowledge the Feathertail Nature Refuge and Smith's Rainforest Nature Refuge, both in Upper Brookfield, which were this year successful via the nature refuge grants program. I am also delighted to have helped support a number of small businesses and social enterprises in the electorate of Moggill this year, with more than \$81,000 being delivered to support these businesses increase their core skills, adopt best practices and deliver on important social endeavours.

This is just a small example of what has been achieved this year and another example of what can be delivered when you have a strong local voice in the Queensland parliament solely committed to delivering for the community. There is so much more to do and I will not stop fighting until all local residents, schools and community organisations in the electorate of Moggill get the additional vital infrastructure and ongoing funding that all local residents deserve.

Pine Rivers Electorate

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (7.28 pm): It is wonderful to follow on from the member for Moggill who has just given a ringing endorsement to the Palaszczuk government for the amount of funding that is being provided into the Moggill electorate. Pine Rivers is a hubbub of activity and it is a pleasure to be able to update the House on the many important milestones currently happening in my community thanks to the Palaszczuk government.

Excitingly, our satellite hospital in Kallangur has reached practical completion and we are eagerly anticipating the official opening of this transformative community health infrastructure. It will provide a minor injury and illness clinic, oral health services, kidney dialysis, rehabilitation and older people's health services, and an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health hub. The community open day is happening this Sunday, 19 November from 10 am to 1 pm. Community members can tour the facilities, get informed about the services being delivered and enjoy the live entertainment and food trucks on site. I encourage all locals to come along and check out this tremendous facility.

Our Lawnton Ambulance Station has been progressing at a rate of knots. Located on the corner of Gympie Road and Station Road, the facility will provide a modern, accessible and more capable space for our first responders.

In Dayboro, the replacement police station is also reaching a milestone with the team relocating up to the local ambulance station and the tender for the contract being awarded. This facility will provide for a major facility to provide a regional response.

Road networks are also being upgraded throughout my community. Roadworks have commenced on the massive Eatons Crossing Road Safety upgrade, including safer intersections in 10 locations along Eatons Crossing Road, a new signalised intersection on Lilley Road and safety upgrades along the length of the road. The project also provides 4.7 kilometres of green infrastructure fencing, koala escape poles, fauna underpasses, eight LED koala signs and more. In this early phase of the project, there has been clearing of vegetation to allow for the widening of the road for road safety.


For each tree that is removed, three trees will be planted. I look forward to updating the community on that work as it progresses, in conjunction with our local community environment groups. I thank commuters for their patience while the roadworks have been progressing. Works will be ongoing still for some time, given the scale and complexity of the project.

Finally, I congratulate all of our grade 12 students in this their final week of schooling and graduation this week. It has been an absolute pleasure to observe your schooling journey. I think I am starting to feel a little bit old, a little bit aged by it all, because I have watched them grow from such a young age, but—

Mr MADDEN: You were young once.

Ms BOYD: I was young once. It has been a pleasure to observe your schooling journey and to get to know many of you. You have done our community proud, and I look forward to following your future endeavours as we continue to make our community an even better place.

Sunshine Coast, Infrastructure Projects

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (7.31 pm): Announcements of reviews to the Commonwealth funding for infrastructure for states and territories has demonstrated our failings. Many vital infrastructure projects in the pipeline from Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast rail links, upgrades of regional transport networks and funding to support SEQ urban infrastructure are at risk of being defunded. These projects take many years to get the green tick, borne from need, advocated for by communities and their MPs. Cuts create instability and frustration for all.


As I responded at the recent Sunshine Coast Business Council to the question around how the three tiers of government can effectively collaborate to deliver infrastructure, surety can be provided through coordination and cooperation among parties and governments, with binding agreements that are not affected by the election cycle. Infrastructure Australia is an independent agency that maintains a list of priority infrastructure projects, such as the Beerburrum to Nambour rail upgrade. By being elevated to more than an advisory body, there is opportunity to take the politics out of projects such as occurs in other countries. For example, Infrastructure Canada is directly involved in funding and guiding projects in the provinces, signing detailed, binding long-term bilateral infrastructure agreements to deliver certainty. Most European countries are capable of maintaining a consistent and pre-agreed pipeline of infrastructure projects between governments. However, as noted in a recent article in the *Times* UK, in countries such as Britain and Australia that have a two-party system, there is less incentive to agree on long-term planning with your main opposition.

Partisanship is problematic. That the Commonwealth government halts projects committed to by previous governments, yet will not allow an independent review of the current government's election commitments is one example. So where does that get us at the next change of government? The same costly cycle. The benefits of the European approach, rather than our Westminster style, allow for predictable and constant commissioning of projects with engineering capabilities and skills developed over the long term, with project machinery maximised and capability retention built from surety.

Our two-party partisan system is so entrenched that it has stifled remedies, reflected in our own parliament's reluctance to review our processes on how to move beyond the partisan nature that is impacting every aspect of Queenslanders' lives. This includes necessary infrastructure, services and programs that get delayed or cut because of politics instead of the business of delivering.

We can make change. Reform the committee system to build an environment that encourages bipartisanship. Bring in binding agreements that transcend between levels of government or election outcomes. Our focus must be on how we can end the unsustainable battle where there are no winners, only ongoing congestion, shortfalls and increasing frustration in governments and their MPs.

Bundamba Electorate


 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (7.34 pm): Bundamba is booming and the Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering the infrastructure and services and creating jobs that we need in our rapidly growing community. Recently, we were very happy to welcome the Minister for Education, the member for McConnel, to our local community to celebrate the beautiful official opening of not one but two brand new local schools—Ripley Central State School and Woogaroo Creek State School. These are two of the four brand new schools that the Palaszczuk Labor government has delivered just this year in 2023. The good news is that there is even more to come with the Bellbird Park State School set to open to

students from term 1 next year, and a new high school at Collingwood Park which is currently under construction and is due to open in 2025. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our local year 12 students all the very best for the final week of secondary schooling before they finish up this Friday.

In addition to education services, we are delivering more social housing for our local community. It was wonderful to see the finishing touches being applied to our brand new social homes at Goodna, and we have another nearing completion at Redbank Plains which makes it six new complexes being delivered across our local community recently. This is part of our ongoing commitment to providing more safe, secure and affordable accommodation sooner to locals in Bundamba. It is not just social housing. We have delivered statewide nearly \$10 million in rental support in this quarter alone, to help renters stay in their homes. This includes initiatives like bond loans, rental grants, rental subsidies and no-interest housing loans.

We have infrastructure that is being built right across our community at the moment. Work is well underway on our major upgrade of Bundamba train station. We have the recently completed Ripley Satellite Hospital which has been opened and providing care to our local community. We have construction underway right now on the 90-bed subacute health facility that is right next to the satellite hospital. There is construction underway on the new ambulance station in Ripley and a new police station in Ripley. We are turning our local Swanbank Power Stations into South-East Queensland's very first clean energy hub. Of course, we are delivering that record level of cost-of-living relief to our local community. Of course, all of this will be at risk under 'Dodgy David' and the LNP and their list of cuts that will decimate our local community.

Cost of Living

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (7.37 pm): Queensland is the capital of the cost-of-living crisis. Recent quarterly inflation data has revealed that Queenslanders are paying the highest price increases: rent, up 9.5 per cent; health costs, up seven per cent; transport, up 6.4 per cent; private vehicle costs, including registration, up 6.4 per cent; and community sport, up over 10 per cent for Queenslanders. There are two key points about these statistics that make them an indictment on the Palaszczuk Labor government. All of the above are areas of state government responsibility, and all of the above are the biggest increases in the nation.

While Queensland is the capital of the cost-of-living crisis, the Palaszczuk government is unwilling or unable to provide relief for Queensland families. Like a deer in the headlights, frozen into inaction, we found out today that the best response they can muster is to admire the problem. Today we learnt that the Palaszczuk Labor government is spending Queenslanders' money on secret polling to tell them what we on this side already know—Labor's priorities are wrong. Labor's failure to manage their budget, failure to maintain assets, failure to deliver critical services and failure to deliver projects on budget has fuelled the escalated cost-of-living crisis for Queenslanders.


While Palaszczuk polls, Queenslanders make heartbreaking decisions about housing, feeding, clothing and caring for their families. Every Labor failure heaps more pressure on family budgets. The more youth crime we have, the more premiums go up. The more wasteful spending, the more government fees and charges go up. The more cost blowouts you have on infrastructure, according to the IMF, the more inflation surges. Every dollar an incompetent Labor minister wastes is a dollar that cannot go to a Queenslander to help them through this crisis. Labor's chaos and crisis is leaving Queensland families with difficult decisions to make around the kitchen table.

Queenslanders are now faced with the impossible choice between paying their rent and feeding their family. Queensland families can only tighten their belts so many notches before they cannot bear the pain anymore. Sadly, many Queenslanders are already there. Charities and support services are reporting unprecedented demand, and it is being driven by people who have never previously had to rely on them. Services are providing staples like food and housing. The most basic dignities of Queenslanders are being threatened.

As the capital of the cost-of-living crisis, we need more than hand-wringing and press releases; we need policies that will drive down prices and put money back in the pockets of Queenslanders, their families and their businesses. Queenslanders are tired of this lazy, third-term Labor government using them as an ATM because they cannot manage their budget. Only the LNP has the right priorities for Queensland's future.

(Time expired)

Wynnum-Manly

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (7.40 pm): Whilst I would love to use my three minutes to tear to shreds what was obviously an audition for a front-row position in the shadow cabinet, I do not want to waste time. I know—as does all of Queensland—how well the Palaszczuk government is doing in terms of supporting people during this cost-of-living crisis. Whether it be free kindy, electricity rebates or rebates on energy-efficient electrical appliances, we are supporting our community. I debunk what the member for Ninderry has said.

I want to talk about my beautiful community. The Bayside Community Fund, which is a sub-branch of the Queensland Community Foundation, is creating opportunities for locals to leave a lasting legacy to the community that we all love. The Bayside Community Fund has been very well supported by the Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron, the Ham Bros, Charities for a Cause, personal donations and fundraising events such as Pups in the Park. The BCF is committed to the bayside and recently ran community awards in conjunction with the *Community Leader*. They called for nominations from locals for their favourite small business in 14 categories, and they received 118 nominations with close to 10,000 votes received.

The community got right behind the awards with support from sponsors including Sara Whitmee, councillor for Wynnum-Manly; Wynnum Golf Club; Wynnum Manly Leagues Club; Small Business Lawyer; Wynnum Plaza; Bendigo Bank; My Financial Design; Wynnum Fringe; and, of course, the *Community Leader*. To top it off, on 9 November a gala awards night was held at the leagues club, with over 320 in attendance. What a night. It was a huge success and a great way to promote and support our local small businesses.

I recently hosted, in conjunction with the mighty Wynnum Manly Seagulls, a women in sports lunch, celebrating the role of women in sport. From sportswomen to sports administrators, we heard about their journey in what was once a very male dominated space. It was great to hear from Kate Jones, NRL commissioner; Elissia Carnavas, former Matilda and sports journalist; Jorja Brinums, Queensland Rugby League's lead content producer; and Romy Teitzel, second-rower from the women's Broncos team. They were all amazing.

Times have really changed. Women's sport is filling stadiums. Look at the recent World Cup—the outpouring of love and support for the Matildas and all of the other countries in attendance. Women's cricket, tennis, sailing, Rugby League, Rugby Union and hockey are all doing fabulously. I thank all of the people who attended, particularly the Moreton Bay College students. I hope they were inspired. What a great time to be an athlete, with 2032 just around the corner. Perhaps it might be a nice time to consider changing the 'Women's Rugby League' to just 'Rugby League' and having a women's competition, similar to AFL, tennis and sailing. Good luck to all the year 12s finishing!

The House adjourned at 7.43 pm.

ATTENDANCE

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