



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

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## WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2023

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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



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

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

#### School Group Tours



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from Grace Lutheran College, Caboolture in the electorate of Morayfield and Chancellor State College in the electorate of Buderim.

#### Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on behalf of the House, I wish the Deputy Premier a happy 46th birthday. Welcome to the club.

### PETITION

The Clerk presented the following paper petition, lodged by the honourable member indicated—

#### Gillnet Fishing

**Mr Dametto**, from 30 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 [1876].

Petition received.

### TABLED PAPERS

#### TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

##### MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs (Hon. Linard)—

[1877](#) Nature Conservation Act 1992: Code of Practice for Rehabilitation of Sick, Injured, or Orphaned Koalas in Queensland

[1878](#) Nature Conservation Act 1992: Code of Practice for Rehabilitation of Sick, Injured, or Orphaned Koalas in Queensland, explanatory notes

[1879](#) Nature Conservation Act 1992: Code of Practice for Rehabilitation of Sick, Injured, or Orphaned Koalas in Queensland, human rights certificate

[1880](#) Nature Conservation Act 1992: Code of Practice for ecologically sustainable lethal take of flying-foxes for crop protection

[1881](#) Nature Conservation Act 1992: Code of Practice for ecologically sustainable lethal take of flying-foxes for crop protection, explanatory notes

[1882](#) Nature Conservation Act 1992: Code of Practice for ecologically sustainable lethal take of flying-foxes for crop protection, human rights certificate

## MEMBER'S PAPER


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

Member for Bancroft (Mr Whiting)—

[1883](#) State Development and Regional Industries Committee: Report No. 50, 57th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled on 22 August 2023

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

## Federal Labor Government, Infrastructure Funding

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.32 am): I have made it plain—publicly and to the Prime Minister—that our government will not accept cuts to Queensland infrastructure projects. We are a growing state and we are a decentralised state, with the longest road network in the country and the highest interstate migration. We pay our taxes and we deserve our fair share.

Just yesterday the federal infrastructure minister, Catherine King, indicated the \$2.2 billion allocated for the Melbourne suburban rail loop in her home state of Victoria is likely safe from any budget cuts—without a business case. How is it fair that one state receives more investment for its projects while our state is told to accept less? To make sure Minister King is left in no doubt about how Queenslanders feel, I have asked the Deputy Premier to meet with her during the next sitting of federal parliament and he will not be alone. I have asked the Deputy Premier to lead a delegation of Queensland mayors. 'Team Queensland' is headed to Canberra.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left, you are not off to a good start.


**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Are members opposite on the side of 'Team Queensland' or are they against?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you. Premier, please continue with your statement.


**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I have always said that we work best when we work together, but to me Queensland comes first. I want the roads and the rail that Queenslanders have been promised. I want the Bruce Highway to be given the priority funding it deserves as the backbone of Queensland's thriving rural communities and industries instead of priority given to the southern states, which have benefited for many years. My message to the federal government is clear: do not cut from Queensland.

## CopperString 2032

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.34 am): We are taking strong action on our transition to a renewable energy grid. A key part of that commitment is the \$5 billion CopperString 2032 project. This megaproject will connect Mount Isa with the SuperGrid through a thousand kilometres of high voltage transmission lines—the largest ever expansion to the power grid in Australia—and act as a vessel for high-speed internet to connect the north-west. Its construction underpins an anticipated \$500 billion in critical minerals and renewable energy generation. That is why our government announced a \$1.3 billion package to fast-track construction, meaning shovels will be in the ground by mid-2024.

The package builds on more than 40 works packages that have been released covering activities and services like engineering, construction, logistics, camp construction and haulage. This investment sets up our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan for success and supports hundreds of good jobs for years to come. It is a project that has the eyes of the world on us—something I heard firsthand from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and leading companies in hydrogen, battery and EV technologies while overseas—bringing with it opportunities for investment in the north-west critical minerals and renewable energy zones. We are embarking on a renewal mission to transform Queensland for generations to come, delivering cheaper, cleaner and more reliable energy to every region from the cape to Coolangatta.

## Renewable Energy

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.36 am): When it comes to investment in renewable energy from both governments and the private sector, Queensland is leading the nation. In our budget we are investing \$19 billion on publicly

owned renewable energy generation over the next four years. That compares with \$20 billion nationally under Rewiring the Nation. Over the last year Queensland led the nation on the connection of new solar farms, up by 183 megawatts. We also led the nation on the connection of new wind farms, up 128 megawatts. That supported a one-year drop in wholesale generation prices of 71 per cent. These are the figures of the Australian Energy Market Operator from their latest report.

Since launching our plan last year, connection inquiries in Queensland have more than doubled, from 10 gigawatts to 25 gigawatts. Investors from around the world want to connect to the Queensland SuperGrid, including the largest expansion in the nation with CopperString 2032 to unlock the largest renewable energy zone. We have announced another two projects in the last month: the Boulder Creek Wind Farm that will be 50 per cent owned by CS Energy, and the Dulacca Wind Farm developed by Central Queensland Power and to be owned by CleanCo. Last week we announced that works have started on Queensland's first hydrogen-ready power station at the Kogan Clean Energy Hub. Geotechnical and early works are also underway on the Borumba pumped hydro energy storage and the world's largest, the Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro Project.

These projects are generational. They will provide 24-hour, seven-day-a-week renewable energy for manufacturing. Our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan invests in the infrastructure that unlocks private investment alongside majority public ownership.

### Diwali



**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.37 am): It was an honour last night to welcome so many of our Indian community leaders and friends to parliament to celebrate Diwali. As we think about the symbolic nature of Diwali, the victory of good over evil and the light within us, we can reflect on how each of us brings this symbolism to life through the values we all share and the close cultural and economic bond. Almost 300 people joined us to celebrate this bond.

I want to pay special tribute to the Honorary Consul for India in Queensland, Mrs Archana Singh, who finishes up this year. I want to convey our appreciation of what a magnificent job she has done. I also acknowledge the great work of the Patron of the Federation of Indian Communities, our good friend of Queensland Dr Maha Sinnathamby, and, of course, the great work of the Federation of Indian Communities of Queensland, led by Mr Anoop Nannuru. I want to thank all of those who took the time to come to Parliament House last night. I thank them for their ongoing support for Queensland.

### Townsville, Renewable Energy



**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) (9.38 am): In Queensland we are beginning a golden decade thanks to the opportunities from decarbonisation and renewables. Many of these opportunities are unfolding in the state's north. Townsville continues to emerge as a global renewables superpower. Our khaki city is leveraging strengths as a home to our defence forces, an industrial powerhouse and a transport and logistics hub.

Last week I visited RGM Maintenance in Townsville to announce Queensland government support for the company's planned Defence and Hydrogen Maintenance Hub. Our Industry Partnership Program is assisting what will be a next generation, \$18.79 million facility that is nearly three times the size of its existing space. It will lead the way for North Queensland's new greener era of freight and heavy vehicle transport. It is well positioned to shift gear and take up greentech like EVs and hydrogen fuel cell trucks. The hub will be ready to sell, repair and maintain these new generation heavy vehicles. It will also ensure ADF heavy vehicles have a bigger and better specialist facility for maintenance and repairs.


This is just one of the projects backing regional jobs and growing North Queensland's renewable energy supply chain. It will employ an extra 65 people, including apprentices, doubling RGM Maintenance's Townsville workforce. The hub will train a new generation in the exciting emerging specialties of hydrogen fuel cell and battery powered vehicles. Construction is expected to start in late 2024 in the Cleveland Bay Industrial Park within the Queensland government's state development area, with completion anticipated for late 2025.

The good news for Townsville does not stop there. Australian owned global renewable energy investor Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners has been conditionally allocated a 200-hectare section of the Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct for a new project. This will be a state-of-the-art facility for

manufacturing polysilicon, the basic building block for solar panels as well as tech like computer chips. Quinbrook proposes to power it using a large-scale solar and battery storage project to be built on land adjacent to the precinct.

These projects are happening thanks to the Palaszczuk government's investments in the region and forward planning. The development of the state development area and support for Lansdown, which has been declared a prescribed project, is paving the way for next generation industry right here in Queensland. Thanks to CopperString 2032 and the development of the critical minerals sector, there will be even more to come for Townsville and for all of Queensland.

### Coal Royalties

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.42 am): Queensland's progressive coal royalty tiers are delivering for the people of Queensland. In particular, they are delivering for the people of regional Queensland. Last week I had the honour of turning the first sod of the new Moranbah Hospital. I was delighted to be joined on that occasion by the member for Mackay and assistant minister Julieanne Gilbert, Isaac Regional Council Mayor Anne Baker, along with other councillors including Deputy Mayor, Councillor Kelly Veale—all of whom are passionate campaigners and advocates for this new hospital.


This new hospital will be a truly modern facility, delivered by our government's progressive coal royalty tiers. It will bring allied and child health, antenatal and postnatal care and mental health services together. It will feature a new emergency department, an expanded imaging department with a new CT scanner, improved ambulance access and a new helipad. Thanks to the good work of Hutchinson Builders, the hospital will be delivered ahead of schedule. When the hospital was announced last year, it was scheduled to be completed in 2025. Hutchinson Builders now advise that the project has been fast-tracked and construction should finish in the last quarter of 2024.

This project demonstrates that progressive coal royalties are delivering for regional communities, especially coalmining communities like Moranbah. Royalties are a payment to the people of Queensland for the resources owned by the people of Queensland. Others would have you believe that mining companies are doing it tough because of these progressive coal royalty tiers. They claim the tiers are costing jobs, but the numbers speak for themselves. Last financial year BHP made approximately \$4.7 billion in profit from its Queensland coalmines. QCoal's Chris Wallin received more than half a billion dollars in dividends and the owners of Queensland coalmine Jellinbah received \$900 million in dividends. When speaking about Bowen Basin coal companies in the *AFR* this month, Wood Mackenzie Asia-Pacific coal analyst Rory Simington said that 'every company we look at is flush with cash', while Morningstar commodities analyst Jon Mills said—

We don't see demand for metallurgical coal falling off a cliff any time soon. Resilient demand and restricted supply is keeping prices high.

Labour demand in the resources sector also remains strong. The latest Queensland Mines Inspectorate data shows there were almost 44,000 workers directly employed in coalmines in Queensland as at 30 June 2023. That means that jobs in the coal industry have increased by almost 16 per cent since we introduced our progressive coal royalty tiers. The Palaszczuk government will continue to manage our resources sector to deliver jobs, to deliver for mining communities and to deliver for regional Queensland through our progressive coal royalty tiers.

### Bruce Highway Upgrade Program


 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (9.45 am): The Bruce Highway is the backbone of our state. From Pine Rivers in Moreton Bay to Portsmouth in Cairns, the Bruce is the connection that brings families together, puts food on the table and delivers good services and exports to where they need to be. It is an economic driver in our state and it supports productivity, jobs, industry and a booming Queensland population. That is why the Palaszczuk government is delivering the \$13 billion Bruce Highway Upgrade Program—a 15-year program to improve reliability and flood resilience, including strengthening and widening, duplications, overtaking lanes, lane separations, intersection upgrades and wide centre line treatments. These projects are essential to keep our state growing and moving. The Palaszczuk government is proud to have delivered 466 projects—let me say that again, 466 projects—on the Bruce Highway Upgrade Program, with 80 more currently in delivery on top of that—31 in construction, 28 in design and 21 in planning. These statistics tell only part of the story.



There is no doubt that productivity and efficiency are important, but continuing to improve safety on the Bruce Highway is paramount. We know that our work to improve safety on the Bruce Highway has saved lives. The work the Palaszczuk government has undertaken since 2015 has focused on improving safety for drivers, and we are seeing the results. Over the last decade there has been a 24½ per cent decrease in crashes along the Bruce Highway and a 26 per cent decrease in fatalities. This can be attributed to our ongoing programmed upgrades and investment. There is no doubt that a shift from 80-20 funding to 50-50 funding will have a negative impact on the delivery and timing of these critical safety projects.

The Palaszczuk government will continue our commitment to a safer and more efficient Bruce Highway, but we cannot do it alone. Already my office has been receiving calls from some of our key roads and transport stakeholders and partners expressing their concern at any shift in funding arrangements that might impact Queensland's massive road network—the largest road network in Australia, despite New South Wales and Victoria having much larger populations than our state. Every member of the Palaszczuk government will continue to fight for our fair share of funding for better roads because we know that it saves lives in regional Queensland.

### Work Health and Safety

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.49 am): The Palaszczuk government has a proud history of delivering nation-leading work health and safety laws. Our unwavering commitment to worker safety is based on our heartfelt belief that all workers have the right to come home safe at the end of every working day. Any workplace death is one too many, and I extend our deepest sympathies to the families and friends of those affected by workplace deaths.


In 2017 we created the new criminal offence of industrial manslaughter in Queensland, becoming the first Australian state to do so. Our industrial manslaughter laws are backed by strong penalties. We have also established an independent Office of the Work Health and Safety Prosecutor, charged with prosecuting breaches of our health and safety laws. We can always do more, which is why last year an independent five-yearly review of our workplace health and safety laws was undertaken, to ensure they remain contemporary and fit for purpose. The government has accepted all 31 recommendations from this review and we will legislate to implement them.

Queensland is also leading the nation in addressing the devastating health impacts of engineered stone, a known cause of silicosis. We have audited all known engineered stone benchtop fabricators in Queensland and provided health screening for more than 1,000 workers through WorkCover. I have long been calling for coordinated national action on engineered stone, and this includes writing to the Morrison LNP government six times—with no real action. We absolutely back a ban on this dangerous product, and I am very pleased that at long last we have a willing partner in the Albanese government, supporting our stance on the need for action on engineered stone. Industry is starting to vote with its feet. I welcome the announcement from Bunnings, which will end the sale of engineered stone by the end of the year, and from IKEA, which has also announced it will phase out the sale of engineered stone.

Employers bear the primary responsibility for ensuring a safe and healthy workplace for workers, and where they fail to live up to these duties we have a regulator that will not hesitate to take action. I can inform the House that Workplace Health and Safety Queensland is currently conducting a targeted compliance blitz, with a focus on mid-rise construction and concrete pumping. In addition, there will also be a focus on young workers and apprentices to ensure they are fully inducted and have a safe working environment.

From day one the Palaszczuk government has sought to reverse the previous LNP government's weakened safety laws to ensure the protection of workers. We have proudly restored Queensland's workplace health and safety laws to some of the best in the nation. We will never stop our efforts to protect Queensland workers.

### Coronavirus, Update; Prince Charles Hospital, Patient Safety

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.52 am): Queensland is experiencing an increase in cases of COVID-19. As of last night, there are 221 hospital beds across the state occupied by people with the virus. The majority of these are elderly people aged 65 years or over. Thankfully, there are only two

people currently in intensive care with COVID-19. Crucially, most of the people in hospital have not received a booster dose this year. I am advised that, based on previous COVID waves, we are expected to see the peak of this wave in the next two weeks.

As the Chief Health Officer has said, COVID-19 is now an ongoing part of our reality, much like other acute respiratory illnesses such as influenza and RSV. Previous COVID-19 preventive measures were exceptional and were taken in response to a public health emergency and the exceptionally high numbers we saw during the global pandemic. For comparison, over the 30-day period from 11 December 2022 to 9 January 2023 there were, on average, 450 beds taken up by COVID patients every day.

As the Chief Health Officer has advised, we are not at that level of impact on our health system or the community. However, whilst we have reverted to normal infection control measures in healthcare settings, individual hospitals will determine when and where masks are required within their facilities based on the local situation—and they are best placed to make those decisions. Last month Hervey Bay hospital introduced a mask mandate for a period of 11 days to deal with increased COVID presentations. North West also introduced a mandate for a short period. Staff at the Sarina Hospital are currently required to wear masks and Metro North is continuing to encourage staff and visitors to wear masks. Children's Health Queensland is currently considering whether to introduce a mask mandate. Queensland Health continues to monitor COVID-19 as part of its broader surveillance of acute respiratory illnesses, and Queenslanders should take health measures appropriate to their individual needs.

We know that vaccination remains our best protection against COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, particularly for those over 65 years. The rise in COVID hospitalisations over recent weeks is a timely reminder for all of us to remain up to date with our boosters. All adults can get a COVID booster if it has been six months or longer since your last one. This is particularly important for those over 65 years, with ATAGI recommending everyone in this cohort should receive an extra dose.

I would also like to update the House on matters relating to the Prince Charles Hospital transplant unit. I again offer my sincere condolences to the families involved. The deaths of these transplant recipients are a tragedy. Whilst it is not appropriate to comment in the House on the details of the individual cases, I do want to provide an update. As the Chief Health Officer indicated yesterday, it is unknown the source of these fungal infections, but these are not all the same fungus and it appears unlikely that they have come from the same source. Dr Gerrard advises that fungal infections are known to occur in transplant patients because their immunity is so suppressed. Metro North Hospital and Health Service has been in contact with the families of the patients who have died, and I want to place on the record my willingness to meet with both families if they would like. I will also be writing to the Leader of the Opposition offering him a briefing on the matter from the chief executive of Metro North.

Patient care remains our No. 1 priority. I want transplant patients to know that the service is safe. I have asked Metro North and the Department of Health to review the communications with patients and families with respect to this matter and to put in place processes to improve communication. Clearly, the way that family members were informed of this matter was not acceptable. Patients deserve timely and comprehensive information and I am committed to ensuring they receive it.

### **Housing Supply; Sunshine Coast, QBuild Depot**



**Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (9.57 am): The Palaszczuk government is freeing up homes for Queenslanders who need them and putting downward pressure on rents. We are delivering the largest concentrated investment in public owned housing in Queensland's history and a massive social housing program. We are investing over half a billion dollars to build more than 439 homes for frontline staff and to maintain an existing portfolio of almost 3,000 government worker houses. We are making sure all Queenslanders can access good services by providing essential services workers in remote Queensland with safe, secure and affordable homes: doctors, nurses, paramedics, teachers, police and fire. Every new home we deliver frees up private rentals, meaning more housing stock, particularly in small communities.

Because of the hardworking tradies, trained and employed by our government builder QBuild and its industry partners like SaltAir on the Sunshine Coast, Volo on the Gold Coast, Ausco Modular in Redbank—and the list goes on—we can deliver big on our promise, because the Palaszczuk government will always support industry and we know that industry partnerships are key to delivering more affordable homes for more Queenslanders and delivering them more quickly.

We are not just delivering for the most remote communities of Queensland; we are also delivering for the fastest growing communities of Queensland. Today I can announce that Labor will rebuild the QBuild depot on the Sunshine Coast. The Palaszczuk government will deliver a new state-of-the-art QBuild facility in the electorate of Caloundra as part of our commitment to deliver better services, good jobs and the infrastructure a growing region needs. I congratulate the member for Caloundra for securing this important community asset for the neighbourhood that he represents. In 2013 the LNP cut the QBuild depot on the Sunshine Coast, but now the Palaszczuk government will reopen it. There we will employ tradies and apprentices, plumbers, painters, electricians, refrigeration mechanics and carpenters to build the infrastructure that a growing community like Caloundra needs.

### CopperString 2032



**Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (9.59 am): I stand before you today to celebrate a monumental step forward for Queensland's critical minerals sector and the pursuit of secure and sustainable energy for the North West Minerals Province. In March the Palaszczuk government pledged \$5 billion to CopperString 2032 and a renewable energy SuperGrid.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am sorry, Minister. I will reset the microphones as there seems to be some feedback. Members, please check that your microphones are not on. It does not assist with the acoustics and the speaker system in the chamber.

**Mr STEWART:** Would you like me to start again?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do not think so.

**Mr STEWART:** I would love to! During community cabinet in Townsville, I was proud to stand by the Premier as she announced the down payment of \$1.3 billion to accelerate the construction of CopperString 2032. That is why I wanted to start again, Treasurer. Initial works will focus on detailed design, engineering, environmental assessments and geotechnical surveys. This funding paves the way for the construction to commence in mid-2024, which is expected to support 800 good secure jobs. This is a pivotal moment for North and North-West Queensland as CopperString 2032 is not just a project; it is a legacy. This legacy should be built in the same way we built the stadium: by North Queenslanders, for North Queenslanders.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Members to my left.

**Mr STEWART:** They love it as well. They love our CopperString announcements. What I am even more excited about are the thousands of new jobs in critical minerals mining and manufacturing and the construction of renewables that this project will lead to. It is the key to unlocking our natural advantage, which is critical minerals including copper, vanadium, zinc and cobalt. We know that there is potentially \$500 billion in new critical mineral deposits that we can unlock through CopperString 2032. Those are the minerals that the world is demanding as part of its journey to decarbonisation. We have a global ambition: to create a genuine pit-to-product value chain and leverage our natural resources. I have said it before and I will say it again: if we do not manufacture our future then someone else will.

We need to act now, together with industry, community and First Nations people to secure our future and unlock the next resources boom in critical minerals. That is why in June this year, at Australia's first-ever World Mining Congress, we unveiled our Queensland Critical Minerals Strategy. It is a bold \$245 million vision to position Queensland as a global leader in delivering critical minerals and renewables to the world. That means not only digging and shipping the raw materials but also processing our critical minerals and manufacturing high-value products here in Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, I am sorry. Members, I have just asked that members be vigilant around whether or not their microphones are turned on. I wish to remind members that if you are doing so as a tactic to disrupt the member on their feet then it is a matter that I will deal with harshly.

**Mr STEWART:** I can start again! It is about future-proofing the next generation of jobs for Queensland, diversifying and decarbonising our economy and ensuring Queensland's future sustainable economic prosperity. This strategy is backed by the construction of the \$75 million Queensland Resources Common User Facility in Townsville. Last week, Queensland company Sedgman was announced as the managing contractor in a major milestone for the project. CopperString 2032 will help make the Queensland Critical Minerals Strategy a reality and take our state to the next resources boom. It is not just a game changer for our resources industries; it is the game.

## Housing Supply; Bushfires, Tara



**Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing) (10.03 am): Right across our state thousands of tradies are helping to deliver our big housing build. We are offering free TAFE and apprenticeships to grow our construction workforce because we have a lot of homes to build.

Our record investment is delivering for people in need in regional Queensland. Just last week, the member Rockhampton turned the sod on a new project in his community. Works are well underway on a new 40-room youth foyer in Townsville. Shovels are in the ground on a new 18-apartment complex in Yorkeys Knob, which is soon to be joined by construction at Earlville and Parramatta Park in Far North Queensland. We have new social homes in Cannonvale and new modular homes on their way to Gladstone South. That follows new modular homes arriving in Eidsvold, Longreach, Hughenden and Roma, with 11 more to come to Gympie very soon. The team has just finished a new development in Roma in partnership with a community housing provider, which is accessible for older Queenslanders and those living with a disability. Our Big Build is delivering thousands of homes across the state, including in regional Queensland.

Of course, regional Queensland is no stranger to natural disasters and our teams have responded quickly to help those in need. Last month the community of Tara was devastated by bushfires. I am pleased to advise the House that, after we moved 23 caravans to the showgrounds, demountable homes have now arrived at the former caravan park. The concrete has been poured and utility works are well underway to make sure those places are ready early next month.

I would like to acknowledge the work of our frontline staff who are helping the community through this incredibly tough time. Our housing staff have been on the ground, making sure that anyone who needs help has received it. To date, they have helped 62 families find temporary accommodation—families such as Leandra Ashwell and her husband, Leslie, who are determined to rebuild and enjoy their retirement in Tara. Leandra has moved into the showgrounds with her family, continuing life as normal as possible, including celebrations for daughter Johanna's formal and year 12 graduation. She said—

We brought her dress from the Philippines; it was the only thing she saved from the fire. That's the only thing she took, not even any of her academic medals. The staff are looking after us well, even our two dogs, Possum and Max ...

The dogs also have new places to live. She said, 'We're happy.' Ms Ashwell combines full-time care of Leslie with singing in the local choir and volunteering at the library. The family have lived in Tara for almost 10 years. They lost everything: their home, car and trailers. There is a long road ahead for them and the community, which has well and truly felt the brunt of the bushfires.

We are delivering to make sure that that community is supported. From the community itself to the firefighters, our housing team, council and everyone in-between, we have seen the community rally together to look after each other, which is something that I think Queenslanders are proud of.

## Community Safety; Jack's Law



**Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (10.06 am): This government will always continue to invest in strategies and support laws that enhance community safety. Recently, I joined senior police and the parents of Jack Beasley, Brett and Belinda Beasley, to announce a major new legislative initiative. In the very near future we will be bringing to the parliament new laws that restrict the retail sale of knives and replica firearms, including gel blasters that look like replica firearms, to juveniles.

Our retail sales proposals include that: it will become an offence to sell knives, certain other bladed items and replica firearms, including gel blasters that look like replica firearms, to juveniles; it will become an offence to use false identification to purchase those items; and it will become an offence to advertise those items as suitable for combat. In addition, retailers will be required to securely store certain other bladed items such as machetes, axes, swords, sickles, daggers, double-edged blades and spears, among other things, prior to sale. Retailers will be required to display signage regarding age restrictions for those sales. This is about protecting the community and enhancing community safety. The proposed laws follow research and reviews conducted by the Queensland Police Service.

In addition, this month marks the six-month anniversary of Jack Beasley's legacy, Jack's Law. Police have conducted more than 2,900 hand-held electronic scanning operations since Jack's Law was extended and expanded to all safe night precincts, on public transport and at transport hubs. In

that time, police have seized 350 weapons. During those wandering operations, 904 people have been charged with almost 1,600 offences and more than 31,000 people have been scanned on public transport and in nightclub precincts.

The advocacy from Brett and Belinda Beasley has been instrumental in putting Queensland on the map as nation leading in the fight against knife crime. I want to read some comments from Brett Beasley about Jack's Law and the new knife sale restrictions. Brett said—

Belinda and I will always grieve for Jack, but it is very heartening to see that his legacy lives on. Six months after Jack's Law came into effect it's really encouraging to see that Police are using Jack's legacy to undertake wandering operations right across the state. It's clearly making a real difference in helping to keep communities safe. It's also very gratifying to see ... another significant step in relation to restricting the availability of weapons, especially to young people.

Queenslanders owe a debt of gratitude to Brett and Belinda and to the Jack Beasley Foundation. They are good people and their hearts are in the right place. All they want is for Queenslanders to be safe, and that is what we all want too.

### **Sexual Violence Services; Women's Health and Wellbeing Services**



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.10 am): Sexual violence impacts all parts of the community, with women and children disproportionately affected. The impact of sexual violence on a victim-survivor is life-changing—for them and their families, friends and communities. National statistics show that 92 per cent of women do not report an incident of sexual assault to police and that more than one-third of sexual assaults occur in the context of domestic and family violence. Over recent years we have seen brave sexual violence victim-survivors stand up across the nation and demand change. Their actions shine a light on an issue that has not been talked about openly for decades.

As more victim-survivors come forward, demand for the life-changing support of our specialist sexual violence and women's health and wellbeing services increases. That is why I am proud to inform the chamber that the Palaszczuk government is increasing funding by \$3 million per annum ongoing to 32 sexual violence and women's health and wellbeing services across the state—from the Torres Strait to the Gold Coast. This is an increase of almost 15 per cent on the sector's core funding, giving certainty and stability going forward.

Since 2019, funding for sexual violence and women's health and wellbeing services has increased by more than 150 per cent. This new investment will help address pressures being experienced by our frontline services. Last week I had the pleasure of visiting the Centre Against Domestic Abuse, CADA, in Caboolture along with local member Minister Ryan. CADA will receive \$113,000 in extra funding each year for its sexual assault services across the Moreton Bay region. I can inform the House that the announcement was incredibly well received and will make an almost instant impact. Acting CEO of CADA, Sue van Hoppe, said—

These funds are more than just a financial contribution, but symbolise a collective commitment to healing, justice and the empowerment of survivors.

I think that sums it up. Worryingly, national community attitudes show that 34 per cent of people believe that allegations of sexual violence are a way for victims to 'get back at men'. While we still have a long way to go to change community attitudes about sexual violence, the Palaszczuk government is listening and engaging. More importantly, we are delivering the services needed most in our communities. For sexual violence and women's health and wellbeing services, this new investment means they can support more victim-survivors on their road to recovery and healing.

### **National Parks, Projects**



**Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.12 am): The Palaszczuk government is delivering the infrastructure and services our growing state needs. Our Big Build is delivering hospitals, schools, roads and energy infrastructure, but it is also providing new and enhanced infrastructure in our national parks and forests. We are improving access to and experiences in our national parks and forests for locals and tourists and, at the same time, creating jobs, particularly in regional and rural Queensland.

The Palaszczuk government's 2023-24 budget includes an investment of \$58.9 million to deliver visitor infrastructure, management facilities and plant and equipment to protect and promote our protected areas. We are investing \$6.3 million on the Ngaro track, a multi-day walk in the Whitsunday

Islands National Park, for track enhancements, campsites and water points. This project promotes nature-based and World Heritage tourism experiences and has been developed in consultation with Ngāro traditional owner representatives.

Other significant Big Build investments also include: \$16.4 million for multiple upgrades to visitor facilities across Springbrook National Park; \$9.2 million for Central Station day use area upgrades at K'gari National Park; and \$7.8 million for upgrades to the information hub, car park and other amenities at Girraween National Park.

We are investing \$6 million to replace the Jindalba boardwalk at Daintree National Park. The project will provide disability car parking, universal access to amenities and a new class 1 walking track. We are investing \$6.7 million at Crater Lakes National Park, with a new universal access walk to the magnificent twin kauris at Lake Barrine. Further works will include a significant redevelopment of the Lake Eacham day use area and walking tracks that will provide universal access throughout the site including down and into the water for recreation, greatly improving the experience for all park users.

At Bunya Mountains National Park in the South Burnett region, we are investing \$5.5 million. We have recently completed the upgrade of the Burton's Well campground and day use area and the Paradise car park, and planning is now underway for the redevelopment of the Dandabah day use area and campground. This project will include a new visitor hub to enhance visitors' experiences and increase universal access throughout the site. In the Townsville region, we will invest \$4.7 million into the heritage-listed Cape Pallarenda Quarantine Station hospital precinct as part of our plan to re-establish a permanent site presence.

The Palaszczuk government's Big Build in our national parks and forests is expected to directly support around 170 good jobs as well as numerous local businesses. We know that more and more Queenslanders—and interstate and international tourists—are getting out and about and revelling in our truly spectacular national parks and forests. Through the Palaszczuk government's Big Build, we are making it easier for everyone to enjoy Queensland's beautiful natural places.

## NOTICES OF MOTION

### Disallowance of Statutory Instrument



**Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (10.16 am): I give notice that I will move—

That the Fisheries Legislation (Spanish Mackerel and Bar Rockcod) Amendment Declaration 2023, subordinate legislation No. 80 of 2023, tabled in the House on 22 August 2023, be disallowed.

### Palaszczuk Labor Government, Polling



**Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (10.16 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House calls on the Labor government to immediately cease the taxpayer funded Ipsos polling commissioned by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and immediately release to the public the full results received to date.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time will conclude today at 11.17 am.

### Housing Investment Fund



**Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.17 am): My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier confirm how many homes the Housing Investment Fund will have built by the 2024 election?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am happy to get more information. As I have said in the House previously, my understanding is that there have been projects that have been released but they have not been completed. In terms of forward projections, I will ask the Minister for Housing to get those projections and provide them to the Leader of the Opposition.

### Housing Investment Fund

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** My question is to the Premier. In 2021 the Labor government promised that the Housing Investment Fund would deliver 3,600 new social houses in four years. Since then, not one has been built, only 200 are under construction and only 34 will be completed three years later.

**Mr Skelton** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Nicklin, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Given that less than one per cent of Labor's housing promises will be delivered by the next election, does the Premier accept any responsibility for the Queensland housing crisis?

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Speaker, rise to a point of order. I believe that is hypothetical in that the question was making a prediction of what might be finished by the election, considering the Premier had just said—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left! The member for Ninderry will cease his interjections.

**Mrs D'ATH:**—that she would come back with the projection of housing being built by the next election.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am going to allow the question, but I will give the Premier some latitude in her response. I do believe that it is not completely hypothetical, given that commitments have been made. I will ask the Premier to respond.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for the question because we all acknowledge that housing is a big issue. We know that there are many factors that are influencing this at the moment and the pressures that are being faced not just here in Queensland but nationally. There are issues in relation to rising interest rates which we know are having a big impact on housing. Of course there is the record migration. We have said publicly in this House before that over 120,000 people are moving to Queensland. The higher construction costs are making it harder.

**Mr O'Connor** interjected.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Bonney! Member for Nanango!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We understand that there are pressures out there. That is why our government has taken action. We had the first ever Housing Summit. We have had housing round tables. There will be another housing round table at the end—

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am answering—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Members to my left, the Premier is being responsive to the question as asked. I have given her an opportunity to respond in any way she sees fit.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. That is why we have a pipeline of social and affordable housing being built. I have personally been out to these sites. I have seen them firsthand with the housing minister and other members of this House. On this side of the House we do not treat people who live in social housing like second-class citizens like those opposite do.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We have also assisted over 220,000 people with housing support. This is a government that listens and responds.

In relation to the Housing Investment Fund, support has been approved for over 1,600 dwellings. I am advised that they include up to 1,200 social and affordable homes to be delivered by a partnership between the Brisbane Housing Company and QIC, and 116 of these homes are under construction at Chermside and Redcliffe.

Secondly, up to 335 ex-National Rental Affordability Scheme homes in Townsville and SEQ are to be purchased in partnership with the National Affordable Housing Consortium, with 94 settled and tenanted. Finally, up to 121 mostly ex-National Rental Affordability Scheme houses across the Sunshine Coast—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** So rude.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No. It was the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. Members to my left, I do not need any assistance in terms of who is interjecting and who is not. I do appear to have a pretty clear idea though. Premier, you have the call.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Up to 121 mostly ex-National Rental Affordability Scheme homes across the Sunshine Coast, Gympie and Moreton Bay are to be purchased in partnership with community housing provider Coast2Bay. The Housing Investment Fund has approved 1,600 homes. The first three developments are under construction at Redcliffe, Stones Corner and Chermside to deliver 200 homes.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You do not like the answer because this minister is acting and delivering. Construction on the Chermside site commenced in July.

*(Time expired)*

### Sunshine Coast, Infrastructure

**Mr HUNT:** My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Can the Premier update the House on how the Big Build is delivering for the growing Sunshine Coast and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Caloundra, who always stands up for the Sunshine Coast, who is delivering for the Sunshine Coast, who understands that he lives in one of the fastest growing communities in Queensland. That is why the Bells Creek Arterial Road was completed ahead of schedule to unlock more housing in that area. What a great supporter of the Sunshine Coast he is and he is delivering.

As we know, the Sunshine Coast deserves high-frequency rail services. That is why we are progressing the Beerburrum to Nambour rail duplication, with early works underway. Well done, Minister. We also understand the importance of having a good rail connection from Beerwah to the east for developments like Aura. Projects like this rail link and the \$70 million Bells Creek Arterial Road will support the growth on the Sunshine Coast. We know how important that CAMCOS study is—that 37 kilometres. That is why we have—the state—fully funded \$14 million for a business case.

**Mr Bleijie:** Oh, wow—another business case!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, you will cease your interjections or you will be warned.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Well, member for Kawana, that is how you actually work in government and deliver.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Direct your comments through the chair, Premier.

**Ms Grace:** He wouldn't know one. He never did one.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Sorry—1 William Street.

**Ms Grace:** There wasn't a business case. They just sold everything.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my right!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This business case is already underway. They are now considering the station location and the delivery time frames. Consultation is underway. I urge the community to have their say. Of course it is part of our \$89 billion Big Build. On this side of the House we will deliver for Queenslanders. On that side of the House we know what the Leader of the Opposition's priorities are: they are the wrong priorities. They are the wrong priorities which involve cutting, sacking and selling.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. You had your LNP infrastructure hit list—cutting the Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3, Cross River Rail, Coomera Connector, Centenary Bridge, satellite hospitals, CopperString. There is a whole list there because the Leader of the Opposition only knows one thing: it is the wrong priorities for Queenslanders because if they had any right priorities there would be a policy. The LNP is a policy-free zone—no policies on housing, no policies on cost of living. Oh, there is one policy—to cut.

*(Time expired)*



### Housing Investment Fund

**Mr MANDER:** My question is to the Minister for Housing. The Labor government first promised the Housing Investment Fund would build 3,600 new social houses by 2025 and then 5,600 by 2027. Will these commitments be met?

**Ms SCANLON:** I thank the member for Everton for the question. The housing minister in this state who saw social housing go backwards by 428 homes has some nerve asking any question about housing in this House. Of course the Housing Investment Fund is one of many funds the Queensland government has to deliver social and affordable housing, and it will deliver 5,600 homes. We have made that clear—that we will make sure that we commence all of those homes by 2027. We remain committed to that. There are homes under construction right now. It may be a foreign concept for those opposite but they take time to build. They did not build very many when they were in government so they really do not know how construction works.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Pause the clock. Members, I cannot hear the minister. This is for both sides of the House. You need to cease your interjections so that I and Hansard can hear the minister in terms of her response to the question as asked.

**Ms SCANLON:** You would have to be living under a rock if you did not accept that it is a very challenging time in the construction industry right now. Despite that, we are building thousands and thousands of homes across this state, and we are doing that in partnership with the community housing sector. I hear the opposition talk about how they are going to unleash the community housing sector. When they were last in government all they did was see social housing go backwards by 428 homes, so I am not sure how they are going to unleash them. The Housing Investment Fund is designed to work with community housing providers. It is designed to work with super funds to unlock more housing.

**Mr O'Connor** interjected.

**Ms SCANLON:** I take the member for Bonney's interjection. We are actually delivering more housing while he is blocking it in his own electorate. The number of NIMBYs on that side who come in here and say, 'We need more housing,' but then block it in their own backyards is grave hypocrisy.

We are very proud of the Housing Investment Fund and the work that it is doing with community housing providers. I find it pretty hypocritical from the LNP to come in and talk about this fund when their colleagues just blocked the very same fund in the federal parliament—the Housing Australia Future Fund. Jane Hume was out there doubling down on it the other day saying that she did does not support this sort of investment fund. Does the LNP support housing investment funds or not?

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will hear the point of order in silence, members.

**Mr POWELL:** The question related to the Housing Investment Fund and whether the promises made by the Palaszczuk government would be met.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, member. I have been attempting to listen to the minister's response. Unfortunately she continues to be drowned out by interjections. The minister is, I believe, being responsive around the Housing Investment Fund as I have heard her response—what I could hear. Minister, you have 42 seconds remaining.

**Ms SCANLON:** We are absolutely committed to delivering on the Housing Investment Fund. The only thing at risk in this state in relation to the Housing Investment Fund and housing in general is if the LNP gets elected. Of course, they said that they have \$10 billion worth of cuts and then they appointed the very man who was responsible for cuts in social housing to the portfolio. The other day the Leader of the Opposition said they are going to set out KPIs, but, when asked, he would not articulate what those KPIs would be. We will deliver, and we have demonstrated that by increasing social housing by thousands of homes in this state. That is what Labor governments do, and that is what we will continue to do.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana, member for Bonney, member for Everton and member for Glass House, you are all warned under the standing orders. I have given guidance. You are not heeding that guidance.

### Job Creation

**Ms LAUGA:** My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Can the Premier update the House on the strength of the Queensland economy, and is the Premier aware of any alternatives?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We know that Queensland has a strong economy. We went to the last election saying that if we had a strong health response it would lead to a strong economy, and that is exactly what this Labor government is delivering. We know that we have one of the fastest growing economies in the nation. It is set to grow at three per cent this financial year, or twice as fast as the nation. That is good news. Well done, Treasurer! That is excellent news. I am pleased to report that in the last 12 months in Central Queensland alone 9,300 jobs have been created.

**Mr Lister:** That's just in your media units!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is called facts.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** You might deal in fiction, but it is a fact.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, I am asking you to resume your seat. Member for Southern Downs, where did that come from? You are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** There are now 282,000 more jobs out of the pandemic and 538,000 more jobs since we came to government. Why is that important? In our economy every person is important because that is an individual, and to have a job is to have dignity and to provide for your family or yourself. That is so important, and that is what we believe on this side of the House.

Let's contrast that very quickly with the nonsense the member for Kawana raised yesterday. How dare anyone on that side of the House get up and talk about jobs in the Public Service! I find it absolutely ironic. It seems that they have erased from the history books the 14,000 people who had their jobs cut. The most damage was done in the regions: the Sunshine Coast, Townsville and Central Queensland—

**A government member:** Roma.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Roma. When I go out west, there is not a mayor who does not talk to me about their savage cuts and what they did to their communities. It had broadscale impacts. We do not know their plans and we do not know their policies. All we can assume is that they are going to do exactly the same thing if they come back to office.

**Ms Grace:** It's the same people sitting around the cabinet table.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take the minister's interjection: it is exactly the same people sitting around the cabinet table. The member for Kawana comes in here and said, 'Business case? Why do you need a business case?' because there is no understanding of government and how government operates.

**A government member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. This side of the House will always stand up for people. We know how important it is to have a job and a roof over your head. We are seeing a strong Queensland economy, making sure we are delivering for the people of this state. As we know, the regions are powering along, with 7,300 more jobs in Townsville, 5,600 more jobs in Toowoomba, 19,400 more jobs on the Sunshine Coast—

*(Time expired)*

### Social and Affordable Housing

**Mr JANETZKI:** My question is to the Premier. Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows that in the June 2022 and March 2023 quarters Queensland commenced just 33 and 35 social houses, the lowest since records began in 1984. Just over 60 were commenced in the June quarter. How does the Premier explain the difference between the Labor government's record on housing announcements and their record of delivering them?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am happy for the Minister for Housing to check those statistics. On this side of the House we support social housing; we believe in social housing. I represent an electorate where there are a lot of people who live in social housing. The way the LNP treated people in social housing as second-class citizens was the most shameful episode of the LNP when they were in government—making elderly people share their vacant rooms with strangers! I say to the member for Toowoomba

South, who may not have been here at that time: not only did they do that but they actually kicked people out of caravan parks. You cannot get any lower. The member for Stafford remembers it very well. We went up to Hervey Bay and met with people in their homes. The LNP was closing down caravan parks which provided a roof over people's heads. I find it ironic that anybody on that side of the House can stand up and talk about social housing.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Oh, you are happy to? Go back and have a look—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Through the chair, Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Go back, member for Nanango, and have a look at the history of how people were treated. They got letters in their mailboxes signed by the housing minister saying they had to share. Not only that, but if they took a holiday and did not explain where they were they would lose their house. That is how you treat social housing. It is disgraceful!

I say to any of the new members over there: go and have a look through the history books. There seems to be a lack of understanding of what three years did to the people of this state and a complete erasing of history. I remember it every single day because I met people who were crying. I met elderly people. I sat down and had a cup of tea with them. They were in tears about what that government did.

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The question was about Australian Bureau of Statistics data from 2022 and 2023.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The Premier gave an undertaking, as I heard it, in one of the earlier parts of her response. She is still on the topic of the question. I will ask the Premier to come back to the central element of the question in the remaining 49 seconds.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** In relation to the question that was posed, I said that the Minister for Housing would check those facts. Here is the letter that was sent out. It says, 'Currently there are more than 8,700 properties that have two or more bedrooms in excess of the needs of the registered number of occupants.' They wanted strangers to come in and share houses with families. That is their record and that is the letter. Here is the letter!

**Dr Miles:** It's your spokesperson!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. There was an uproar because this was the policy of the LNP government. What is their policy now? We do not know because it is a policy-free zone.

### Infrastructure

**Mr POWER:** My question is of the Deputy Premier. Could the Deputy Premier advise the House how the Palaszczuk government is delivering more infrastructure and services, especially for growing areas like Logan in our growing state, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any other approaches?

**Dr MILES:** Queensland's Big Build is delivering infrastructure right across this state, and it is our plan to deliver the infrastructure that a growing state like Queensland needs. Nowhere is that more important than in Logan. Logan is one of the fastest growing parts of our state, and if we are going to continue to develop greenfield estates like we are seeing in Logan then we need to make sure they have the roads, the schools, the health services and the public transport they need.

That is why our Big Build—that \$89 billion investment—is just so important. It will allow us to continue to unlock those homes in Logan, Moreton Bay and Ipswich, which are the growing parts of our state. It will allow us to address congestion in those areas as they grow. It will allow us to create jobs on those infrastructure projects as well as connect people's homes with where their jobs are. It will allow us to continue to protect the Queensland lifestyle that we all love. It is also letting us deliver that energy infrastructure that will allow us to protect jobs going into the future and attract the industries of the future, the SuperGrid and CopperString 2032.

All of that is at risk if the Leader of the Opposition gets the chance to implement his so-called 'right priorities'. His 'right priorities' include creating a new Productivity Commission that he says will target cuts at transport, utilities and social infrastructure. What is social infrastructure? Social infrastructure is things like housing. They come in here and criticise us for investing in housing when their own Right Priorities document says they will create a new commission to target cuts at housing. They sound a bit the same too, don't they—'Right Priorities', 'Strong Choices'. One had a Commission of Audit and one has a Productivity Commission. We all know what the last LNP commission did. That was this one here. They have said they are going to do another one of these—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, are you going to be tabling that document? Otherwise, stop holding it up.

**Dr MILES:** What did it deliver? It delivered \$5.5 billion of cuts. That is only half of the cuts that they have already announced to infrastructure. It cut 14,000 jobs. We can only assume they will cut twice that many this time with their brand new Strong Choices, Right Priorities.

*(Time expired)*

### **Housing, Indigenous Communities**

**Mr LANGBROEK:** My question is to the Premier. Since 2018 the Palaszczuk Labor government has spent \$1,655,000,000 on Indigenous housing. Given this, can the Premier explain why the number of state owned and managed Indigenous community housing fell by 103 properties between 2018 and 2022?

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members! Don't start the clock yet. Members to my right, I need to hear the Premier.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Surfers Paradise for the question. The member for Surfers Paradise may remember that when the LNP federal government were in office they actually cut Indigenous remote housing—another cut. The LNP know a lot about cutting. I do not know how the member for Surfers Paradise took that question. I do not know why he did not look at that question and say, 'I think there have been some previous federal LNP cuts here which might explain it.'

In fact I can remember going down to the COAG meetings and raising this with the then prime ministers on numerous occasions. I can remember the former housing minister raising this issue in the parliament when the member for Surfers Paradise was sitting in this parliament. Perhaps he was not listening. We made it absolutely clear that the federal LNP government cut remote Indigenous housing. Perhaps the member for Surfers Paradise was not listening to the Minister for Public Works today when he was talking about all of the QBuild housing and how they are working with other partners to send it to remote communities so they have good quality housing. It will be manufactured by Queenslanders, built by Queenslanders, going out to service Indigenous communities.

### **Coal Royalties**

**Mrs GILBERT:** My question is of the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the Palaszczuk government's progressive coal royalties are delivering for the economy and for the people of Queensland, and is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for Mackay for her question. What a great day it was to be out there at Moranbah with the member for Mackay to celebrate the sod turning for the new hospital in Moranbah. That hospital will serve that great community and serve the miners of Central Queensland and North Queensland. It is a hospital that will make a big difference and something that is being delivered through our progressive coal royalties.

Not only are they building infrastructure in regional Queensland but those progressive coal royalties are supporting cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders. Just yesterday we saw the Westpac-Melbourne Institute consumer sentiment index show that consumer sentiment in Queensland improved by 8½ per cent in November 2023, bringing the improvement to 12½ per cent for the previous 12 months. That was the strongest of any state. That reflects how Queensland families are responding to our cost-of-living measures. Our rebates are the biggest in the nation in size and spread. We have energy rebates, appliance rebates, free kindy and SwimStart vouchers all delivering for Queensland families.

Of course they are all at threat from the Leader of the Opposition because he has repeatedly refused to rule out cutting electricity rebates. The LNP leader refused to provide those electricity rebates when he was in the Newman government. The Leader of the Opposition was gleeful about cutting concessions to pensioners. When he was the minister for the department of local government, he cut the staff in that department by 10 per cent. When he was at the Media Club two years ago, he was

boastful about those cuts. When he was asked about those cuts by the Media Club, he said, 'Absolutely, I gave direction and I have no qualms in saying I was in charge of my department the way a minister should be.'

If that is being in charge of a department, Queenslanders know what it would be like if the Leader of the Opposition was in charge of government. All that would result in is that sort of level of cuts.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** You can hear him going off now because he knows it is true. He is boastful about cutting 10 per cent of staff. Sacking people, that is his legacy—

**Mr Power:** Shameful.

**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection from the member for Logan. Absolute shame should fall on the Leader of the Opposition, but this is a Leader of the Opposition who has learned nothing, apologises for nothing and regrets absolutely nothing. Queenslanders know what is coming under the leadership of the man who has not allocated one single dollar in the pamphlet to social and affordable housing in this state. He has not allocated one dollar to build one house because the double standards and the hypocrisy is writ large for every Queenslander. He is a man who fundamentally cannot be trusted with housing or any other service delivery area in this government.

*(Time expired)*

### Housing Affordability

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the Premier. With residential lot approvals falling nearly 30 per cent in nine years since Labor has been in power, does the Premier take any responsibility for Brisbane having the lowest rental affordability ever and the regions having the worst in the nation?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** This is very similar to a question that was asked last time and the Deputy Premier clarified that. I can advise the House that investment in dwellings in Queensland is up 14.8 per cent over the last year, so there is a fact that the member for Kawana might like to look at. We know they do not like facts over there. There is a lot of fiction and there is a lot of erasing of history. For the most well-resourced opposition in the nation, there are no policies.

**Dr Miles** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right. I hope the Leader of the Opposition is not being misleading. Whilst I am on my feet, I do want to say that we are investing \$1.25 billion over the next five years in social housing supply and homelessness support. This is really important to us as a Labor government and it is something that is very clear from the stakeholders that we listen to. We are constructing over 700 new social homes on top of the 4,800 that we have delivered since 2015. We are supporting the delivery of social and affordable housing by business and non-government organisations through our \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund, and I went through that previously. We are building modern prefabricated homes for regional and remote Queensland communities through QBuild, as I have mentioned, and soon there will be one established in Cairns.

I want to say this: the response to what occurred in Tara and Dalby as a result of the bushfires was absolutely first-class.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Treasurer and member for Toowoomba South, you are warned for quarrelling across the chamber.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Over 20 caravans are out there in Tara. I received a message from Mayor Paul McVeigh the other day, thanking me for the fast response that was undertaken by this government. That is about helping those most in need. Having met personally with people who have lost everything, it was very important to me, when I heard their personal stories, to ensure they had a roof over their head, that they were not left with nowhere to go. In small communities they do not have the infrastructure. That is why we got the response out there as quickly as we could. All of the agencies worked together. They worked together to make sure people had the best response. Even when they were in that evacuation centre, the council did the best they could in terms of making sure everybody was looked after. The state government agencies swung in and helped as well. That is what happens when we work together with the council, with the organisations and with—

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The member was out there, too. The response now is first-rate.

### Education Infrastructure

**Mrs MULLEN:** 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 continuing commitment to education infrastructure across Queensland state schools, especially in the electorate of Jordan, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms GRACE:** I thank the member for the question. How excited we were to open the brand new Woogaroo State School in Augustine Heights. What a magnificent school it is. Not too long after that we opened the new Ripley Central State School in Bundamba. What a fantastic new school that is as well. Since 2015, in Jordan we have spent \$280 million on infrastructure in education. It is an incredibly fast growing area. In response to the advocacy of the member, we have continued to provide schooling infrastructure in those vital areas. It is very pleasing to see that Springfield Central State High School will start to take shape during 2024 on a new project at that school as well.

Since we have been in government we have spent over \$3 billion on 25 new schools. There is nothing I love doing more than opening new schools, whether it is in Buderim, Palmview, Caloundra, Logan, Coomera, Jordan, Townsville or Bundamba. Twenty-five new schools have been built. There is not one member—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Ms GRACE:** One in the Northern Beaches—I take that interjection from the member. When parliament sits, there is not one member in this House who does not come to see me about some form of infrastructure in their schools. In terms of alternative approaches, not one member comes to me about closing a school—not one. When those opposite were in government—and the same people sat around the cabinet table—50 schools were earmarked for closure. They closed six schools. We saved every one of them. Wyreema in Condamine was right up there. What has happened in Wyreema? Enrolments have tripled! We saved it for you, member for Condamine.

One of the then ministers who sat around the cabinet table was ready to close and sell off the school in Everton Park. What did Labor do? We invested over \$12 million in infrastructure there and it is going from strength to strength. In Fortitude Valley, we built the first inner-city high school—

**Mr Head** interjected.

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

**Ms GRACE:**—on the site that was earmarked for sale. That is what you get from those opposite: cuts and 'for sale' signs at schools. We have no idea at the moment—

**Mr Dick** interjected.

**Ms GRACE:** I will take that interjection from the minister. Not only are we delivering there but also all schools are air-conditioned and there is new infrastructure in every electorate. We hear nothing but whingeing, whining and continual complaints from those opposite about wanting other stuff. There is only one side of this House that will deliver infrastructure in schools and that is the Palaszczuk Labor government.

### Prince Charles Hospital, Patient Safety

**Ms BATES:** My question is to the Minister for Health. Will the minister advise whether routine checks for bacterial, viral or fungal loads are undertaken in the transplant area of the Prince Charles Hospital and, if so, when the last checks were undertaken prior to the outbreak being identified?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I thank the member for the question. I am happy to get that information for her. I am very pleased to inform the House, as the Chief Health Officer said yesterday, that when clinicians at the transplant unit detected a higher number of fungal infections over the transplants that had happened since May this year they did all of those relevant checks. I am very happy to get the routine checks. As the Chief Health Officer said yesterday, there are routine checks. I am happy to get the dates for the member.

### Bruce Highway Upgrade Program

**Mr HEALY:** My question is of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services. Will the minister please outline the risks of funding cuts to the Bruce Highway, and is he aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the member for Cairns for the question. He is a fierce advocate for road funding in the Cairns and Far North Queensland area. I know that recently we have seen big improvements to the ring-road and the Bruce Highway Cairns Southern Access Corridor, which is also in the Speaker's electorate. There have been three Bruce Highway upgrades in three terms in that part of the world. I thank the member for Cairns for his advocacy.

I will outline our record on the Bruce Highway compared to the opposition. Members will remember the Bruce Highway hoax at the last election. They talked big and then they did not allocate a dollar for capital—not one dollar for capital when they went to the last election. People know that this government will stand up and deliver Bruce Highway upgrades. They know that those across the aisle will cut. That is what they did last time. They had four upgrades in their term in office versus 466 for this government. '466 for four' is usually a pretty good first innings in cricket. In this case, it is actually a summary of us versus them on the Bruce Highway. '466 for four' is the score on the Bruce Highway—the Palaszczuk government versus the Queensland LNP.

They are all still there: the members for Broadwater, Glass House, Everton, Mudgeeraba, Kawana and Chatsworth. Who can forget Chatsworth? The member let the cat out of the bag earlier this year when he said, 'We have billions in savings coming under the LNP.' That means billions in cuts. He let the cat out of the bag. Let's compare that to this government's record: Haughton River Floodplain; Saltwater Creek bridge—a year early; Townsville Northern Access; and the Mackay Ring Road. As you go up the Bruce Highway you can see the 31 construction projects underway right now on the ground—under this government versus those opposite.

Let's be very clear: we do not want these huge improvements in safety for regional Queenslanders to in any way go backwards, and that is why we support 80-20 funding. We will always stand up for a safer Bruce Highway, for regional Queenslanders. It does not matter if it is those opposite with the Bruce Highway hoax or the proposal from the current federal government; this government supports the Bruce Highway 100 per cent. We want to continue to make it safe for Queenslanders and more efficient. When the Gympie bypass opens next year we will see 26 kilometres of new, separated, duplicated highway—opened under the Palaszczuk government because of the funding arrangements that are there right now. We have the largest road network in the nation. The Bruce Highway funding split should stay as it is. We in this government will always go in to bat for Queenslanders.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members for Scenic Rim, Warrego, Gympie and Chatsworth, you were trying to disrupt the minister in his contribution. You are warned under the standing orders.

### **Ingham Hospital, CT Scanner**

**Mr DAMESTO:** My question is to the Minister for Health. The minister previously committed to delivering a 24-hour CT-scanning solution for the Ingham Hospital. The need for this crucial medical equipment has been demonstrated and supported by health staff, the local ATSI Community Advisory Network, Mayor Ramon Jayo and multiple service community groups. How much longer will trauma and stroke victims be forced to go without?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I thank the member for Hinchinbrook for his question. He knows how committed I am to delivering this 24-hour service in Ingham and, in fact, delivering world-class health care closer to home for all Queenslanders, particularly for those in regional communities like Ingham. The Townsville Hospital and Health Service has spent a number of months engaging with the local private provider. Unfortunately, however, they have been unable to reach an agreement that is satisfactory to both parties. The community have been really clear about the need for a 24-hour CT scanner. Medical emergencies do not happen within business hours, and that is why today I am so pleased to announce that our government will deliver a CT scanner at the Ingham hospital to be staffed by Queensland Health doctors and nurses.

I am very proud that we have been able to work with the Townsville Hospital and Health Service to prioritise this funding. I thank the member for Hinchinbrook, the community advocates and the member for Thuringowa, who has raised this personally with me on behalf of his former colleagues who work as paramedics in Ingham—they know how important it is to have a 24-hour service. We would not be making this announcement without the support of the community, and I again acknowledge their tremendous advocacy. I know a number of community meetings have happened in Ingham with the board chair and the chief executive. Again, I thank you for keeping me up to date with the community's actions. I am so proud that we are delivering world-class health care closer to home. I am thrilled to announce today a CT scanner for the Ingham hospital.

### Community Safety

**Mr WALKER:** My question is of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Will the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's comprehensive plan to support community safety, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr RYAN:** I thank the member for the question. I have known a few members for Mundingburra and this has to be the best member for Mundingburra that the Queensland parliament has ever seen—certainly better than the member for Mundingburra who was on that side of the House. He forgets about that moment in history.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, I am hearing tedious repetition.

**Mr RYAN:** There are many good things to say about this member for Mundingburra, Speaker; that is for sure. I commend the member for Mundingburra not only on his outstanding question but also on his advocacy for his community. He is a strong advocate for the community and a strong supporter of this government's comprehensive plan around enhancing community safety. We have strong, tough laws to support the police in the work that they do in enhancing community safety. We are also boosting resources for the Queensland Police Service and other support agencies not only to hold people to account but also to ensure the appropriate focus is on community safety. I commend the Queensland Police Service for this week announcing Deputy Commissioner Shane Chelepy as the Deputy Commissioner of Regional Operations and Youth Crime, to bring a focused, targeted approach for the Queensland Police Service and other agencies on community safety.

We understand the fundamentals around early prevention and intervention, which is a key part of our plan. There is a suite of action, a spectrum of action, to ensure a strong focus on community safety. The only plan that those opposite have are around slogans and they are lacking in substance. I note that last week in Townsville the member for Broadwater—it would have been nice for him to be on familiar territory—was questioned by journalists around his plan. They were trying to get behind the slogans and ask: what is the detail; what is the substance? The glass jaw came out; he could not give the detail. There was no detail, no plan and no idea—just those slogans and, of course, the glass jaw that came out.

I did look around to see whether I could find the plan anywhere else. I did see on social media that the member for Bonney was at an event recently in Batman gear. I thought, 'Hang on, maybe that is their crime fighting approach?' Some people have said they have never seen the member for Bonney and Batman in the same room at the same time. Then, I did see the member for Everton dressed as the Cat in the Hat and I thought, 'Maybe the plan is under the hat, maybe the member for Broadwater is pointing to the hat?' Then, I saw the secret weapon the member for Condamine dressed up as Ken.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr RYAN:** I am not sure how that contributes, but there is no plan and no ideas.

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** I give a general warning to members: if your time has expired you will resume your seat, or you will be warned under the standing orders.

### Speed Cameras

**Mr ANDREW:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I refer to section 6.3.2, 'Restrictions on speed detection device site locations which I will table—which states—

Speed detection devices should not generally be operated in the following restricted site locations:

...

(iv) where the length of the speed zone is less than one kilometre.

*Tabled paper:* Extract from document, titled 'TM Issue 69 Public Edition-Effective 19 October 2023', regarding speed detection devices [\[1884\]](#).

Why are we putting speed cameras in places like Sarina where there is 650 metres between a 50 and a 70 kilometre sign to raise revenue when it is illegal under the government's AIM regulations?

### Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Mirani, the way that you have couched that question is essentially seeking a legal opinion, as I hear it.



**Mr Andrew** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, it is not a time to protest. I rule the question out of order.

### **Regional Queensland, Infrastructure**

**Ms LUI:** My question is of the Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement. Will the minister update the House on the efforts of the Palaszczuk government to ensure regional communities have access to first-class services and infrastructure, and will the minister advise if there are any alternative approaches?

**Mr de BRENNI:** I thank the member for Cook for her question. I know that the member believes in the role of government in constructing and maintaining our state's built environment so that we can deliver those important services, particularly in the most remote parts of this state. It is why, in fact, we have delivered the rebuild of QBuild. I inform the House that we have boosted the trades-based workforce to almost 500 tradies, with another 1,000 to come on board over the years to come. We have rebuilt the QBuild apprentice program. There are now 91 apprentices with QBuild today, and we will be doubling that number. Our next intake of tradies is set to be 50 per cent diverse—women, people from First Nations communities and Queenslanders with a disability. That is a nation leading standard of diversity across our workforce.

We have invested in the QBuild Rapid Accommodation and Apprenticeship Centres, where we are preparing tradies on the modern methods of construction and Queenslanders to meet the needs of regional and remote communities. That is why I am very pleased to announce today that, in an effort to reduce the costs of living in Far North Queensland and the electorate of Cook; in an effort to accelerate building and construction in remote Queensland and the Torres Strait; and in an effort to make sure that we can continue to deliver better frontline services in the electorate of Cook, we are building a new QBuild depot on Thursday Island.

I congratulate the member for Cook, as I congratulated the member for Caloundra. This particular depot will be home to 22 trade staff and three apprentices. It is in stark contrast to when the LNP were in office. They shut down and cut 22 QBuild depots across Queensland. They sacked 1,600 QBuild staff and they targeted women. They targeted QBuild women and they targeted women in regional Queensland when they sacked 1,600 people. We are growing our workforce—not cutting it—so that we can build fire stations and social housing, so that we can deliver government employee housing and so that we can deliver critical frontline services.

While we are prioritising infrastructure in the regions, we know the LNP is prioritising the commission of cuts that they announced through their pamphlet. We saw what happened after their last Commission of Audit. They went on a cutting spree—22 depots shut down, lives destroyed and communities left without the services they need. They cut depots in Cairns, Redcliffe, St George, Cloncurry, Longreach, Rockhampton, Cunnamulla, Noosa, Hervey Bay, Warwick and Mackay—the list goes on. I guess it just made sense, given that their plan every time they are in office is to cut infrastructure. That is what they are all about—just cuts.

### **Prince Charles Hospital, Patient Safety**

**Mr POWELL:** My question is to the health minister. Whistleblowers have contacted the opposition expressing concern about the cleaning regimen of the heater-cooler unit used in every cardiac surgical case. They have advised that this could explain the different forms of fungus impacting the victims of this fungus cluster. Will the minister advise whether she has been provided with details of the cleaning regime and, if not, will she order an investigation?

**Dr MILES:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask that the member for Glass House verify the information contained in his question.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Glass House, you have referenced whistleblowers. If they are whistleblowers in the true sense of the word under legislation, I understand that you cannot be verifying that information. However, do you have anything you can verify the statement with?

**Dr Miles** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do not need any interjections, Deputy Premier.

**Mr POWELL:** The opposition office has been contacted by members of staff who wish to remain anonymous in providing that information.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will allow the question but, Minister, you have some latitude.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I have been advised by the infectious diseases team at the Prince Charles Hospital that they are doing everything they can to investigate the sources of these fungal infections. They have done a very deep and thorough clean and are continuing to monitor the situation. An investigation is underway. Once I have that information, I am very happy to update the public and the House.

### Housing

**Mr McCALLUM:** My question is of the Minister for Housing. Can the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government continues to deliver its big housing build, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms SCANLON:** I thank the member for Bundamba for the question. Of course, we are delivering more social homes right across the state including in areas like Goodna and Redbank Plains—thousands of homes—as part of our Big Build. All of that would be at risk if those opposite were to be elected to government. In fact, the LNP clearly got so sick of us pointing out that their policies were just slogans that they thought, 'Maybe we need to rehash these slogans in a beautiful pamphlet.' We see the same slogans, but they are just in different colours in a glossy brochure now.

The Leader of the Opposition does not have any real substance on policy. That was no clearer than when he announced his new policy, which was to deliver KPIs. When asked by news channel media what those KPIs were, he said, 'Actually, we don't know. We don't really have any of those.' It made me wonder what kinds of KPIs they would have if they promoted the member for Everton to be the housing spokesperson for the LNP? We know the KPIs he delivered on last time. One would think that as the housing minister he would have wanted to increase housing—but, no, those opposite sent social housing backwards by 428 homes; or to deliver more housing for construction—but, no, they just cut that by 19 per cent. What about public housing? No. Again, we know that they wanted to outsource public housing because they have an ideological problem with public ownership in this state.

I want to respond to some of the questions those opposite asked this morning. They cherry-picked some data over a very short period of time, failing to acknowledge the full year's worth of data which shows that in 2022-23 we delivered 858 new homes. I should also mention that the data they referred to does not include community housing. Using their own metrics, that data would be zero under their priorities document because under 'delivering more social housing' it says they only want to work with the CHP sector.

Those opposite need to be up-front with Queenslanders about whether or not they support public ownership, because in this state we think we can do both. We are the only state to have delivered more public housing and more community housing, and we will continue to do that through our Housing Investment Fund and all of the other funds that they neglect to talk about because it does not suit their political narrative. Meanwhile, their mates in Canberra block housing at every opportunity.

Queenslanders deserve more than slogans. They want to see real action, and that is what we are delivering. We are repurposing retirement villages and aged-care facilities. We are delivering modular homes. We are providing rental support. Those opposite gutted the Queensland Residential Tenancies Authority that provided valuable support to renters. It is only the Labor Party that can be trusted to deliver housing for Queenslanders.

*(Time expired)*

### Right to Information

**Mr HART:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. When providing official correspondence to RTI officers including text messages, does the Deputy Premier provide all correspondence to allow the RTI office to determine relevance or does the Deputy Premier determine what is relevant himself?

**Dr MILES:** I confirm for the member for Burleigh that I always comply with all relevant requirements when it comes to right-to-information requests.

### Youth Justice

**Ms KING:** My question is for the Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice.

**Mr Brown** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Capalaba, you are warned under the standing orders. Members, the questions will be heard in silence. Please start your question again, member.

**Ms KING:** My question is for the Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice. Can the minister update the House on our Palaszczuk government's youth justice services, and are there any alternative approaches?

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

**Ms FARMER:** I thank the member for her question. What a great advocate she is for her community, a big supporter of the \$17 million PCYC at Caboolture. They are going to invest in youth development and crime prevention programs. We have the Ted Noffs Foundation. Her electorate and the Morayfield electorate are going to benefit from that. It is so important, because they are really effective at reducing drug dependence. We know that 80 per cent of young people in the youth justice system have been dependent on drugs. In fact, 100 per cent of serious repeat offenders have used drugs. The members for Thuringowa and Townsville know that. We just opened up the new Street University there. It is just so important.

These are just some of the rolled-gold early intervention programs that we are using to address the complex causes of crime. What are some of the others, Mr Speaker? I thought you would never ask. There is intensive case management—51 per cent reduction in frequency. We have nearly 77,000 kids engaged in our youth co-responder teams. I notice that the member of the opposition talks about rolled-gold early intervention as well. That is one of the three really simple things they are going to do to solve youth crime. There are apparently only three things to solve the whole issue of youth crime. You just have to do these three things and then it is all going to go away. If you have been a victim of youth crime, abracadabra! One, two and three and youth crime will be solved.


The member needed a little bit of detail so he goes around the state saying, 'I've asked the Auditor-General to evaluate all of these programs.' The thing is that the Auditor-General had already announced he was going to do that. I cannot wait for the select committee and for those three members—the members for Currumbin, Lockyer and Ninderry—to bring all of their ideas to that select committee. That is exactly why the Premier announced—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr SPEAKER:** The period for question time has expired. Members for Ninderry and Cairns, take it outside next time. You are both warned under the standing orders.

## LAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

### Introduction

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (11.17 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Land Act 1994, the Land Regulation 2020, the Land Title Act 1994, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004, the Place Names Act 1994, the Recreation Areas Amendment Act 2006 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Transport and Resources Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023 [\[1885\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023, explanatory notes [\[1886\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[1887\]](#).

The Land and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023 will provide a contemporary approach to the administration of state land and the naming of places in Queensland. The bill will also enable recreation area names to be changed and will improve the resources regulatory framework to ensure the mandatory payment of local government rates and charges to support our regional communities.

State land is very important to Queensland and makes up around 60 per cent of Queensland's land mass, as members are probably aware. State land plays an instrumental role in facilitating economic activity and other public purposes through land allocation for critical purposes like primary production, community spaces, First Nation communities and for state and local government operational facilities. Honourable members of the House may not be aware that even the site of the

Queensland parliament itself is state land and, yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, via the Speaker you are appointed under the Land Act 1994 as trustee for the 2.1376 hectares of hallowed land that makes up the Queensland parliamentary precinct. In effect, technically, I am your landlord.

The bill will amend the Land Act, the Land Regulation 2020 and the Land Title Act 1994 to modernise the state land administration framework. As Queensland's Big Build major project pipeline increases over the next decade, state land will be an important resource to support the delivery of infrastructure. This will include the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan and other initiatives to support economic and tourism development, First Nations outcomes and social and affordable housing. The Land Act has not necessarily kept pace with the contemporary needs of the state and it imposes restrictive limits on how state land can be allocated and used. The government must be able to deal with state land efficiently to deliver critical priority projects and provide for community needs.

To provide for the timely allocation of land, the bill will cut red tape by reducing duplication in existing decision-making around land use. The amendments will remove the requirement to consider the most appropriate use and instead rely on the planning framework and other relevant laws that already govern land use. In this context, I want to note that for nearly 30 years since the Land Act was enacted there have been three iterations of the state's planning laws—namely, the Integrated Planning Act 1997, the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 and the current Planning Act 2016.

Existing provisions in the Land Act strictly limit the circumstances under which suitable unallocated land can be granted in fee simple—meaning freehold—to a state agency. This has necessitated special purpose legislation such as the implementation of The Spit Master Plan Act 2020 and the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Act 2016 in order to provide the state with the ability to deal with commercial development projects with the benefit of freehold title. The bill proposes amendments that will remove these existing limitations and will therefore allow suitable state land to be granted to the state in freehold title. This will accelerate the land allocation process, reduce red tape and facilitate faster delivery of essential projects.

More than 21,000 state land reserves are managed by trustees for a variety of community purposes—for example, parks, public halls and sporting grounds. Under the current regulatory framework, these lands have a narrowly prescribed purpose which limits how trustees may use the land. The amendments in the bill will support trustees, most of which are government departments, local governments or statutory bodies, to manage trust land in the interests of their communities. The bill will replace the very narrow, specific community purpose listed in schedule 1 of the Land Act with six broad community purpose categories. Existing purposes will be listed against one of the categories as examples of permitted land uses. By doing this, many existing community purpose reserves will be open to a much wider range of permitted uses. These changes will provide flexibility to respond to changing community needs.

To accommodate unforeseen community needs, a new provision will be included in the Land Act to enable the minister to decide a reserve for any purpose so long as there is a demonstrated community need and it is in the public interest. The bill also expands the decision-making powers of the trustees which are state government departments, local governments and statutory bodies. Such trustees will now be able to approve leases on trust land or take actions that may be inconsistent with the purpose of trust land so long as there is a management plan in place and the lease or action does not diminish the purpose of the trust land or adversely affect the public interest—for example, allowing electric vehicle charging station infrastructure at frequently visited reserves, installing community batteries on under-utilised state land and allowing coffee carts at community parks, something we all love.

Local councils already require separate planning approval and compliance with a whole range of local laws for these secondary uses to begin. All members of the House can probably remember a time where they went to a function at the surf club. That surf club probably had to, alongside complying with other local laws, submit an application to Resources seeking for additional use. This bill removes that requirement. These changes will support trustees to make decisions in the interests of their communities. Any decisions taken by a trustee about trust land will need to be consistent with the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 and the Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993.

New provisions will give trustees streamlined pathways to freehold conversions for all or part of an operational reserve or non-Indigenous deed of grant in trust for operational purposes. Unlike community purpose reserves, additional reserves were allocated for facilities and buildings like council works depots, sewerage treatment plants, courthouses, police and ambulance stations and even state schools. Enabling these sites to be held, where appropriate, in freehold title will allow greater opportunity in the management, development and use of the state's property portfolio.

The bill removes limitations on term leases for pastoral purposes, responding to some issues raised by stakeholders. Currently the Land Act states—

Lease land the subject of a term lease for pastoral purposes may be used only for agricultural or grazing purposes, or both.

The bill proposes to remove this provision and make clear that these leaseholders are able to seek approval for a complementary use to their leased purpose such as farm-based tourism on their pastoral lease. These reforms will allow a leaseholder to generate a secondary income stream to support their pastoral enterprise through challenging seasonal conditions or when there are commodity—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr STEWART:**—thank you; I take that interjection about how good this is—price fluctuations. Where relevant, requirements under the Native Title Act and any Planning Act considerations will, of course, apply to all proposals. The bill ensures additional lease purposes cannot be approved in relation to grazing leases on state forest and timber reserves under the Forestry Act 1959 and certain protected areas under the Nature Conservation Act 1992. These lands are managed by the Department of Environment and Science and are specifically reserved for the purposes of forestry and nature conservation.

The bill also makes amendments to the Place Names Act 1994. Placenames are a critical component of our geography and sense of place. They are used to identify key landmarks and features in our environment with names that represent cultural values and impact on a person's sense of identity and belonging. The Place Names Act is primarily legislation for naming geographical features and areas in Queensland and has not changed substantially since it came into force almost 30 years ago. Change is needed to respond to significant shifts that have occurred in community expectations, advances in technology and developments in business practices, policy and regulation.

The bill clarifies the places to which the act applies and the administrative functions within the act—for example, the gazetteer of placenames. The bill refines the issues to be considered when changing or discontinuing the name of a place to include matters such as socio-economic impacts of giving, changing or discontinuing a name and the transitional arrangements that may be required to successfully implement a complex naming decision. The bill enhances public engagement by enabling the use of contemporary technology to make submissions. The minimum consultation time frame is aligned with that of other states and territories while retaining the flexibility to consult over a longer period as needed. The bill broadens the limited circumstances in which publication of a proposal can be waived. Significantly, it allows other consultation processes to inform placenaming decisions and provides new, more effective tools and processes to replace offensive and harmful names with more respectful and inclusive ones.

The bill enables the chief executive to propose a new or changed name for the minister to approve. A more objective and transparent decision-making process will give confidence that the minister's decision has taken account of all relevant placenaming issues and community views. Importantly, the bill provides for transitional arrangements to enable communities and businesses to adjust to a new or changed placename. This recognises that an abrupt name change may be difficult to implement in some cases—for example, due to the significance of the socio-economic impacts. Overall, the bill clarifies the scope of the Place Names Act and streamlines the placenaming process while making placenaming more inclusive and responsive to the community. Placename proposals will be decided in a timelier manner and offensive placenames removed more easily and promptly.

The bill also amends the Recreation Areas Management Act 2006 to enable, where necessary, the name of a recreation area to be changed in response to changed circumstances such as the alteration of an official name under the Place Names Act. In June of this year the official name of Fraser Island was changed to K'gari under the Place Names Act and, consequently, the name of the Fraser Island Recreation Area needs to be changed to align with the new official placename. This proposal is not a new concept and, in fact, directly mirrors existing section 63 in the Nature Conservation Act which enables the name of a protected area, such as a national park, to be changed by regulation.

Further, the bill will amend several resources acts—being the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 and the Petroleum Act 1923—to introduce the payment of local government rates and charges as a consistent mandatory condition of a resource authority. The resources industry must operate responsibly in the community that it is based in, and we expect it to keep its obligations. We know that resources projects provide benefits to the regions and local communities in which they operate. Paying their local government rates and charges is an important way that resources companies can support both the

growth of the resources sector and the sustainable development of our regional communities. By amending the resources acts, the bill makes the payment of relevant local government rates and charges a mandatory condition of all resource authorities. The bill will allow the department to take compliance action against resource authority holders if their rates and charges are unpaid. This may include reducing the term or area of the resource authority, imposing a monetary penalty or even cancelling the resource authority. The bill will also enable security paid by the resource authority holder to be used to pay local governments any outstanding rates and charges.

The bill will give the minister the power to take into account non-payment of local government rates and charges when deciding future resource authority applications. Through these amendments the bill will incentivise the resources industry to pay their rates and charges and allow the department to provide assistance to local governments to recover unpaid rates and charges. The bill is another way that the Palaszczuk government is supporting the resources industry and our regional communities to grow together in sustainable coexistence. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (11.33 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to Transport and Resources Committee


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

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR CONDUCT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from 14 November (see p. 3463), on motion of Dr Miles—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (11.33 am), continuing: 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. As the *Courier-Mail* editorial said—

His 'crime' had been to sensibly and calmly suggest during an open council meeting that the vaccine rollout plans hatched by his local public health services were 'just not going to work' because he doubted his entire community could be vaccinated in the few days allocated and that not everyone could physically attend the shire hall for their jabs because of isolation or mobility issues.

He was investigated because, as the *Courier-Mail* said—


... we live in a state where the government body established to investigate genuine matters of council misconduct and corruption is instead wasting time dictating what opinions elected councillors can and cannot express in public.

The Gold Coast council says that dealing with frivolous complaints has cost its ratepayers more than \$200,000. History must not be repeated and it is essential there is attention to detail in implementing these reforms. As a former councillor and deputy mayor, I understand the role councillors have in providing essential services to communities across the state. They are naturally close to the eye of the action and often the first port of call. Many of my LNP colleagues have cut their teeth in local government politics. We value and understand the vital role of this third tier of government. The LNP supports integrity and transparency in all levels of public life and government. It is incredibly important that complaints made against mayors and councillors are handled appropriately and in a timely manner. For too long, duly elected councillors have been hamstrung by an overbearing complaints process which has stopped them doing the jobs they were elected to do. As the *Courier-Mail* editorial found in relation to the OIA—

There is now clear evidence that something is seriously amiss in the way it is going about its task. It is out of line, and way out of its lane.

If we are bogged down in the frivolous, we are liable to miss the serious. People will lose trust in the integrity and transparency measures. When a government is characterised by chaos and crisis, is guided solely by the media cycle and sees all issues through the prism of political media management, it is no wonder the system is broken. The poor performance of the complaints system and the intimidation of local governments that we see today are entirely the fault of the Palaszczuk Labor government. Under its culture of chaos and crisis, local government has been ignored, bundled into a superdepartment and forgotten. The LNP values the role of local government. Under the LNP, local government will have a seat around the cabinet table. I will not oppose the bill.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Before I call the next member, I will remind members of those on a warning. They are the members for Nicklin, Nanango, Glass House, Everton, Kawana, Bonney, Southern Downs, Woodridge, Toowoomba South, Callide, Scenic Rim, Gympie, Warrego, Chatsworth, Capalaba, Cairns and Ninderry.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (11.37 am): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Listening to the contributions of the committee members last night, there certainly seemed to be a lot of love in the room, which was great to see, between the member for Bancroft, the esteemed chair of the committee; the member for Ipswich West, my longstanding colleague and former committee member; the member for Bundaberg; the member for Lockyer; the member for Traeger; and the member for Burleigh.

In the spirit of this bill, I congratulate the committee on their tripartite approach—that is a word we do not often use in this House but has been used many times already in this legislation—to working together across all of the different political parties that make up that committee. They have done a significant amount of strong work and it is clear to see that the committee are quite pleased with where they have eventually landed. I also note that the bill has good support from the Local Government Association of Queensland and many mayors and councillors throughout Queensland.

It is worth noting at the outset that Queensland local governments are unique. Brisbane is home to the largest local government in the country. I believe that it is larger in budget than the state of Tasmania. When we talk about local governments, we are not just talking about small rural and regional councils. The Brisbane City Council has a huge local government area that is governed by its own legislation, the City of Brisbane Act. In my own electorate I have three local councillors. I call it my French flag, because I have one Labor, one Liberal and one Independent.

**Mr Dametto:** French?

**Ms PUGH:** The Independent; I see her colours as white. I am sure that they all agree on the importance of the bill in line with the broad support that the legislation has received from local government generally. The work on this report and the subsequent bill, which is now before the House, took over a year to produce. The committee tabled its report in October 2022. The committee made 40 recommendations to improve the councillor conduct complaints system. The bill before the House today enables 19 recommendations from the report to be enacted. Those recommendations require legislative amendment in order to be enacted.

I acknowledge one of the members of the department staff who worked on the bill and some of the notes surrounding it. I see her down the back, shaking her head. Jess Burgess worked in my electorate office when I was first elected. From my very first day as the member for Mount Ommaney—

**Mr Saunders:** What a great day.

**Ms PUGH:** What a great day. I very fondly remember my first day in the office. Jess has always had a passion for planning, which she studied at university. I am so proud not only to see her career blossoming but also to speak on a bill that she had a hand in. I echo the sentiments of the member for Pine Rivers about the hard work of the department staff who worked with the members of the committee, the ministers and, of course, all of the relevant organisations to bring this bill before the House. They have done a fantastic job. In addition to Jess, I acknowledge them for all of their hard work.

Deputy Speaker, I note that you also know young Jess. I call her ‘young Jess’ because that was the name that she gave herself. I think I was ‘old Jess’ in the office.

**Mr Sullivan:** Grandma Jess.

**Ms PUGH:** ‘Grandma Jess’; I do not take that interjection, member for Stafford. The councillor conduct report noted that councillors can struggle to identify what can constitute a conflict of interest, that in the past training on this issue has been irregular and that it has not been given the appropriate importance that it deserves. Let us be clear: this kind of training should be compulsory because it needs

to underline the fact that it is nonnegotiable. It is vitally important, in performing their role, that councillors clearly understand all of their obligations. It is very fair that new councillors will get guidance. This training constitutes a key part of that.

I think back to all of our onboarding here at Parliament House. Each and every member of parliament is required to undertake a training course, which is not done by political parties. All newbie members come together, here at parliament, to learn about our responsibilities, our roles and, of course, all of the reporting measures that are required. I do believe I sat next to the members for Noosa and Maiwar when we did that training. It was fantastic to see the 'no dumb questions in this space' approach that the panel took so that we could walk away with a much better understanding of the role that we were to carry out. Importantly, we now know where to go if questions come up over the course of our tenure.

The councillor conduct report recommendation 27 is that the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning 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's response supports recommendation 27 in principle, of course subject to further consideration and stakeholder consultation. Clauses 7 and 97 insert new section 169A into the City of Brisbane Act, which I have referred to, and the Local Government Act to require councillors to complete approved councillor training about the responsibilities of councillors under the CoBA or the LGA.

Very many moons ago, I worked for the then minister for local government. I recall attending a very early iteration of this councillor training. It has obviously come a long way since then. We have long been aware of the importance of this training. It is great to see this legislation underpinning it and making it compulsory.

The training must be completed by a councillor within the period prescribed by the regulation or, if the department's chief executive extends the period for that particular councillor, the councillor needs to complete it within the extended period. The department's chief executive may extend the period for completion of training only if the department's chief executive is satisfied that it would be appropriate in those particular circumstances, for example, a councillor is unable to complete the training due to an unavoidable absence. Of course, there is a little bit of flexibility there but, once again, it underlines and underscores the critical importance of this training, the top priority that needs to be placed on ensuring that this training is undertaken and that it is very difficult for a councillor to commence their work without having undertaken it.

The department's chief executive must publish a notice about approved councillor training on the department's website within the period prescribed by the regulation. The department's chief executive must also give a notice about approved councillor training to each local government and each councillor of the local government within the period prescribed by regulation. Furthermore—and this is a particular issue I notice in the City of Brisbane right now—if a councillor is appointed or elected to fill a vacancy in the office left by another councillor then a notice must be given to the local government and the councillor within 20 business days after the councillor is appointed or elected. That is particularly important right now as we come within the one-year window of the elections. We are seeing a number of new appointees into councils, particularly in the City of Brisbane area. It is important that, as those new councillors are appointed, they are able to get training as soon as they are appointed to the role rather than wait for the election period for that to take place. They need to know straight up what their responsibilities are.

I know all members of this House respect the role of local government, which is part of the reason this legislation is so important. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (11.47 am): I rise to give my contribution to the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Before I speak to the bill, I acknowledge the work of the committee and also the work of all councils in looking after their local government areas. They do a fantastic job under trying conditions. There is always feedback about how it is becoming more and more difficult to be a councillor in this day and age, especially with the legislation that they have to comply with and also with what is required of them by the public. The public has high expectations about what councillors are to do. It is not like the old days when you treated council like sitting on a board and turned up for a meeting once or twice a month. Residents expect you to be standing in every pothole and trimming every tree for them so hats off to anyone who puts up their hand. Coming up to the 2024 council elections, I wish all the best to every candidate who is putting their hat in the ring because it is a brave thing to do.



The KAP will not be opposing the bill. We will support it as it passes through the House. The objective of the legislation is to implement the government's policy in relation to certain recommendations of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee in its report No. 28 of the 57th Parliament titled *Inquiry into the Independent Assessor and councillor conduct complaints system*. The bill seeks to make further changes to the councillor conduct complaints system, including limiting the system's application in relation to former councillors. It further clarifies and enhances the councillor conflict of interest requirements, which is about public interest. The bill modernises local government advertising requirements, provides a discretion to the Electoral Commission of Queensland in relation to the recovery of local government election costs and also provides appropriate transitional agreements for the commencement of the improved councillor conduct complaints system, which is important because there are a few changes contained in the bill. It will be important to make sure councils and councillors have time and the resources to come up to speed on that.

I must note that the member for Traeger sits on the committee that deliberated on this bill. He was not overly critical. As he noted in his speech last night, he was very happy with the committee process. During the member for Traeger's speech he said that the bill was not perfect and that the legislation we are amending here is not perfect, but he suggested that at this point he did not have any further suggestions or alterations that could make it better. I will talk to that in a second.

In March this year I asked a question without notice of the Deputy Premier about local government having to be responsible for the handing down of penalties for councillors found to have engaged in inappropriate conduct by the OIA. The council that approached me to ask that question indicated that it was tough for councillors and councils to vote on the punishment of someone who sits beside them, especially if they are not of the same political persuasion or whatever. It can be seen and made as a political statement in some cases. I understand that the question was answered pretty appropriately at the time by the Deputy Premier. As far as I understand, this bill does not address any of the issues raised in that question.

I want to table a brilliant article, written by *Townsville Bulletin* journalist Cameron Bates, about Raymond Jayo, the Hinchinbrook mayor. He is a great mayor.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Townsville Bulletin* online, dated 9 November 2023, titled 'Queensland local-government elections 2024; advice for mayor, councillor candidates' [\[1888\]](#).

Although the article does not reflect on the OIA, it does reflect more broadly on what it is like to be a mayor and a councillor in this day and age and the fact that there is a lot of expectation from residents who think councillors or mayors can just walk into the operational side of a council and tell people what to do or give directions when people are not doing things according to residents' expectations. The reality is that there is a very strong line in the sand. Councils and councillors look after the policy side of things when it comes to the operation of that council, but it is up to the CEO to direct council staff. I think that is a little lost on people in trying to understand the role of a mayor or a councillor.

There were a number of submissions to the committee inquiry from councils in the north. Hinchinbrook, Townsville and Cassowary Coast—the councils I look after—did not put forward a submission, but I acknowledge that some councils farther north did make submissions. When I have talked to some councillors and asked for their thoughts on this legislation, more broadly the OIA and the process, they have said that it is very restrictive and quite intrusive and that some investigations can be carried out by the OIA without councillors even being aware of that investigation until, usually, the very end. It can be quite invasive to people's lives. You can always say, 'If you are not up to no good then you have nothing to worry about,' but it is pretty daunting to know as a councillor that at any stage people could be going through your emails or text messages. It is quite scary, I think. I have been told that it is one barrier resulting in a reduction in the number of good candidates coming through, especially with the upcoming local government elections.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish you could intervene as the noise from outside is very loud, but I will continue speaking. As I said, it has been quite a hindrance to attracting good people to run for council. When I have asked councillors, 'How do you fix it?' they have said to scrap it altogether and start again. I do not know if that is the answer, but that is some of the feedback we have been given.

The KAP supports the legislative changes in this bill. Once again, I commend the committee for working together with the crossbench and everyone who came together to make sure we got this bill right. I support the legislation.



**Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (11.54 am): I cannot hear anything outside! It is wonderful in here. I rise to speak in support of the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Local government elected representatives play a vital part in the support and

development of their communities. As such, it is imperative that they operate with integrity and good governance in everything they do, just as we do. There is an expectation out there from the community. I do not think anything in this bill is outside of those expectations. It is essential that a fair and rigorous system is in place to support their function and ensure they operate with compliance and probity in every situation. The Independent Assessor and councillor complaints systems fulfil this role and task. At the end of the day, it is an essential part of an overall role that they play.

It is only right and proper that such systems that are in place are appropriately reviewed and amended from time to time to reflect and keep up with best practices and performances. We have heard members of the committee speak to this. Like many in this chamber, I deal with a lot of councils on a regular basis. They have all indicated the same outcomes. It is absolutely vital that we ensure we keep on top of this and modernise it and that we make sure it is relevant and, more importantly, very much appropriate.

The State Development and Regional Industries Committee has done an outstanding job of consulting with a wide range of submitters and witnesses. Its work has ensured that a fair and sensible approach has been established to recalibrate the councillor conduct framework. It is important to acknowledge that the changes that have been made have occurred as a result of a rigorous and thorough process of consultation. The bill before us does just that with its implementation of 19 of the 40 committee recommendations. This is a matter of supporting continuous improvement and of maintaining a fit-for-purpose complaints and conduct framework that is relevant for all Queensland councils. This aspect is especially important when considering the customs and cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councillors and the challenges faced by many smaller local government areas, where a very different population in representation sizes can present unique governance situations.

As the Assistant Minister for Tourism Industry Development I can say that, in travelling around this great state of ours—and it is vast—the challenges are significantly different in the Far North, particularly if you are looking at the cape or the Channel Country, from the challenges in the city. Passing this bill and making changes to these protocols is essential, but we have to make sure we take all of those other factors into account.

The primary objective of the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is to recalibrate the councillor conduct framework to make it more effective and efficient and to ensure that only matters of substance and in the public interest proceed to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal for determination. The bill does this by implementing the government's policy in relation to 19 recommendations of the committee's report No. 28 of the 57th Parliament titled *Inquiry into the Independent Assessor and councillor conduct complaints system*.

I want to run through some of the key factors here, but, as I have said, I have spoken to many councils on this. They all recognise that there is room for improvement. That is why I make the point that this needs to be an ongoing process. We have acknowledged that and we will continue to make it better and better. I think that is made very clear in the committee's report.

The bill introduces a preliminary assessment process that the Independent Assessor must undertake to determine how best to deal with a complaint about councillor conduct, including a time limitation for accepting the complaint. Other points to note include that the bill provides that the CCT may be constituted by not more than three members for a hearing and only one member to deal with administrative or procedural matters for hearings. I see this as making the outcomes a little more time efficient.

The bill permits the Independent Assessor to withdraw an application made to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal, in whole or in part. It also removes the CCT's function of investigating suspected inappropriate conduct on behalf of local governments. I will not be going through all of them, but it is important to recognise that some of those provisions make a far better and a cleaner, more efficient system. The member for Mount Ommaney touched on this, and I want to reiterate it: the bill establishes compulsory training requirements for councillors. This is absolutely essential. Understanding the processes and the procedures is fundamental in the utilisation in ensuring better outcomes.

The bill also makes further changes to the councillor conduct complaints system, which is part of that process. They include: limiting the system's application in relation to former councillors; further clarifying and enhancing the councillor conflict of interest requirements; and, amongst others, modernising local government advertising requirements which we think is obviously pretty important.


As I said earlier, broad support for this amendment was outlined by several local government representatives at the public hearing in Gladstone, as well as submitted by the LGAQ, Councillor Tate and the Isaac Regional Council. The LGAQ submitted that it appreciated the changes, noting that this would 'ensure that the councillor conduct system doesn't become a political weapon against individuals which is critical in maintaining the confidence of the sector and the integrity of the role of the OIA and the CCT'. I think that really covers it when you are talking about industry support.

In closing, it is critical to again acknowledge the pivotal role councillors play in their communities, with Queenslanders expecting high standards of conduct from their leaders at all levels. A robust independent framework for councillor conduct and complaints is essential to uphold public confidence in local government, enhance sector capability and deliver positive outcomes statewide.

The committee, along with numerous participants, embraces the proposed amendments in the bill. These changes aim to refine the councillor conduct framework, making it more effective and efficient, ensuring that only substantive matters in the public interest proceed for determination.

Since the committee initiated its inquiry in 2021, there has been noticeable improvement in the operation of the councillor conduct complaints system. Testimonies from the multiple inquiry participants affirm this very positive shift. Sustaining this progress is paramount, as I have said. Therefore, it is recommended that the relevant parliamentary committee, alongside its ongoing oversight duties, conducts a review of the councillor conduct system in the upcoming parliamentary term to guarantee its intended operation.

I want to acknowledge, as I have said before, the hard work of the committee and the strong support of the secretariat. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (12.02 pm): It is my pleasure to rise and speak on the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Councillors play a pivotal role within their communities, as we have heard from the member for Cairns and previous members, and the people of Queensland rightfully expect a high standard of behaviour from their elected community leaders and the establishment of an effective independent framework for councillor conduct. Handling complaints and the way that they are assessed is crucial for upholding public confidence in local government. We know there is a lot of cynicism about politicians at any level.

I note that this bill incorporates 19 out of the 40 recommendations put forth by the committee in its examination of the Independent Assessor and councillor complaints system. I thank the committee for their assessment. The proposed amendments aim to realign the councillor conduct framework, making it more effective and efficient, with a focus on allowing only substantive matters in the public interest to proceed for determination.

As shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, I express appreciation for the extensive efforts from the local government sector and the Indigenous Leaders Forum, whose insights constructively contributed to the development of the bill. It is recommended that the Palaszczuk government takes proactive measures to ensure the system is tailored to the specific needs of Queensland's Indigenous councils.

I have had the pleasure in my 20 years in this place of going to many of those councils. The list is as follows: Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council; Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council; Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council; Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council; Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council; Aurukun Shire Council; Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council, which is a stand-out community; Mornington Shire Council, where there are very challenging issues that I know the mayor has expressed concerns about; Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council; Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council, which I have not been to; Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council; Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council; Torres Strait Island Regional Council; Woorabinda Aboriginal Shire Council; Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council; and Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, where I was pleased to attend with the local MP a couple of years ago to see the challenges facing those communities. With small voting cohorts and significant changes in those councils for each term, there is no doubt that, with the rules applied in this bill, there need to be specific allowances made and understanding of the challenges and the specific needs of those Indigenous councils.

The objectives of the bill are to implement policy based on the State Development and Regional Industries Committee's recommendations, make changes to the councillor conduct complaints system and modernise local government advertising requirements. Additionally, the bill introduces discretionary powers to the Electoral Commission Queensland regarding the recovery of local government election costs—I will deal with that a little later—and addresses consequential amendments due to the change of classification for Moreton Bay Regional Council.

The bill received 15 submissions, with the Local Government Association of Queensland, LGAQ, showing broad support but highlighting issues such as the removal of certain language from the legislation—namely, ‘knowingly and recklessly’—and the need for a code of conduct for local government candidates to level the playing field. I want to note the submission of Mayor Tom Tate, City of Gold Coast. He made a submission, which I will table after I have referred to it, highlighting that, since the new approach to councillor complaints commenced in 2018, his experience to date has been ‘extremely frustrating for councillors and terribly costly for ratepayers and taxpayers’. He said in his letter of 3 October 2023 that he had a number of issues with the changes. He stated—

... I am very supportive of the mechanisms that have been provided to the OIA to streamline the complaints process and potentially remove some of the time and costs from the current complaints system.

Those included changes around vexatious complainants and ordinary business matters. In summary, at page 3 of his submission, he stated—

I commend the Government on the positive changes described above but note that they are only effective if interpreted and implemented judiciously by the OIA. I note that there have always been provisions around not investigating for public interest reasons, yet the OIA have not used those provisions as often as they should have. This has come at great cost to ratepayers and taxpayers, and I would argue to the community as potential local representatives are discouraged from standing for office. Similarly, there have always been provisions around vexatious complainants that have rarely been used.

I table a copy of his submission.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 3 October 2023, from the Mayor of the City of Gold Coast, Mr Tom Tate, to the Committee Secretary, State Development and Regional Industries Committee, regarding the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 [\[1889\]](#).

I also want to refer to an article in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* by Paul Weston titled ‘\$200k burnt on frivolous complaints’. In the article it revealed that \$200,000—this is an extension of what Mayor Tom Tate had said about the cost to ratepayers—of City of Gold Coast ratepayer money was ‘wasted on crazy complaints’, including 60 against the mayor himself. Tom Tate was quoted as saying, ‘I look at this as 10 extra shade sails which could have been installed in parks.’

I note that in the article he listed the following as an appalling waste of time and money: a councillor using the word ‘frivolous’ in the incorrect context during a media conference was referred to the OIA; Facebook blocking and incorrect moderation on a councillor’s social media page was referred to the OIA; and a complaint against himself, Tom Tate, in which he said, ‘I don’t know what they are smoking,’ in reference to a group of complainants during a media conference was referred to the OIA. He said he was just ‘using the common Australian vernacular to describe complaints of dozens of people’ which he was advised had been incorrect. The article states—

By comparison, Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk did not face similar scrutiny ... for telling media: “I don’t know what planet Tom Tate is living on”.

I table a copy of that article.

*Tabled paper:* Media article, undated, titled ‘\$200k burnt on frivolous complaints’ [\[1890\]](#).

The inconsistencies seemed rather frustrating to me and Tom Tate. Of course there is a cost to ratepayers for that significant legal advice, not to mention the time taken when he has had 60 referrals to the OIA. There is no doubt that he is a passionate advocate for the Gold Coast. As we often say about Mayor Tom Tate, English is his second language. There are times when he has made reference to different issues that are sometimes deemed by the OIA to be inappropriate which subsequently have led to significant legal costs.

The legislation is not without its challenges and there have been technical issues raised, including the lack of a clear definition for the public interest in dismissing complaints, potential reputational damage in smaller communities, and a loophole for anonymous and vexatious complaints. There is also a call for an independent local government integrity and advisory service which the bill currently does not provide. Furthermore, concerns exist about using QCAT for re-prosecuting cases and the delayed fulfilment of promised reform by this government dating back to July 2021.

Of significant note is the discretionary power given to the Electoral Commission of Queensland to recover election costs from councils. Estimated costs for the upcoming local government elections in 2024 are marked at \$37 million. The costs in 2020 were \$27 million. I understand it is budgeted to be \$28 million in 2024. There is a concern it is possible that the ECQ will seek to recover all costs—an additional \$9 million—from councils.

Lastly, the bill addresses issues relating to Queen’s Wharf, specifically the conversion of land parcels into freehold. Concerns have been raised about the lack of consultation with traditional owners. In fact, there does not appear to have been any consultation with the Turrbal people, which is a customary practice for such transfers.

In the midst of a cost-of-living crisis, when Queenslanders are grappling with affording fuel for their vehicles, putting food on the table and meeting electricity expenses, it seems highly likely that the majority of Queenslanders would favour allocating their rates and taxes to initiatives that directly address their daily necessities rather than funding elaborate inquiries into frequently minor complaints about their local councillors, which I note from other submissions seem to have cost upwards of \$10 million.

Whilst this bill is a pivotal step towards strengthening our local governance, the opposition will not oppose the bill. However, consideration should be given to the feedback of stakeholders and addressing the technical challenges, many of which have been raised by the shadow minister, the member for Warrego. I want to thank her for her contribution, because I know that through her dealings with mayors and people in the local government sector she is right across many of these issues. We must also ensure that the reforms outlined in this bill truly serve the interests of our local Queensland communities.



**Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (12.12 pm): I rise to support this bill. I want to start by thanking the chair of the committee and the Deputy Premier for establishing the initial inquiry into the OIA and Councillor Conduct Tribunal back in 2021. I think it is a really important piece of work. There was substantial input from councillors in the Redlands, the Redland City Council and Redlands 2030.

We have heard from a few of the contributors to this debate about the OIA being used and weaponised in very frivolous and vexatious ways. In fact, I went back through the Redland City Council's Councillor Conduct Register from July 2022 to now—about 16 months worth—and found that there have been over 60 complaints. When you go through the detail of what is outlined in these complaints and when you look at the pettiness of some of the things in this register, you realise that taxpayers' and ratepayers' money could be far better spent. I suggest having a look at the dates. This particular one kicked off in July 2022, which was post the incident with our mayor and the targeting of certain councillors—

**Mr Tantari:** Which mayor was that?

**Ms RICHARDS:** Yes, exactly: which mayor was that?—who chose to speak up on the incident. In that document you can see quite clearly what that looks like. In fact, I have a letter from the Office of the Independent Assessor to one of those councillors. I thought I would read it, because this is the sort of thing that comes through. This is where ratepayers' and taxpayers' money goes when dealing with this sort of thing. The letter states—

Dear Councillor:

On 8 February 2023, the Office of the Independent Assessor received a complaint in relation to your conduct as a councillor of Redlands City Council. It was alleged that you engaged in inappropriate conduct in a workshop meeting of council when you referred to a councillor as 'Miss Point of Order' and another councillor as 'Chair Mitchell' and interrupted a councillor when they were speaking to a notice of motion. It was further alleged that on 8 February 2023 you entered another councillor's office and asked to speak to the councillor about her attitude. When asked to leave the office, you raised your voice in a shrill tone and continued to make comments about the councillor's attitude and behaviour and that this was in response to the councillor calling in a development application that was within your division. The complainant alleged that your behaviour toward her and other councillors had deteriorated significantly since the mayor's drink-driving incident.

The notice of decision says—

Having considered all of the information available, I have decided to dismiss the complaint about you pursuant to section 150Y(b)(iii) of the Local Government Act 2009. In making this decision I considered the following information: the complaint received on 8 February 2023; other inappropriate conduct matters raised about Redlands City councillors; and relevant provisions of the Local Government Act and the Queensland Human Rights Act 2019. I decided to take no further action in respect of this complaint because taking further action would be an unjustifiable use of resource.

The complaint did not raise any suspicion of substantive misconduct but again spoke to the poor relationships and interactions between some councillors. It is understood that council had previously engaged a professional agency to provide dispute resolution services for the councillors with a view to resolving differences; however, it is clear that attempts to reconcile differences have not been effective.

The OIA would agree that the level of dysfunctionality between councillors has escalated since June 2022. Since this time a significant number of notifications have been received from particular councillors highlighting this ongoing dynamic. In circumstances where a council is encountering systemic issues arising out of an inability of councillors to deal professionally together, being the conduct to which the complaint relates, it is considered that the councillor conduct framework is the most effective way of dealing with these issues. There is a positive obligation and an imperative on all councillors to change this dynamic, to prioritise the public interest, and to ensure they are collectively delivering local government which is effective, efficient and sustainable.


When you look at the 60 complaints listed on the register, I think it absolutely speaks to the dysfunction that is occurring out at Redlands in our council. That level of dysfunction has a knock-on effect right across our community. It is our community that suffers as the result of the dysfunction of council. As quoted in the chair's report to this bill, the OIA said—

Councillors are civic leaders and should be held to high standards of conduct. This should include taking disciplinary action, in appropriate circumstances, where a councillor's personal conduct, or criminal convictions arising out of personal conduct, is conduct that is not befitting of a councillor and or does not provide high quality leadership to the councillor's community.

The incident that occurred with the mayor in a council vehicle, a Lexus, whilst performing her duties as the mayor of Redland City Council certainly has not been addressed and made clear. While you have that swinging in the wind in terms of what it means to have done that, the community cannot see how there have been any ramifications for that. When we talk about leadership, it is like a percolator with a level of dysfunction that runs right the way through. I think that is very well reflected in the register that lists complaints. They are only the ones that have had a determination. If they are still before the tribunal and no decision is pending, they are not on this list.

Ms Anstee said that the simplest of complaints require at least 40 hours of time by the chair and 20 hours for each of those two members. When you put that together, in the simplest cases—and some of ours are probably quite complex—that is 80 hours. When you average that out at the base rate for any professional service, which is probably around \$150 an hour, that is a substantial amount of ratepayers' money going to where the moral compass within council should already be set. They should already have that tone set and it should not require the OIA to deliberate and determine.

I am really pleased with what is contained within this bill. That pre-assessment process will hopefully go a long way to rectifying those vexatious and frivolous claims. Redlands has a track record in that vexatious space. We had 'Scarlett Rivers' which was quite incredible, and I have tabled that information in this House before. She went to the most extraordinary lengths to be vexatious in her dealing with a family member of a councillor who was one of her colleagues. Hopefully, this legislation goes some way, but sometimes bad people cannot be stopped from doing the wrong thing even with the tightest pieces of legislation. I hope some positive change can come from that pre-assessment process. Again, the definition between personal conduct and official duties is obviously quite a blurred line, and I would think about that in terms of the mayor's incident. I really hope this legislation goes a long way to solving some of our problems out in Redland City Council. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (12.20 pm): The primary objective of this bill, as we have heard, is to make reforms to the councillor conduct complaints scheme in the Local Government Act to improve its operations and to ensure that only matters of substance and in the public interest rise to the consideration of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal, the CCT. Before discussing the bill in detail, it is worth refreshing ourselves on the issues being experienced that initiated this. The Deputy Premier wrote to the State Development and Regional Industries Committee requesting an inquiry in 2021, attaching letters from both the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties and the Local Government Association of Queensland. The key concerns they raised were: the scheme has overly legalistic, complex and adversarial practices; the scheme has greater impacts on both councillors and the system itself than ever expected; there were a number of vexatious complainants; and impacts to free speech. In efforts to remedy, the bill introduces a range of changes including to the operation of the CCT around appointments, membership and its constitution—all to make the tribunal work more effectively.

It also makes changes to the complaints scheme operated by the Office of the Independent Assessor, the OIA, by introducing a new preliminary assessment to be conducted by them before further progressing a complaint. A complaint only progresses if it meets a variety of criteria, including if it is in the public interest, if it could not be dealt with elsewhere, whether the complaint was in good faith and if sufficient information was provided to properly assess.

Another change is that a complaint should not be progressed if it only deals with the personal private conduct of a councillor not associated with their public role. The department argued that the focus of the bill should be on the conduct undertaken by councillors in their official role; thus conduct undertaken in a private capacity is more appropriately dealt with by the police and the courts. This change was welcomed by the LGAQ. As they stated in the public hearings, private conduct should not be viewed 'through the lens of the code of conduct'. However, the OIA expressed reservations about the exclusion of private conduct, arguing that councillors are civic leaders, like the rest of us, who should be held to the highest standard of conduct, including taking disciplinary action where personal conduct is not befitting of a councillor.

Overall, one of the core issues with the system as it now stands is its politicisation, as often false accusations and complaints are used to smear representatives as part of the political electioneering or for personal gain. We heard a lot from the member for Redlands on what it actually does, including the dysfunctionality as well as the impact to communities. As a former councillor myself, I have seen the impacts on good, decent representatives being falsely maligned; also, the behaviours of some reflect poorly on all of us, which must be appropriately addressed.

A welcome change is the introduction of powers around vexatious complainants, which are those who make repeated and frivolous complaints about councillors to the OIA. With this change, the OIA can declare a person a vexatious complainant when they have made at least three complaints assessed as frivolous, vexatious or made in bad faith. A vexatious complainant must then apply to the OIA before making any further complaint and the OIA must give permission to submit such a complaint. This is similar to the vexatious complainant process used by the Information Commissioner. There was broad support for these changes by several local government representatives in the public hearing, and the LGAQ said that it would ensure that the councillor conduct system does not become a political weapon against individuals. Let's hope so.

However, there are several identified problems with this system that may limit its effectiveness. First, it does not have full coverage as it is limited to complaints by members of the public and not sitting councillors. As the OIA stated in their submission, the complaints system is mostly misused by councillors. Second, if frivolous complaints are made in a coordinated manner by multiple people against the same councillor, this proposal would not address this.

The third problem is what was not addressed in the bill which was highlighted by the LGAQ—and that was to ban anonymous complainants. This would be a simple avenue to ensure the vexatious complainant system is not circumnavigated. To not incorporate this in these amendments for debate is concerning. Finally, the OIC, which will implement the submission, said in their submission that the proposed scheme is too complex and cumbersome. With internal reviews and appeals to QCAT, they said it will draw resources away from core functions and that the complexity means it would not be responsive during the short time frames of council elections. The department's response to these was that anonymous complaints are required to protect complainants from reprisals and that councillors have a duty to make complaints under the Local Government Act. They did not address whether all of these issues will make the scheme less effective or not.

I turn now to the amendments regarding conflict of interest. Last year's SDRIC report recommended that issues with conflict of interest be dealt with through improved training for councillors. This bill introduces some minor tweaks to the conflict of interest provisions to clarify the conflict requirements, such as that a councillor with a declarable conflict of interest in a matter must not participate in a decision relating to the matter unless authorised to do so under the Local Government Act. Will this make any difference to what is deemed perceived or real conflicts? I think not. Other changes in the bill include time limits on complaints, the exclusion of former councillors from the scheme, the requirement to publish more data and compulsory training for councillors.

In closing, I would like to thank the committee for their work on this bill, including their tripartisan nature, and I thank all submitters. To all councillors across the state who are heading to the polling booths in March, we wish you well and thank you for all that you do. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (12.27 pm): I rise to speak to the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I would like to begin by reiterating part of my speech in 2018 when we introduced the then bill creating the Independent Assessor. I said at the time—

I strongly believe that the majority of local government councillors within Queensland operate professionally and with due regard to the requirements of the law.

I also said—

Equally, ratepayers have a right to ensure that this is indeed the case—

and to be able to use a third party to investigate any claims of misconduct or bad behaviour.

As noted by the parliamentary committee in its examination of this bill, an effective independent councillor conduct and complaints framework is vital to maintaining public confidence in local government, building capacity across the sector and providing positive outcomes for communities across our state. Since its introduction in 2018, there has been some time to allow the system to operate and to determine if further improvements should be implemented. In fact, between the introduction of the OIA and the start of what has been a comprehensive review into the Independent Assessor and councillor complaints system, 3,800 complaints have been lodged. To put this into context, there are 578 councillors in Queensland so it equates to more than six complaints per councillor.



The State Development and Regional Industries Committee report was very comprehensive and made 40 recommendations, of which 19 are being implemented through this bill. I want to commend the committee and the department for their work on this bill. Both the bill and the review into the OIA saw significant interest in consultation, and I would like to thank all of the local councils, individual councillors and key stakeholders who have contributed to making the complaints system more agile and better informed.


I wish to add that it is really important that we get this right for local governments. I have had the opportunity to speak with many councillors not only in my own regions of Ipswich and Logan but also right across Queensland, and getting the complaints framework right matters. An elected representative's integrity, their reputation, is vitally important, and when matters drag out for long periods of time or on matters that are simply vexatious or deliberately political, it can have a significant impact on those individual councillors.

Even before the review recommendations were released and based on my discussions with councils, it was clear that there was dissatisfaction with the length of time needed to resolve complaints against councillors. During the review, the OIA provided context to the matter of timeliness by highlighting its workload. The agency, as I said, has dealt with more than 3,800 complaints since it was established. In 2021-22 they assessed 881 complaints. Of these, 64 per cent were assessed and dismissed or no further action taken, five per cent were referred to councils as potential inappropriate conduct, 18 per cent proceeded to a full misconduct investigation following assessment, and three per cent were referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission. The review found that the councillor complaints system needs to be more closely and efficiently aligned with public interest and the intent of the legislation.

Debate, on motion of Ms Mullen, adjourned.

## PLANNING AND OTHER LEGISLATION (MAKE DEVELOPERS PAY) AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (12.30 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Planning Act 2016 and the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the State Development and Regional Industries Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Planning and Other Legislation (Make Developers Pay) Amendment Bill 2023 [\[1891\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Planning and Other Legislation (Make Developers Pay) Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes [\[1892\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Planning and Other Legislation (Make Developers Pay) Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[1893\]](#).

I am introducing this bill, the 'make developers pay' bill, because neither of the major parties will. Labor and the LNP have proven that they are incapable of taking on big developers, even when those developers are making housing more expensive, putting workers at risk, leaving subbies and homebuyers out of pocket, or making off with massive profits, all while infrastructure is stretched and underfunded in communities across Queensland. This bill is a first step to addressing that last issue, by removing the state imposed cap on the infrastructure charges that councils can levy on developers.

Infrastructure charges are one of the few ways councils can make developers contribute towards the things that growing communities need. They fund pedestrian crossings, parks, flood mitigation, public transport, community facilities and services. It makes sense that if a developer is able to come in and make a profit building in the area they should give some of those profits back to the community. Of course, councils, being the ones tasked with delivering this new infrastructure, are best placed to determine the appropriate charges. In 2011, Queensland Labor introduced new powers for the state government to regulate a statewide cap on those charges. Only Victoria and New South Wales have a similar cap. Where did this brilliant idea come from, you might ask? There are no points for guessing, because, of course, it came from the development lobby. The change came off the back of significant cuts to state government funding for local infrastructure projects after the capital works subsidy scheme was scrapped in 2008. Council started increasing their infrastructure charges to make up the difference and developers were none too happy about that.



According to Adjunct Professor Bruce James, groups like the Property Council vigorously lobbied the state government to step in and cut infrastructure charges until they eventually established the infrastructure charges taskforce, which ultimately recommended a set of maximum infrastructure charges. Keep in mind, though, that this was before we banned developer donations in Queensland. Labor and the LNP were at that point still taking hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations from property developers every year. Of course, they still take them at the federal level, and the LNP has made good use, I might add, of the loophole that allows related parties—for example, someone who is the sole shareholder of a developer—to donate to their campaigns. I can only assume that Labor still refuses to close that loophole because it also wants to keep its options open, just like it has not banned cash-for-access meetings because it reaps the benefits of these functions—a lazy \$10,000 a ticket for Labor's 'business forum'.

I come back to the new cap on infrastructure charges. There is a direct link between the major parties' deals for developers and underfunded public services and infrastructure. We now have a system where regulated and adopted charges for infrastructure are divorced from the actual cost of building things like footpaths or parks, so as the cost of land and infrastructure has increased councils have struggled to keep up, and that bill increasingly falls to ratepayers. In Brisbane over the last five years, infrastructure charges have increased by less than 13 per cent while cumulative inflation has surpassed 19 per cent. In fact, just two years ago, Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner agreed that caps on infrastructure charges were preventing council from building enough infrastructure to keep up with the growing population. However, unsurprisingly, he did an about-face on that this year, with the LNP council scrapping some of their crown jewel infrastructure projects to pay for cuts to infrastructure charges. Their brutal \$400 million cuts include ditching shade on the Victoria Bridge and 'indefinitely pausing' the Toowong to West End Green Bridge, which was originally proposed by the Greens but finally adopted as an LNP promise ahead of the 2020 council elections.

When the LNP announced these cuts, they were careful to focus squarely on the increased construction costs. They were, however, conspicuously silent about their decision to cut infrastructure charges just a couple of months earlier. Labor voted for that tax cut for big developers on the floor of council, and the Greens were the only party to oppose them. The LNP was only too happy to parade about the promised bridges, to boost their green credentials in seats that also happened to be under significant threat from the real Greens, but, when push comes to shove, they would rather give developers a tax cut than deliver new infrastructure for the community. They are running a protection racket for developers, and I am frankly shocked that Labor in council is sitting idly by and letting them do it.

This bill is a line in the sand. It is time big developers paid their fair share. Here is the thing: if costs have increased, that is exactly when infrastructure charges should be raised to cover them, but we have these laws at the state level that separate the real infrastructure needs of a council and a community from the charges that can be levied. Before the developer-loving members of this chamber start running the Property Council's talking points about how high infrastructure charges will reduce supply and make the housing crisis worse, let's just focus on a few facts. Developers already charge the highest price they can get away with. If they could charge, say, \$10,000 extra per home today, they would already be doing it. They charge the maximum the market will pay, which includes holding back housing supply to keep prices artificially high, which we already know they do, routinely. If house prices were really determined by the costs to developers instead of the market then no developer would ever go bankrupt or lose money.

In reality, economic research shows that infrastructure charges are not generally passed on to homebuyers. They are borne by developers, reducing their profit margins, which is why developers argue so strongly against them and why they will, no doubt, kick and scream so vocally about this bill. Both major parties have swallowed all of the property industry lies hook, line and sinker, and they parrot them verbatim on a regular basis. The industry propaganda about incentivising supply is nauseating. They slash planning regulations and offer generous tax breaks for build-to-rent projects that do not guarantee a single affordable home, while rents and mortgages continue to go up. They have privatised housing supply so completely that big developers control how fast new housing is built and at what price it is rented or sold. If they actually wanted to make housing affordable, they would build more public homes, they would ban unlimited rent increases, and they would introduce a vacancy levy.

To solve an affordable housing crisis, you need to build affordable homes, not luxury penthouses. Labor and the LNP apparently cannot do this because they are not just beholden to the property industry; they are the property industry. They profit from their multiple investment properties and host

luncheons with the REIQ now and accept lucrative board and lobbying positions upon retirement. The Greens, on the other hand, are the only ones willing to stand up to the property and development lobby and put ordinary people and our neighbourhoods first.

My colleagues who are looking to kick out the LNP in Brisbane City Council will no doubt have more to say between now and March about making developers pay their fair share. We obviously would scrap the developer tax cuts and reinstate projects like the green bridges and the shading on the Victoria Bridge. We need to prioritise better public transport, parks, bike lanes and community facilities as our communities grow. That cannot happen unless big developers are made to pay their fair share.

By removing the cap on infrastructure charges, we pave the way for councils to charge developers properly for the things our communities need. We could get big, city-shaping projects built much more quickly, including finally getting on with the Toowong to West End Green Bridge. We could make sure that new apartments are matched with new green space for those without a backyard. We could clear the huge backlog of overdue pedestrian crossings and footpaths that make our suburbs safer for kids and pedestrians. We could give residents in growing medium- and high-density neighbourhoods more services within walking distance to make living without a car a real option. In my local area, that includes a public pool for Toowong, a high-frequency bus on Swann Road, or new libraries with meeting rooms as community spaces are increasingly hard to find.

This bill is a line in the sand. It is time that we removed the cap on infrastructure charges so that councils have flexibility to charge developers for the real cost of building infrastructure as land values and construction costs rise. It is time that big developers paid their fair share.

### First Reading

**Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (12.40 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

### Referral to State Development and Regional Industries Committee


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the State Development and Regional Industries Committee.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR CONDUCT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3512, on motion of Dr Miles—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (12.41 pm), continuing: As I was saying, the review found that the councillor complaints system needs to be more closely and efficiently aligned with public interest and the intent of the legislation. The system must also be capable of resolving complaints in a timely and cost effective manner. Information provided by the OIA indicates that a large number of complaints—64 per cent—are dismissed on initial assessment, or subject to no further action. The information provided also indicates an upward trend in this regard. The bill seeks to introduce a preliminary assessment process that aims to increase the overall efficiency of the system by allowing the OIA to focus on substantive conduct matters and to improve the timeliness of complaint resolution. It provides that the IA must dismiss a complaint or take no further action for a notice or information about councillor conduct in certain circumstances including: it was not in the public interest to proceed; it was received outside of the prescribed period; it relates solely to a councillor's personal conduct; or the conduct was engaged in by the councillor to comply honestly and without negligence with a guideline made by the director-general.

It also provides that the IA must dismiss a complaint or no take no further action for these circumstances: the conduct is or may be dealt with another entity; the complaint is frivolous or vexatious; the complaint was made other than in good faith—for example, it was made for mischievous or

malicious purposes; or it would be an unjustifiable use of resources. If the matter is not dismissed following the preliminary assessment, the IA must decide to refer the conduct to a local government to deal with, investigate the conduct or take alternative action. For example, make any recommendation the IA considers appropriate such as the councillor attending training, counselling or mediation. There has clearly been strong support to introduce a preliminary assessment process, with the need to put a clear public test front and centre as part of an initial triaging process.

I have become aware of councillors being referred on matters that clearly do not have a public interest and seem to fall mainly into the vexatious and sometimes malicious category, but are still taking too long to clear. The bill introduces a requirement for the IA to dismiss or take no further action about councillor conduct on preliminary assessment if satisfied the conduct relates solely to behaviour engaged in by a councillor in a personal capacity, unless the conduct is suspected corrupt conduct. This change is being made to once again enable the IA to focus on conduct that is directly relevant to a councillor's official duties.

As the department noted in the committee report, it is not intended for the system to capture the private behaviour of councillors which, as we know, is more appropriately dealt with at the ballot box by electors. There are also matters that are rightly more appropriately dealt with by the police and the courts, not the OIA. The councillor conduct report also recommended a time limitation period for the acceptance of complaints, unless they involve matters to be referred to the CCC. Clause 46 of the bill introduces a period for making complaints or giving notices or information about councillor conduct that must be made or given within one year of when the conduct occurred or within six months after the conduct comes to the knowledge of the complainant but within two years after the conduct occurred. I believe this is reasonable, particularly for inappropriate conduct or conduct breaches. The councillor conduct report also makes a recommendation in relation to making training and professional development on the councillor conduct system compulsory for all local government councillors, mayors and senior council managers. I think it is absolutely imperative and I could not see any councillors not complying with this requirement to have approved councillor training about their responsibilities, with consequences for noncompliance.

Finally, I would like to discuss the matter of vexatious complainants which is included in the legislation. I am pleased to see the changes that are proposed in this bill. In my discussion with councillors, along with timeliness of complaints management, this is one of the main issues being raised. It is absolutely imperative that we do not allow the integrity of the OIA and the Councillor Conduct Tribunal to be undermined by allowing it to be used as a political weapon against individuals. Councillors have told me of being referred to the OIA on matters that frankly should never have been referred and are clearly vexatious and aimed at ensuring that that individual is tied up in defending themselves against such claims. The current vexatious complainant process is limited to complaints that are made by members of the public and not to sitting councillors. It is not surprising, however, that the OIA's experience has shown that the system is most misused by councillors.

Whilst councillors have a statutory duty to make referrals and notifications under the Local Government Act, I agree with the committee's view that further work needs to be undertaken to extend the vexatious complainant's process to include sitting councillors. My electorate spans two local government areas—Ipswich City Council and Logan City Council. I have become increasingly concerned at the OIA referrals that are being made in Ipswich City. I am concerned not because I believe there is widespread misconduct or breaches of duty, but, in fact, the opposite. Ipswich City Council has, since the election of 2020, had approximately 68 complaints referred to the OIA. Of those, just three have been substantiated. The remaining 65 have been dismissed or no further action taken.

What concerns me is that it is clear the majority of the complaints are coming from inside the council. Reading the Ipswich City Council councillor conduct register is an exercise in exasperation for the ratepayers of Ipswich, who are seeing time, energy and resources being spent on complaints which are being summarily dismissed, not substantiated and, in some instances, clearly made politically or maliciously. I question whether council resources and staff are being used to gather evidence regarding these complaints. Is this an appropriate use of staff time? Many of these complaints are a disservice to the people of Ipswich. I encourage our councillors to get on with their proper day-to-day duties and stop using the OIA in this way.

Again, I return to my words of earlier. I do believe the majority of local government councillors within Queensland operate professionally and meet their requirements under the law. The bill today is an opportunity to improve the councillor conduct and complaints process to allow those councillors to continue to undertake their good work in service to their ratepayers. I commend the bill to the House.



**Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.47 p.m.): I rise to address the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. On 13 September 2023, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Steven Miles, introduced the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill into the Legislative Assembly. The bill was referred to the State Development and Regional Industries Committee, which reported on 27 February 2023.

The committee made five recommendations: firstly, that the bill be passed; secondly, that the department take further steps to ensure the councillor conduct framework is operating as intended and is fit for purpose for Indigenous councils; thirdly, that the department, with the tripartite forum, prepare and update training materials to assist stakeholders interpret the distinction between private and public conduct; fourthly, that the government ensure the Councillor Conduct Tribunal is adequately resourced and has representatives from regional Queensland and First Peoples communities where practicable; and, finally, that the relevant parliamentary committee conduct a review of the councillor conduct complaints system in the next parliamentary term.

As is denoted by the explanatory notes, the objectives of the bill are to: implement the government's policy in relation to certain recommendations of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee in its report No. 28 of the 57th Parliament titled *Inquiry into the Independent Assessor and councillor conduct complaints system*, the councillor conduct report; make further changes to the councillor conduct complaints system, including limiting the system's application in relation to former councillors; further clarify and enhance the conflict of interest requirements and modernise local government advertising requirements; provide a discretion to the Electoral Commission of Queensland in relation to the recovery of local government election costs; make consequential amendments resulting from the change of classification for the Moreton Bay Regional Council; provide appropriate transitional arrangements for commencement of the improved councillor conduct complaints system; and, finally, make a minor amendment to the Queen's Wharf Brisbane Act 2016.

The committee received 15 submissions. One was confidential, six were from councils and councillors, and eight were from other agencies and interest groups. The Local Government Association of Queensland was broadly supportive of the bill. The Councillor Conduct Tribunal made the following recommendations: that the principle of upholding the public trust by elected officials remain in the definition of 'misconduct'; that at least two members of the tribunal be required to hear a contested matter; and that a matter may be dismissed immediately upon receipt by the tribunal if they deem that appropriate.

The Liberal National Party supports integrity and transparency in government, and this includes local government. It is vitally important that any complaints that are made against mayors or councillors are handled with due diligence in an open and transparent manner, with a timely resolution of referred issues. There is no doubt that local government officials want these issues resolved by this legislation once and for all, given the number of matters we have seen in the public domain. There is also no doubt that the current problems facing local governments in Queensland with respect to these issues are a direct result of a broken councillor complaint system. That system was established by the Palaszczuk state Labor government in 2018.


Since Labor's changes in 2018 there have been countless examples of overreach by the Office of the Independent Assessor, with frivolous complaints, damaged reputations and careers destroyed. This has certainly been unfortunate for many of those people who have been trying to discharge their responsibilities with due diligence as elected representatives within various local councils right across Queensland. It can only be hoped that, with the passage of this legislation, Labor's mess with respect to the framework for managing and resolving complaints made against mayors and councillors is fixed once and for all. The reforms and the amendments contained within this legislation should make a material improvement to the complaints management framework and the associated processes.

In conclusion, I want to acknowledge all members of the committee for their work in scrutinising this legislation and also the committee secretariat in preparing the relevant report. They undertake some very important work on behalf of democracy here in Queensland when they examine legislation which has been put forward. I know that our committee secretariat do important work in preparing these reports.

Finally, I take this opportunity to acknowledge the service of former councillor James Mackay, who recently retired as the Brisbane City councillor for the Walter Taylor ward. Former councillor Mackay was a passionate and fierce advocate for his ward who delivered significant benefits and improvements for his local constituents. I also take this opportunity to acknowledge and congratulate Councillor Greg Adermann on his advocacy and community achievements in the Pullenvale ward. I

wish both Councillor Adermann and Penny Wolff, who is now the new Brisbane City councillor for the Walter Taylor ward, all the best. They are champions for their local areas. They continue to be involved with local government and delivering for their respective communities.

I conclude by saying again in relation to this legislation that hopefully this will now resolve many of the issues we have seen with respect to local government and the complaints management framework. I know that with the passage of this legislation there will be many in the local government sector, in the Local Government Association of Queensland and various stakeholders who will really be hopeful that the processes moving forward will be better for all who are elected councillors or mayors in various local governments right across Queensland.

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (12.53 pm): I rise in support of the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Councils play an incredibly important role in both our system of democracy and our local communities. Councils are responsible for development and housing through local government planning schemes. All of the development applications and the conditions that councils oversee are incredibly important. In my experience, the vast majority of local councillors are people who are professional and who work hard and diligently on behalf of their communities—as they should—on behalf of the people who pay their rates and expect the services they need from local government to be delivered in their communities, like in our Bundamba community. To ensure the public can have confidence in their elected councillors, there needs to be a framework that reflects community standards. On those occasions when councillors do not meet the standards that are demanded of them, there should be a framework for those consequences to be fairly meted out.

That brings us to the report and the inquiry that the State Development and Regional Industries Committee conducted into the functions of the Independent Assessor and the councillor conduct and complaints system. It was a very thorough and comprehensive inquiry. I congratulate the committee on its work in that regard. That report made 40 recommendations to improve the councillor conduct complaint system in our state. Of those 40 recommendations, 19 necessitate legislative changes, and those legislative changes are reflected in the bill that is currently before the House. It is worth noting and putting on the record that the government accepted in principle or in full all 40 of those recommendations that came out of the committee report.

In respect of the 19 recommendations that are being given effect in this bill, those reforms will recalibrate the councillor conduct framework to make it more effective and more efficient and to ensure that only matters that are of real substance and in the interest of the public and the community do proceed to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal for action and determination. It takes a lot of time and resources. We have heard many speakers reflect on the trivial or vexatious complaints that have been clogging up the system and draining resources under the current system. I will speak to those in more detail a little bit later in my contribution.

It is worth noting that this bill and the reforms that it contains have broad support across the local government sector. Indeed, it has strong support from the Local Government Association of Queensland and broad support from Queensland mayors and councillors. One of the most important reforms is the introduction of a preliminary assessment process and time limits for the Independent Assessor's consideration of councillor conduct complaints. This is a really important reform that will help improve the complaints process here in Queensland to deliver better outcomes for the community. Part of that is introducing a process to declare a person as a vexatious complainant.

I am particularly pleased to see these reforms requiring the tribunal decisions to be published in full, subject to appropriate redactions. That is entirely consistent with open and transparent government and it is entirely consistent with modern community expectations. It is important that these reforms allow the withdrawal of applications to the tribunal if it is in the public interest. It is also excellent to see requirements for local governments to report annually on the information around conduct breaches and the matters that have been referred to them and to publish external investigation reports, once again with the appropriate redactions.

In the time I have remaining to me, I might turn to the matter of vexatious complaints. At this point I will associate myself with the excellent contribution of the member for Jordan. It is of great concern that, in Ipswich City Council, out of 68 complaints only three have been substantiated. I note in the committee's report when it comes to the application of vexatious complaints to sitting councillors that the committee formed the view that this process should apply to existing councillors. I am glad to see that that has been put forward in the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.



**Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): I rise to make a few brief remarks about the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and put on the record that the LNP will not be opposing this bill. I want to make some comments about the hard work of the shadow minister and the way that she has been listening to mayors, councillors and those people who work in local government and the way that she has heard the cries for help from elected officials. No contribution on this bill would be complete without explaining what life has been like for people serving their communities at the front line. It has been a torrid period, and I will tell members why: the way the legislation has been drafted, the way the Office of the Independent Assessor has operated and the way every lens of this government has not been about focusing on the bad apples has made it almost impossible for elected officials to do their job.

When I listen to those mayors and councillors tell me what life is like living under a constant stream of vexatious complaints and no-one has listened to them, it has destroyed careers, it has destroyed relationships, it has cost thousands of dollars in people's personal money and lost opportunities for communities. That is why the LNP will not be opposing this bill, but for the government to suggest that the changes it has made when it comes to local government have done anything other than make it more difficult for elected people to be able to do their job in serving the community shows how out of touch the government is.

I want to explain why it is so important to have a vibrant and empowered local government sector. In this chamber we speak a lot about the housing crisis. The level of government that holds the key to assisting us is local government and we have a vision and a passion to partner with local government to deliver infrastructure, and I will tell members why that is important: young people have lost hope of home ownership in this state and the figures show that Queensland has the lowest home ownership rate in the country. Tasmania has 71 per cent—

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): The opposition leader had only just embarked on that particular theme. I am happy to give him a little latitude to explore that before we decide whether or not it is relevant.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Without an empowered local government sector and with local government being bogged down by vexatious complaints, its ability to be able to get on with the job of delivering planning outcomes is not there. This is completely and utterly relevant and Queenslanders are living out of their cars because of it. Queenslanders have lost hope of home ownership and Queensland is ground zero when it comes to the lowest percentage of home ownership in the nation: Tasmania, 71 per cent; Western Australia, 70 per cent; South Australia, 61 per cent; Victoria, 69 per cent; New South Wales, 65 per cent; and Queensland, 64 per cent.

**Mr KELLY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I appreciate your earlier ruling in relation to this matter and I have been listening carefully to the Leader of the Opposition's contribution. While I accept his point in relation to the importance of local governments and their impact on housing, he is simply continuing through his arguments to pursue matters that have completely no relevance to this bill. I have listened to that contribution and he has strayed far from the long title of the bill. I seek your guidance.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Greenslopes. Leader of the Opposition, I ask you to be mindful of the contents of the bill and confine your comments to the long title.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** The LNP supports integrity and transparency in government. In order to have an empowered local government sector, it needs to be able to do its job. I would propose to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that there is no more important job at the moment for councils than to be able to unlock land supply. If they are unable to make planning decisions because the big arm of state government is breathing over their shoulder, this is the most relevant bit of legislation you could possibly find.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I do not mind members not sitting in their seats, but they should not be interjecting and I would suggest that if they want to interject they should go back to their seat.


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I take that point of order, Acting Leader of the House. Members should be in their own seat if they are interjecting and I give a general warning on that point.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** The LNP seeks to work with local councils. The LNP wants to see local councils able to do their job without the threat of regulation. The LNP has an ambitious plan within 10 years to go from last to first place in the percentage of Queenslanders who own their own home. We want to offer young people hope. We want them to believe that they can own their own home. We want the vulnerable to have a roof over their head and young people to be able to own their home in this state.

**Mr KELLY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would make the point that the Leader of the Opposition is simply using this as an opportunity to lay out the LNP policy in relation to housing rather than—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Okay. You have made your point of order, member for Greenslopes. I will take some advice. Leader of the Opposition, I just ask you to be mindful of relevance and demonstrate how what you are saying is relevant to the bill that we are considering at the moment.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** I am going to put it really clearly: the No. 1 issue that local councillors say to us when we are listening to them is that they feel that they are unable to make decisions about planning matters because of the threat that is posed by the legislation. I understand the local government legislation because I have seen the changes this government has made and by making the changes to the legislation it has created fear amongst a generation of good people in local government, and it is people in local government from both sides of the political realm who feel that they are so disempowered by the legislation that they are afraid to make decisions. If they are afraid to make decisions, planning grinds to a halt. If planning grinds to a halt, land supply does not roll out. Tax relief, incentives, land supply: that is how we are going to get young home owners into the market. We are going to work with councils and deliver that for years to come.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.07 pm): I rise to make a contribution in relation to this bill, and I certainly support the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In making my contribution, I want to start by thanking the Deputy Premier for bringing this bill to the House. He has certainly listened to the sector. Anybody who has been a member of parliament since this system was introduced would know that there have been concerns raised by a range of people in relation to this matter. However, the notion that was being put forward by the Leader of the Opposition was, quite frankly, ridiculous. To try and suggest that the housing crisis is as a result of this—

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

**Mr KELLY:**—particular point is utterly ridiculous and I am responding to concerns that were raised by—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Member for Greenslopes, would you please resume your seat and I will take the point of order.

**Mr KELLY:** I am—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Greenslopes, resume your seat!

**Mr STEVENS:** The member has strayed completely—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mermaid Beach, I have not called you yet. Member for Mermaid Beach, what is your point of order?

**Mr STEVENS:** The member has strayed immediately off the long title of the bill and I ask for relevance back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Mermaid Beach. The Leader of the Opposition did receive a degree of latitude and the member for Greenslopes is directly responding to the matters raised by the Leader of the Opposition immediately prior. There is no point of order.

**Mr KELLY:** In rebutting what was said by the Leader of the Opposition, I make the point that suggesting that the housing supply in the Redland City Council and the Noosa Shire Council areas has anything at all to do with the contents of this bill that is before the House is completely and utterly wrong. In the interests of maintaining the good dignity and the orderly conduct of this House, I will move on.

This complaints system was introduced in 2018. It is absolutely unsurprising to me, as it should be to anybody, that when you have a new system there will be a need to review and potentially to improve on that system. What we are seeing here is a normal process of governance. I would like to thank the State Development and Regional Industries Committee for undertaking a very extensive and thorough review and for the recommendations they made for improvements to this system.

I note that previous speakers, particularly the member for Warrego, tried to paint this as a broken system. It is not a broken system. It is an important system that ensures councillors who have a very important role in our community are held to a very high standard. That is a standard that most of the councillors I have met and interacted with hold themselves to. I say to the member for Warrego that they do not need an external system to hold them to account; they hold themselves to that very high standard. We do need a system in place to hold to account those members who do not meet those standards.

**Ms Leahy** interjected.

**Mr Saunders:** What about your mate Chris Loft, the mayor?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr KELLY:** I will take the interjection from the member for Maryborough. I would love to hear all about Chris Loft, the mayor of Maryborough. I would encourage him to make a contribution to this debate. I am sure he will do a much better job than the so-called shadow minister over there.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Members to my left, order! I will not be giving any more informal warnings. I will start warning members under the standing orders.

**Mr KELLY:** Sometimes councillors with the best of intentions still make errors. This system allows for the correction of those behaviours before they become more serious and allow for collective learning.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr KELLY:** Deputy Speaker, I would ask for order in the chamber.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Greenslopes, you are quite correct. Members, there is too much chatter and there are too many interjections. The member for Greenslopes is not accepting them.

**Mr KELLY:** This system allows for correction of those behaviours before they become more serious and it also allows for collective learning. I believe that is a very sensible approach. What sticks with me to this day from when I ran for council in 2012 is that when I was doorknocking and asked people what they were concerned about they could always point to it. They care about that road, that rubbish bin, that park or that street light. Local government, perhaps more than any other level of government, has a real immediate and local impact on people. Diligent councillors play a very important role in the delivery of council services, and it is crucial we have systems to ensure their conduct is of the highest quality.

This bill does a number of important things that improve the efficiency of this system. For my entire professional career I have been regulated under various systems that have some similar features to this. In considering this bill I could certainly relate to aspects of this system, and I will note a couple of comparisons. Improving the preliminary assessment processes and time limitations is a very important step forward. There is a sweet spot for the speed with which justice is delivered. No matter what the speed is, people want to be treated equitably before the law. However, if a matter drags on for too long it can have very negative impacts on the individual: stress, financial strain, damage to reputation and, can I say, a lack of confidence in their professional capacity. I have seen nurses and doctors who have had matters that take years to resolve and it takes a huge toll on them. These measures will not only ensure faster justice but also equitable and fair justice.

The recommendations around the Councillor Conduct Tribunal will lead to greater efficiency. The appointment of a deputy president and the constitution of the CCT will lead to much greater efficiency. There are several other aspects of this bill that improve efficiency. Matters will be dealt with in a more timely manner, which really means more rapidly dealing with inappropriate behaviour. More importantly, it will also mean clearing councils of any allegations, allowing them to get back to the important work that they do. I think with that point I am on a unity ticket with the Leader of the Opposition. More efficient handling of these matters will also mean councillors will not be distracted by these matters for long periods of time. I note the broad support of submitters for the recommendations, including the LGAQ, and I believe that this is because they can see the benefits of improving the efficiency of this system.

I was also pleased to see the provisions around vexatious complaints. As a registered nurse I have personally experienced repeated vexatious complaints and I know the impacts this can have on people. It certainly creates undue stress. For professionals it is an unnecessary distraction that can spill over and impact on work performance. I am pleased that this bill makes improvements in the manner in which vexatious complaints are handled.



Finally, I would like to note that the committee report and the bill make clear distinctions between behaviours which may be dealt with by the complaints systems and those matters which perhaps are better managed by a process of democracy. For example, when Lord Mayor Schrinner delivered a budget in May this year and then a few months later had to slash \$400 million from the budget, meaning that workers would lose their jobs because the Lord Mayor could not do his job—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. I note that the speaker on his feet is straying completely away from the bill and I ask that you direct the speaker to come back to the bill before the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is a fairly long bow to draw. I ask you to bring your comments back to the long title of the bill.


**Mr KELLY:** I am attempting to demonstrate the type of behaviour that would be subject to complaints and that which would not be by using examples. Perhaps another example that I would use was when the deputy mayor of this city told complete lies about me on social media—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Greenslopes clearly knows, as the Deputy Speaker of this chamber, that he is using unparliamentary language and I ask that he withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Acting Manager of Opposition Business has a point. I would ask you to withdraw that unparliamentary language.

**Mr KELLY:** I withdraw. In another example, when the deputy mayor made completely untrue statements about me on social media, accusing me of refusing to table a petition in this state parliament, maybe that was a matter I could have referred on to this body for consideration, but realistically I know that the voters of Holland Park will take a dim view of a councillor who chooses to tell untruths in public on social media and that matter will probably be better dealt with democratically.

This bill will lead to greater efficiency in how we manage complaints against councillors. It will lead to better standards of behaviour. In short, it will help councillors to do a better job and more efficiently deal with those who do not meet the standards that are expected by reasonable people in our community. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.17 pm): It has been a long wait for this bill—a long wait for Queensland's mayors and councillors and a long wait for Queensland ratepayers. That the bill is necessary at all lies totally at the feet of the current government. It is no exaggeration to say that the 2018 laws around councillor conduct have resulted in a system which is intimidatory. It has suppressed open debate in countless Queensland communities, especially in rural and regional councils right across my electorate. It oppresses councillors and mayors in exercising their free speech in the course of their public duties. What is more, it has wasted millions of ratepayer dollars investigating complaints that are trivial, vexatious or both.

I have no doubt that it has dissuaded quality candidates for election in multiple shires. There is absolutely no doubt that it cost Rockhampton a popular and outstanding mayor in Margaret Strelow. Ms Strelow was a fantastic mayor and, unfortunately, she decided to resign because of OIA processes and decisions. That is an example of where legislation has gone wrong. Closer to home, it has affected my community. I have nine complete shires in Gregory, as well as part of a tenth. I have heard a lot of feedback about these new arrangements, from both elected councillors and dissatisfied ratepayers. A common complaint is that councillors feel afraid to speak out on any issue publicly, at council meetings or in the local media. They are even afraid to speak to each other or meet with ratepayers in case the meeting is judged inappropriate following a vexatious anonymous complaint.

Anything even mildly contentious is often dealt with in a closed council session or a subcommittee meeting, out of the public gaze or record. That is a direct result of this government's laws and councillors have every reason to feel afraid. Take the case of Councillor Sean Dillon, Mayor of Barcaldine Regional Council. To give some context, Barcaldine shire covers an area as big as the state of Tasmania, with a population of only 2,900 people. As those figures show, many people live in rural and remote settings. You may think such a location would have been relatively insulated from the COVID-19 lockdowns and bans seen in Queensland's cities and towns, but that would be untrue. Many public health measures that made sense for denser populations, such as in Brisbane, were also imposed on rural and remote locations, severely impacting the populations with little demonstration of the need or benefit obtained.

Like other Queenslanders, Barcaldine shire residents wanted to achieve a vaccination rate that would support the lifting of restrictions. At an open council meeting, the councillors received a briefing from Queensland Health about how the Central West Hospital and Health Service intended to deliver vaccinations. Mayor Dillon raised two salient points.

Firstly, in order to receive their vaccinations, his residents needed to know when and where they could do so and that required a communication or public education drive for the vaccination rollout to proceed. That was a sensible and surely uncontroversial suggestion. People needed to know when, where and why. That communication plan also needed to be quite creative because Barcaldine has limited mainstream media channels. Mayor Dillon said that he thought the public communication component needed strengthening. That is what he said: it needed strengthening.

Secondly, Mayor Dillon expressed the need for there to be more than just a few vaccination days and more than one venue due to the tyranny of distance, which is a fact of life for most of us in Western Queensland. Mayor Dillon is a crack hand at counting cattle onto a truck so he had a good feel for how long it would take for a queue of people to move. As I said, they were uncontroversial suggestions that were down to earth, practical and intended to be helpful. They seemed to demonstrate a concern with achieving the best possible outcomes for the shire's residents and good local knowledge.

Instead, Mayor Dillon found himself facing a charge of potential misconduct from the OIA on the basis that his comments in the meeting could have been considered detrimental to public confidence in the health service provider and lead agency and in the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination program in the region. No matter that time proved his concerns to be well founded—well founded—he had to sit mute under a potentially career ending allegation. Two months later, the OIA informed him that he was reasonably suspected of inappropriate conduct. We can only assume that was because he wanted to improve the program to better suit the context, as any mayor would do.

However, that was taken as a criticism of the state government. He was an elected office holder who was being shut down in the course of carrying out his public duties. It is no wonder that Queensland's 577 elected mayors and councillors are feeling intimidated. That is not an isolated case and the bill we are debating today does little to address such concerns. Under this bill, the Office of the Independent Assessor must dismiss a complaint if it is not in the public interest to proceed, but there is no clear definition of what the term 'public interest' means in this context. Without such a definition, I expect we will continue to see cases like Mayor Dillon's.

Under these laws, a publication notice will not contain the name of the complainant or any other person. This will do nothing to filter out repeated vexatious complaints but it does at least have the intention of providing some protection—except, no. The protection is then obliterated by the proposal to publish an executive summary of the investigation report in the council's agenda papers. Mud sticks and the reputational damage would be done regardless of the outcome of the investigation, even if there are no adverse findings. The department has advised that they are unable to resolve or rectify this so nothing has changed.

One of the key issues driving the huge increase in concerns being raised are vexatious or malicious complaints. Since the OIA was created in 2018, the problem has ballooned to such proportions that blind Freddy could see something had to be done. Unfortunately, this bill is not the solution we need. The simple solution would be to disallow an anonymous complaint so that the public and the media can see if there are personal or political motivations behind that complaint. Refusing anonymous complaints would make it clear when a single complainant continually makes vexatious complaints, in which case they should be warned and banned. Under this bill, if a complainant is declared vexatious but keeps submitting complaints anonymously then there is no mechanism to declare those complaints vexatious and they will be treated as a genuine complaint.

In regional and rural Queensland, local councils play an important role. In my area there are nine councils plus part of a 10th, which is the Isaac council. Councillors work extremely hard in their communities. There are members of this House who have been councillors and the member for Gympie was a deputy mayor. They know how hard it is to hold those positions while also being a member of the football club and the polocrosse club.


**Mr Perrett:** Camp drafting

**Mr MILLAR:** They may be involved in camp drafting and they will also be on the P&C. In rural and regional Queensland, it is becoming harder and harder to find people who will run for council. Take, for example, the shire of Diamantina, which includes Birdsville, Bedourie and Betoota, and of course the main paper out there is the *Betoota Advocate*. We are finding it harder and harder to find candidates because a lot of councillors are saying, 'I have my own business.' It could be a trucking business, a grazing business or a small business in town. They are saying, 'I can't continue to make a living from my small business while trying to be a councillor because I can't go to the meetings as I'm not allowed to be there.'

I have spoken to the local government minister and former local government ministers, such as Stirling Hinchliffe, about having a different act for rural and regional councils to provide them with better opportunities to do their job. It is getting harder and harder. I know that the council elections are coming up in the next six months or so. I can tell the House now that out my way we are finding it harder and harder to find people to stand.

**Mr Sullivan:** You could run, mate.

**Mr MILLAR:** I could, but I will not. I will declare that now. I hope that the government understands that being a councillor in regional and rural areas is an incredibly tough job.

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (2.27 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill continues the progression of local government reforms that the Palaszczuk government has always maintained are essential for the transparency and integrity of local government governance in the state of Queensland. Before I go to the details of the bill, I refer to comments made by some members of the opposition in the debate.

The member for Warrego, the member for Gympie and other opposition members ought to reflect on what they say in this House when referring to the councillor complaints system as 'broken'. That system has kept local government in check and held it to a high standard of accountability for many years. Members opposite know only too well that their comments on the system reflect on the hard work of the men and women of the Public Service who design and run that system, in particular, those in the department of local government and the OIA. I should know: I used to work in the department of local government.

I know opposition members are given their orders to trash talk anything that the Palaszczuk government does in the local government space and that seems to be the case for everything they say and do lately. However, to say that the system is 'broken' is about as far-fetched as saying that the LNP Newman government cared about public servants. We all know how that ended up for about 14,000 of them. It is unfair and downright insulting to our hardworking public servants who work in a very difficult space between the levels of government—

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order in relation to relevance. I ask that the member for drawn back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): There has been a degree of latitude afforded to a number of speakers throughout the course of the debate. I do not think the member for Hervey Bay has strayed too far from the bill, but I will ask him to remain mindful of relevance.

**Mr TANTARI:** It is relevant. With regard to the councillor conduct system, I believe it is unfair and a downright insult to our hardworking public servants who work in a very difficult space between the levels of government, but they do so with absolute professionalism and transparency at all times. It shows a total lack of understanding of the current councillor complaints system, let alone the changes that are a natural course of refinement and improvement.

Turning to the bill, the bill will implement the government's policy response to certain recommendations of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee in its report titled *Inquiry into the Independent Assessor and councillor conduct complaints system*. The bill will make changes to the councillor conduct complaints system and the functions of the OIA. The current councillor conduct complaints system—

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Mr TANTARI:** No, it is not at all; it is refinements. The current councillor conduct complaints system was introduced in 2018 in response to the 2017 independent Councillor Complaints Review Panel report. This report provides for a simpler, more streamlined system for making investigations and determining complaints about councillor conduct in Queensland.

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Mr TANTARI:** Mate, it was a sight better than what happened between 2012 and 2015, when the Newman government was in power. It was a sight better.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr TANTARI:** I was there. The councillor complaints system between 2012 and 2015 was a joke.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Hervey Bay, would you resume your seat for one moment. I did not want to interrupt the member on his feet, but the interjections are again getting to too high a level. I have already indicated that I will be warning members under the standing orders. I start with the members for Bancroft and Mermaid Beach for quarrelling across the chamber. The table cannot hear the member on his feet. It is too loud.

**Mr TANTARI:** This report provides a simpler, more streamlined system for making and investigating internal complaints about councillor conduct in Queensland. A key element of the reforms was the establishment in 2018 of the position of Independent Assessor and the Office of the Independent Assessor to investigate all complaints and information about councillor conduct before deciding how it should be dealt with.

The creation of the IA and OIA enhanced the independence and transparency needed at that time to ensure that the assessment of complaints being made against councillors was free from perceived bias. This does not mean that the action taken then has eliminated all perceived bias, because we know of the prevalence of conspirators who peddle total rubbish in our communities without any proof or fact—just malicious personal attacks—to cause reputational damage, mainly out of spite or attempted political gain against decent individuals who, by and large, work for the betterment of these communities. Having an independent system to assess councillor complaints does create a form of barrier away from these, may I say, nut jobs as the OIA sits to one side assessing complaints of possible inappropriate conduct, misconduct and corrupt conduct.

In October 2021 the State Development and Regional Industries Committee was requested by the Deputy Premier to review the functions of the OIA. This request followed an increasing number of key stakeholders' concerns relating to the role of the OIA and the performance of its functions. Key to this request was assessing whether the performance of the OIA was consistent with the intent of the local government complaints system. This is a healthy review process instigated in the public interest. Over the course of the inquiry the committee identified issues relating to the operations, and it tabled a report outlining 40 recommendations to improve the councillor complaints system in Queensland. The bill addresses 19 of those recommendations that require legislative amendments to implement.

Before I touch on some of those supported recommendations, I would also like to note that through consultation with stakeholders a number of additional amendments to further strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the councillor conduct complaints system have been identified. These amendments complement the other recommendations of the committee. With regard to former councillors, one of the key proposals to the councillor conduct complaints system is to limit the system's application as it applies to former councillors so that the system only applies to those persons in relation to suspected corrupt conduct. Currently the Local Government Act provides that a complaint about the conduct of a former councillor can be investigated and dealt with under the councillor conduct complaints system. This change will narrow that scope. Following concerns raised by stakeholders regarding the issue of councillor conflict-of-interest requirements, work has taken place to develop an amendment to respond to these stakeholders' concerns. Other matters related to the modernisation of local government advertising requirements, where a need to contemporise the means of communication was identified.

As I said earlier, the amendments in this bill address 19 of the committee's recommendations. Whilst all are substantial in ensuring the act continues to remain robust and sensitive to stakeholder and community requirements, I will note a few of these amendments. The bill will introduce a preliminary assessment process that the IA must undertake to determine how best to deal with a complaint, notice or information about councillor conduct, including a time limitation for accepting the complaint, notice or information. This is an important process as the IA deals with a substantial number of complaints in any given year. Having a preliminary assessment program will allow smoother management and a more robust triage to ensure complaint resolutions are timely. Having time limitations for acceptance of a complaint, notice or information does provide a cut-off point for all those involved in the system and sets a defined boundary for this process.


Finally, I touch on how the bill establishes compulsory training requirements for councillors and the removal of the provision of training from the functions of the OIA. I think this is good thing. I think it is vitally important that councillors, like all good professionals, make themselves aware of their requirements under the law. Given their best intentions, many councillors simply do not avail themselves of the opportunity to bring themselves up to date with the changes in the act, particularly in those areas that can affect them directly in their roles. As members know, directly prior to being in this place I was a public servant who just happened to work in the department of local government. During my time, my team and I were responsible for the regional rollout of training to councillors, amongst many other duties. I am sure that the member for Gympie remembers that. From that experience I can inform the House that, by and large, most councillors rocked up when they were asked, but there were a few who would do anything not to attend—and some just plainly refused to attend but were effectively—

**Mr Perrett** interjected.

**Mr TANTARI:** You were always there; you always rocked up. Effectively, it was professional development for them in their role. Some of your guys in that council—boy, were they tough to get up to the professional development program!

Compulsory training is necessary and appropriate as many councillors, some from a range of backgrounds—and this is a good thing—need to understand their responsibilities under the act. It is simply in the best interests of their communities and themselves that they do so. I also support the decision in this bill to remove the training provision from the function of the OIA. I think that is the right step. I personally believe that the department and its officers are best placed to manage and perform this function. Officers with the support of the department through resourcing and upskilling understand the councillors they are working with in each council and how to best assist them in the servicing of their communities—support that I know is well valued by councillors. These relationships cannot be downplayed. Departmental officers are vitally important to the success of a councillor complaints system, not in dealing with complaints but working at arm's length to ensure the number of complaints is minimised by providing fearless and frank guidance.

It is these simple, trusting, ongoing conversations that ensure councillors stay on the right path because, if a councillor does not understand certain actions or inactions and their consequences, when they do know they are less likely to draw the wrath of the legislation they work under. From my experience, councillors who maintained a robust relationship with the department were the ones least likely to fall foul of the system. To my former colleagues I say: keep up the good work. Of course, I am a little biased but I want to acknowledge the fine and outstanding work of the department of local government and its officers. Your work is valued and appreciated by the Palaszczuk government.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.37 pm): I rise to make my contribution on the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Local councillors are tasked with some of the biggest decisions that affect people's everyday lives—what our homes and streets look like, how far we have to walk to find somewhere to kick a ball, if we can cycle safely to work and whether our local shops are fast-food chains and megasupermarkets or small, independent businesses. It is vital that those decisions are not coloured by inappropriate conduct or corruption. The Greens will be supporting this bill. It makes some good and sensible changes to the councillor conduct complaints system as recommended by the committee's inquiry, albeit changes that are clearly based on an assumption that the status quo is pretty much the best we can hope for.

The key thing that this bill does is create a new process for preliminary assessment and dismissal of councillor conduct complaints in a range of circumstances, including where it is not in the public interest or where the conduct occurs in a personal capacity unless it is corrupt conduct. There is no doubt that the current system needs an overhaul. Right now, the complaints processes are choked up with complaints that are clearly politically motivated, vexatious or a question of conduct that would be far better left to voters' discretion. There is a pretty clear example in former Greens councillor and now mayoral candidate Jonathan Sriranganathan.

Jonno has been dragged through the so-called independent councillor conduct complaints process for what are clearly just political disagreements. He has been accused of misconduct for social media posts about how property investors should not leave homes empty during a housing crisis and calling out the institutional racism and violence of Australian police—observations that have been made by no less than commissions of inquiry in this state. I would suggest that those are examples of appalling abuses of process that have affected Jonno. Just because the major parties do not have the courage or conviction to speak out or stand up on issues like this does not mean it is a matter of formal councillor misconduct. It is up to voters to decide if moral conviction is something they would like to see in their representatives.

What these changes should not amount to though is a get-out-of-jail-free card for corrupt councillors to have their complaints dismissed at the preliminary assessment stage before it is able to be revealed as corrupt. I am supporting this bill because I am hopeful that the changes will generally reduce the pursuit of matters that are not in the public interest and that would be best left to voters without allowing matters that may amount to corrupt conduct to slip through the cracks. However, let's not lose sight of the gaping abyss because, ultimately, this bill is little more than tinkering at the edges of a system that is fundamentally incapable of facilitating decisions in the best interests of people who live in our cities and regions.

The Office of the Independent Assessor was brought in in 2018 against the backdrop of rife corruption that saw the entire Ipswich City Council dissolved and multiple workers and elected representatives serving prison sentences. Following its investigation, the CCC released a public report

exposing culture and corruption risks in local government. That report is absolutely explicit about three of the most serious manifestations of the poor culture in that council, and I want to address each of those in turn because this bill does nothing to address those risks more generally.

First, the culture produced ‘a lack of oversight and accountability for expenditure and public resources’. Let’s not pretend that is isolated to the dissolved Ipswich City Council. This government, for example, still will not tell us how much it is paying for Cubic, its new privatised public ticketing system, despite numerous requests. Why that would need to continue to be hidden is beyond me.

Second, the CCC’s report criticised the ‘use of mechanisms which allowed avoidance of scrutiny of actions and requests for information under the Right to Information Act’. It reminds me of the piles of redacted documents on my desk regarding ‘commercial-in-confidence’ deals between this government and its casino mates who have been handed prime riverfront land, transferred to freehold by this same bill, for an undisclosed sum of money and an undisclosed supposed benefit to the people of Queensland. It reminds me of the deal with the Olympics organising committee to, in collusion with the LNP-led city council, keep some of the most significant spending and other decisions about our city in decades secret. This government is still hiding behind these excuses at every opportunity, just as the CCC was so critical of.

The third thing the CCC report raised was a culture of ‘inappropriate relationships between the council and the private sector, in particular property developers and contractors’. This one is the kicker, because this government is still unwilling to ban cash-for-access meetings or do anything about the stranglehold that developers have over our cities. They refuse to introduce a developer licensing scheme. They refuse to fix the developer donations loophole which allows companies controlled by a property developer to make political donations.

In my electorate of Maiwar, there is a vacant block sitting derelict in the heart of population-dense Toowong. Back in 2020, the LNP-led council approved a development application from SDC, a company which is owned by the sole shareholder of McHomik Investments—a company that happens to have donated over \$6,000 to the LNP. That development proposed no affordable housing, breached height limits and privatised land that was previously slated for public greenspace under council’s long-term infrastructure plan, but the LNP council was only too happy to offer multiple concessions to this developer. Again, this company was closely connected to one of their donors. That included moving a bus stop out of their way—all the way up the street. It included abandoning the requirement for the developer to deliver an urban common as public space and it relocated council’s new park proposal around the corner on top of existing homes.


Now that the Aviary development has fallen over, after years of delays and uncertainty, the empty site is sitting behind fences, the bus stop is still ‘temporarily moved’ up the street—all the way up the hill from the train station and the shopping centre—and a new owner is promising more so-called luxury towers that will price out long-term residents. Meanwhile, the community is crying out for public, affordable housing and desperately needs a new school, public greenspace and community facilities. While developers are still given a free pass to unduly influence council decision-makers, the needs of the community will be put last time and again in favour of the major parties’ developer mates. Yet this bill does nothing about that kind of corrupt conduct.

Today this government will talk about preventing corruption and tonight they will sit down to their dinners, drinks and fundraisers with their property developer mates. They say they care about stopping corruption, but that does not include the kind that they keep legal so they can benefit from it.

We will support this bill because the small changes may help reduce the tribunal from being overloaded with frivolous, vexatious and irrelevant complaints, and other changes such as publishing tribunal decisions will improve transparency. However, let’s be clear: the real corrupt conduct—the kind that makes our cities less livable and ordinary people’s lives harder—is still legal. It is not subject to scrutiny by the Councillor Conduct Tribunal or any of the political establishment. Without genuine, transformative change, the critical decisions that local governments make about our lives will continue to be corrupted by their own self-interest, their corporate donors and the property developers that run this city.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask for your indulgence given that I have some time left on the clock. I would like to make a personal comment to the camera. My dear parents are tragic enough that they occasionally watch Parliament TV. My mother is going in for a really significant operation tomorrow to remove a rare and aggressive cancer. I just wanted to say: we love you, Mum. We are thinking of you. We hope you get well quickly. Juno and I will come and visit you on Friday, God willing.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): The House wishes her well, I am sure.

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.47 pm): I rise to speak on the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. In doing so, I would like to acknowledge the Deputy Premier, the Hon. Steven Miles, for his work to bring this important legislative reform to parliament. I would like to acknowledge the State Development and Regional Industries Committee; the committee chair, the member for Bancroft, Chris Whiting MP; members of the committee; the committee secretary; and Hansard for their efforts and hard work in the examination of the bill. The report into the inquiry was tabled on 14 October 2022. The committee received 59 submissions, conducted 14 public hearings across nine towns and cities, and heard from 47 witnesses.

The primary objective of the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill is 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. The bill does this by implementing the government's policy in relation to 19 recommendations of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee's report No. 28 of the 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into the Independent Assessor and councillor conduct complaints system*, the councillor conduct report.

The framework for dealing with councillor conduct under chapter 5A of the Local Government Act 2009 commenced in December 2018 and applied to all local governments in Queensland and later to Brisbane City Council in 2020. A key component of the new system was the establishment of the position of Independent Assessor and the Office of the Independent Assessor to investigate all complaints and information about councillor conduct before deciding how it should be dealt with.

Where appropriate, the OIA prepares applications for hearing by the independent Councillor Conduct Tribunal, which ultimately determines misconduct matters. Councillors play a fundamental role in their communities and Queenslanders expect high standards of conduct from their elected community leaders, and rightly so. Having an effective, independent councillor conduct complaints framework is vital to maintaining public confidence in local government, building capacity across the sector and providing positive outcomes for communities across the state.

In the Cook electorate alone there are 14 local government jurisdictions in both mainstream and Indigenous councils. I know that the councils in my electorate work extremely hard for their communities and the people they serve. I am fortunate to work with some of the most fierce advocates and community champions in local government who fight for local issues across infrastructure investment and legislative reforms to improve livability and the quality of life for people in the most regional and remote parts of our state.

Just last week I visited the Cook Shire Council and met with the deputy mayor, Councillor Robyn Holmes, and council CEO Brian Joiner, who took advantage of the opportunity to raise local issues including health, water, housing, land availability and so on. Not so long ago I joined the Minister for Health to meet with local leaders from the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area to discuss how we could strengthen health provisions in the region to improve health outcomes. Last week the Torres and Cape Indigenous Councils Alliance, most commonly known as TCICA, met in Cairns to discuss regional issues. The freight subsidy was one of the topics that was openly discussed.

Mayor Toppin from Mareeba Shire Council and I attended the seniors forum in Mareeba last week to show support for a very important event aimed at creating awareness for vital services and government support available to seniors. While I am on that subject, I want to give a shout-out to my dad, who has been in the council space for a very long time. Next year it will be 50 years, so he started very young. He has been through all of the different transitions and changes that happened throughout his time. I am very proud of the work that he does. I know that he is very passionate about his community—my community—Yam Island and the region that he also still represents as the deputy mayor of the Torres Strait Island Regional Council.

Even with the best of intentions, community councils were left exposed to a complaints system that closely scrutinised them. While I respect the work of the Office of the Independent Assessor and I acknowledge the need to have strong measures in place to encourage transparency and accountability, the process of undergoing an investigation has a huge impact on an individual's psychological health and wellbeing. There were stories of councillors having mental breakdowns, feeling stuck in a process that did not seem to have an end, and questioning their self-worth in a role that not only expects them to champion community issues but also endure lengthy battles to prove their innocence.

Many of the councillors in my electorate have questioned their future in local government and highlighted that the constant stress and pressure of going through an OIA investigation was just not worth it. I have listened to many personal stories, and I can honestly say that the effects were seen and

felt. That is why I am speaking on this bill. There is a huge need for a balanced approach that will effectively manage councillor conduct complaints against community expectations whilst maintaining public confidence and trust and consider the impacts on the individual being investigated and their psychological, physical and emotional wellbeing. I firmly believe that the changes in this bill will achieve that.

The report highlighted broad support for the bill in relation to the councillor conduct complaints system, particularly around mechanisms that would streamline the system and remove some of the time delays and cost. Clause 46 of the bill implements the government's response to recommendation 1 of the committee's councillor conduct report by introducing a preliminary assessment process that must be undertaken by the OIA before progressing conduct matters, and time limitations for the receipt of complaint notices and information about councillor conduct. I am pleased to note that the aim of the new process is to increase the overall efficiency of the system, allow the OIA to focus on substantive conduct matters and improve the timeliness of complaint resolution, which was a key concern raised by the local government sector.

The bill provides that the OIA must dismiss a complaint or take no further action for a notice or information about councillor conduct in certain circumstances—for example, it was not in the public interest to proceed; it was received outside of the prescribed period; it relates solely to a councillor's personal conduct; the office of the councillor is vacated; or the conduct was engaged in by the councillor to comply honestly and without negligence with a guideline made by the director-general. The OIA may dismiss a complaint or take no further notice for a notice or information about councillor conduct in certain circumstances: if the conduct is, or may be, dealt with by another entity or the complaint is frivolous or vexatious; the complaint was made other than in good faith—for example, it was made for mischievous or malicious purposes; it would be an unjustifiable use of resources; or there is insufficient information to properly assess the complaint.

The bill also seeks to modernise local government advertising requirements by replacing requirements relating to print newspapers and applying them to other media, including online publications. The amendment reflects the declining readership of print newspapers, increased costs associated with print advertising, and the termination of many regional newspapers.

Before I conclude I want to thank the Deputy Premier as well as members of the committee for their work on the examination of the bill. I think it is much needed. It will make a lot of difference to the councils I work with. I acknowledge that comprehensive consultation occurred. I think it is really important to get a broad range of views from councils right across Queensland as well as the LGAQ, Local Government Managers Australia and the Queensland Law Society, amongst many others. I am also aware that Indigenous councils were also consulted in Gladstone during the LGAQ conference. I am really proud of that because I think it is important for us to get an Indigenous perspective on the issue, especially when there are cultural and language barriers and so on.

I fully support the changes. If anything, it will remove the fear of running for office in the future and support local leaders and community champions to continue the wonderful work they do to support communities. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (2.57 pm): Our system of government is one of the best in the world and our local governments play an important role in making it so. Local governments deliver vital services for our communities. A good council ensures that rates are maintained at an affordable level. They deliver an effective planning scheme to get the right developments in the right areas. They maintain community facilities to high standards and they ensure our waste is collected and recycled as best it can be. The overwhelming majority of councillors do the right thing. They are there to serve their community. Most of what we are dealing with today is about how to best manage the very small number of local representatives who breach the trust of the people who elected them.

When councillors are unfairly and unreasonably impeded in their role by state legislation, they are unable to effectively deliver for our communities. This needs to be balanced against the need for our elected representatives, whether that be at the local, state or federal level, to be held to the highest standard. Integrity and transparency in government is essential. The Local Government (Councillor Complaints) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill aims to improve the local government complaints system by amending the councillor conduct complaints system. It has provisions to: limit the system's application in relation to former councillors; clarify and enhance the councillor conflict-of-interest requirements; modernise local government advertising requirements; and provide appropriate transitional arrangements for the commencement of the improved councillor conduct complaints



system. This comes from the 2018 establishment of the Office of the Independent Assessor, the OIA, and the Councillor Conduct Tribunal, the CCT. That system is not working. The councillor complaints system is broken and we welcome these reforms to it.

Since the establishment of the OIA and the CCT we have seen these bodies overreach their powers. There have been frivolous complaints which have cost Gold Coast ratepayers hundreds of thousands of dollars. The member for Gregory earlier outlined the horrific process the mayor of Barcaldine went through when he was hauled before these bodies for many months for raising legitimate and reasonable concerns. There have even been cases of some councillors being referred to the OIA for simply blocking abuse on their social media platforms. I am sure this is something we can all agree on as elected representatives, no matter what level of government. Certainly, here in this chamber, we should not have to be investigated for moderating our social media platforms to protect ourselves and others from abuse. I know that many of us on this side of the House have blocked the transport minister on Twitter for some of the tweets that we received from him. I highly recommend everyone do that if they have not. Others have even been referred to the OIA for looking disinterested in a council meeting—something that none of us would be guilty of in this chamber! There was even a case where the OIA threatened a journalist to reveal a source or receive a hefty fine if they did not.

After years of chaos and countless reports of overreach, intimidation, flawed processes and several months-long complaint backlogs, an inquiry into the Independent Assessor and the CCT was issued. It should not have taken these examples of frivolous hearings and experiences of overreach, intimidation, flawed processes and extensive complaint backlogs appearing in the media for the government to address these concerns. But here we are—more than a year since the State Development and Regional Industries Committee tabled their report on 14 October 2022. That report had 40 recommendations which made it abundantly clear that the system is broken and in need of an overhaul.


During the inquiry, the committee heard from some mayors and councillors, but, as we heard from the member for Warrego, the shadow minister, in her contribution, there were many others who were fearful of coming forward and making a submission to that process. I want to thank some of the submitters to the bill, including our own City of Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate. In his submission, Mayor Tate wrote—

I note that this bill ... has been almost two years in the making ... We are now approaching five years since this new approach to Councillor complaints commenced on 3 December 2018 and the experience to date has been extremely frustrating for Councillors and terribly costly for ratepayers and taxpayers.

We have a responsibility to our constituents to spend their money wisely. The framework that we have had in place for the last five years has not been doing this. In the middle of a housing crisis—a crisis which local government has a critical role in resolving—our councillors should not have to deal with what they have had to deal with under this government's broken system. This legislation will allow the Independent Assessor to withdraw an application to the CCT and to streamline the requirements for notifying councillors of CCT hearing details. It will also introduce the additional annual reporting requirements for the Independent Assessor and local governments and require the publication of suspected conduct breach investigation reports.

To conclude, I cannot make a contribution to these laws without mentioning the situation my part of the Gold Coast is currently experiencing. The people I represent are seeing their rates go towards paying to have a councillor suspended on full pay and they are also paying for the salary of an adviser who cannot do much other than meet them, listen to their concerns and forward those concerns to the council. We are paying twice as much for zero local government representation. People across Labrador, Parkwood and Arundel are frustrated.

We have some major local developments coming to a vote in the next few months—like the Parkwood surf park and the proposed redevelopment of Arundel Hills—and we do not have a vote in the council chamber. Our area is also missing out on funding for projects and upgrades that we desperately need because we have no-one in council to advocate for us. I am not blaming the state government. The minister did the right thing by suspending our local councillor, but I do want to acknowledge the impact of these unprecedented circumstances on my community. I hope this will be resolved at the election in March next year so that we can again be properly represented in council.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (3.03 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. It is often said that local government is the most grassroots form of government given the basic services that a council provides. It was particularly so pre-amalgamation days in the smaller councils that then existed. In what is now

the Toowoomba Regional Council, there were eight local governments so it was quite easy to have access to a local councillor. We now have 10 councillors and a mayor who work hard to cover what is a large and diverse council.

These councillors traditionally come from a community involvement background before putting their names forward to contest a council representative position. This means that, when elected, these councillors come under a level of scrutiny that most of them will not have encountered before. This is as it should be for anyone who is responsible for the handling of public funds. The ratepayers demand proper scrutiny on how their hard-earned dollars are spent and that any potential conflicts of interest are declared. Whilst there have been avenues to report any suspected breaches in conflict or disclosure, unfortunately we have seen a number of cases where the outcomes of these investigations have been less than satisfactory. It is this section of the bill that I would like to focus on. The committee report states—

The framework for dealing with councillor conduct under chapter 5A of the *Local Government Act 2009* ... commenced in December 2018 and applied to all local governments in Queensland ...

A key component of the new system was the establishment of the position of Independent Assessor ... and the Office of the Independent Assessor ... to investigate all complaints and information about councillor conduct before deciding how it should be dealt with ...

In October 2022, the State Development and Regional Industries Committee ... tabled its Councillor Conduct Report, making 40 recommendations. The government's response to the Councillor Conduct Report supported or supported in-principle all 40 recommendations.

There was broad support in submissions during the committee process for the bill in relation to the councillor conduct complaints system, particularly around mechanisms that would streamline the system and remove some of the time delays and costs. Some of the amendments in the bill include the IA must dismiss a complaint or take no further action for a notice or information about councillor conduct in certain circumstances: for example, it was not in the public interest to proceed; it was received outside of the prescribed period; it relates solely to a councillor's personal conduct; the office of the councillor is vacated; or the conduct was engaged in by the councillor to comply honestly and without negligence with a guideline made by the director-general. The Independent Assessor may dismiss a complaint or take no further action for a notice or information about councillor conduct in certain circumstances: if the conduct is or may be dealt with by another entity; if the complaint is frivolous or vexatious; if the complaint was made other than in good faith—for example, it was made for mischievous or malicious purposes; if it would be an unjustifiable use of resources; or if there is insufficient information to properly assess the complaint.

If the matter is not dismissed following the preliminary assessment, the Independent Assessor must decide to: refer the conduct to a local government to deal with, for a suspected conduct breach; investigate the conduct, for suspected misconduct; or take alternative action—for example, make any recommendation the IA considers appropriate, such as the councillor attend training, counselling or mediation. The LGAQ stated that this addresses a key concern of its members in relation to the time taken for matters to be dealt with and the need to put a clear public interest test up-front as part of an initial triaging process.

The committee heard about the challenges faced by Indigenous councillors in applying certain conflict of interest provisions, particularly around declaring family and kin relationships. Regional councils also face these challenges due to small communities where there are family relationships, neighbours and friendships that need to be navigated. Councillors need to be aware to declare these issues that may arise so the community can have full confidence that decisions made by council are fully transparent. Unfortunately, not all complaints that are made are purely in the best interests of the community. It is disappointing that we have councils that suffer from a number of vexatious complaints both for personal and political reasons. The bill does go to some of those issues, but submitters state that it does not go far enough. The committee report states—

Clause 67 of the Bill inserts new chapter 5A, part 3, division 8 into the LGA to establish an administrative process whereby the IA may declare, in certain circumstances, that a person is a vexatious complainant for the period, of not more than 4 years, stated in the declaration.

In doing so, the IA must be satisfied a person has repeatedly made complaints and at least 3 of the complaints have been dismissed by the IA as being frivolous or vexatious, or have been made other than in good faith.

The LGAQ submitted that it appreciated the changes, noting that this would 'ensure that the councillor conduct system doesn't become a political weapon against individuals which is critical in maintaining the confidence of the sector and integrity of the role of the OIA and the CCT'.


The OIA also suggested that the current vexatious complaint process is limited to complaints made by members of the public and not to sitting councillors and that the OIA's experience has shown that the system is most misused by councillors. Accordingly, the OIA recommended that the vexatious complainant system be extended to cover local government officials. The committee has stated in its report—

However, we are of the view that the vexatious complainant process should be extended in some way to include sitting councillors.

I could not agree with that more. Mischief-making complainants, whether on council or otherwise, need to be held to account for their vexatious complaints. While the LNP will not be opposing the bill, the concerns around vexatious complaints are well made out.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work that our councillors do in serving our community. We on this side of the chamber value and respect the work that these hardworking councillors do—unlike some of the members opposite, who have used this chamber to attack mayors and councillors under parliamentary privilege. One only needs to look at some of the contributions made by some members opposite during this debate to see that.

In March next year we will be holding council elections, and I would encourage local champions to nominate. We need good people to stand up and put their names forward to serve on councils and serve our local communities.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (3.12 pm): I rise to make a contribution on behalf of the people of Southern Downs on the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. In common with many members of the House, I would like to quickly acknowledge the local government areas that are present in my electorate of Southern Downs. They are the Southern Downs Regional Council, Goondiwindi Regional Council and about half of the land area of the Toowoomba Regional Council. As most rural members, I am sure, would agree, as a local MP you have a great deal to do with your local governments because they are close to the communities that they represent and that we represent, and a good working relationship between the two levels of government ensures the best possible outcomes for the communities that we represent.

I would like to say at the outset that I agree with those on my side of the House who have said that the system is broken. I respect the member for Hervey Bay and I acknowledge his experience as a participant in this world as an employee of the department of local government, but in my electorate of Southern Downs the experience has been that the role of a council, the role of local government, has been diminished, not protected, by the system that the councillors operate under. I think the Leader of the Opposition put it very well when he listed a number of effects: careers and reputations are destroyed, relationships are destroyed and opportunities are lost. I will talk a bit about how those things happen in a practical sense.

One of the councils in my electorate, the Southern Downs Regional Council, has for many years been plagued by overuse of the councillor conduct rules that they have had to work under for quite some time. What you find is that in an undivided council particularly, where the councillors are all direct competitors with one another electorally, the system is ripe for abuse. I will talk about my dear friend the Mayor of Southern Downs Regional Council, Councillor Vic Pennisi. He stated at the public hearing of the committee in Gladstone that he has made the fastest 50 in the history of cricket. He has had more than 50 complaints levelled against him, some of which have cost him personally a great deal of money to defend, others of which have cost the Southern Downs Regional Council a lot of money to defend and all of which have been dismissed.

To say they are vexatious I think is mild. I think these complaints have been miserable, spiteful complaints by unimaginative people in order to frustrate the proper democratic processes in local government. This gives rise to a situation where councillors are fearful to say anything, fearful to act and fearful to represent with fidelity the wishes of their constituents. We hear of complaints about a councillor looking disinterested in a meeting. The kinds of things that Councillor Pennisi and others on that council have been subjected to are tawdry and contrary to the public interest in terms of the cost they have occasioned to the taxpayer and ratepayer and also in terms of the freezing of the functions of local government that it gives rise to.

In one particular instance, Councillor Pennisi—I was with him on the day—went on TV. He was asked by Channel 9 what he felt about Emu Swamp Dam and he said that it would be a great thing for the community. He promptly got a complaint lodged against him with the Office of the Independent Assessor for dissenting from a council decision. That was dismissed, of course, because he was not, but this was done for entirely political purposes and for the purpose of distracting and befuddling someone who was doing a really good job in council, in my opinion.

What we are seeing is that the ability of people to make complaints anonymously disconnects them from accountability for putting in vexatious complaints, and we also see that the council, the local government, is having to spend a fortune, including some of the individuals, to defend these things, and it is just wrong.

I hear a lot about training and how training would be important in improving the system. Training is beneficial where it alleviates misunderstanding or ignorance about the processes, but where bad faith is involved, where malicious, vexatious and spiteful complaints are being lodged, that is not a matter for training. That is bad faith which will occur whether people are aware of what is at stake or not.

We also see that councillors are having to face conflict-of-interest arrangements which deadlock the operation of some councils. In the case of the Southern Downs Regional Council, again Councillor Vic Pennisi, on entirely specious grounds, was forced by the council to withdraw from a number of discussions and decisions on the basis of a perceived conflict of interest. The circumstances of that, in my opinion, were that it was a corrupt abuse of the system to prevent a legitimate voice from being heard in the council chamber.

In the case particularly of undivided councils, allowing councillors to act as judge, jury and executioner of one of their own is contrary to the public interest, because they are fundamentally electoral competitors with the other councillors sitting around the room. It is quite conceivable to have a case where a voice can be silenced and removed from the chamber because it is known that that voice will differ from the majority on the floor of the council. When you add to that a certainty that it will also lead to their opponents making complaints and making public that there are complaints against them, this is a perverse disincentive for councillors to represent their communities and to stand up and argue for what is right.

I think to say that this system is not broken is incorrect. With the greatest respect to my honourable friend the member for Hervey Bay, I suggest that he should come and see the culture that prevails in a council like the Southern Downs Regional Council. I would also like to say that the culture within the OIA has been wanting, in my view. A number of councillors on the Goondiwindi Regional Council, which is a fine council, a very representative council—one that is in the black—

**Mr Krause** interjected.

**Mr LISTER:** I take the interjection from my honourable friend the member for Scenic Rim. In Goondiwindi there have been no complaints. The Independent Assessor has not been involved in any complaints, as far as I know, since the beginning of the system. Kathleen Florian went to Goondiwindi and in an accusatory fashion waved her finger at the councillors and said, 'I know that you are withholding complaints. I know that you are doing the wrong thing and not telling us about it. I know that because there have not been any complaints.' That was a very prejudicial position for the Independent Assessor to hold and, apart from being very rude, it was a damaging accusation against the council. The fact that she could not make the intellectual leap to think that perhaps the reason there were no complaints is that the council has been doing its job and had not been the subject of complaints from community is disappointing. Add that to the fact that 95 per cent of complaints are effectively dismissed and that there are over 1,000 of them a year. Let's face it: any of us in this place who have any engagement with our local governments knows that the system is by and large abused by the opponents of councillors to besmirch their reputations and to make their lives hard. I would say those are not circumstances which reflect well upon the system.

I know that this bill is a good leap in the correct direction, but I do not think it goes far enough. I will be judging whether it does or not by seeing how the Southern Downs Regional Council fares under the new system. The Leader of the Opposition put it very well when he said that hamstrung councils that are afraid to act because their councillors live under the spectre of complaints and being hauled before authorities because they might express disagreement with a government policy is not in the public interest. How are councils supposed to represent us and make good decisions on matters such as housing supply and so forth, if they are hamstrung, hogtied and fearful to stand up for what they believe in because of the system as it is? The two words 'Sean Dillon' should be enough to make it clear where this act has gone wrong. I certainly commend the improvements and wish to see more.



**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.22 pm): I rise to address the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I hopefully will be able to return to the substantive component of the bill that many members of this House have already addressed. I heard the member for South Brisbane comment around the fact that many of us are dealing often with complaints about council inactivity or council not doing what they should be doing. I keep telling my constituents that is because the world has completely and utterly changed for councillors. The councillors that they once knew pre Belcarra and pre the legislation can no longer operate.

Do not get me wrong: there were a number of councillors who clearly did the wrong thing and needed the book thrown at them. As other members have said—and what this bill demonstrates—is that perhaps there was overreach in terms of dealing with councillor complaints. Now we have to bring it back because, as the member for Southern Downs has said, councillors have become hogtied, fearful and hamstrung. They are unable to do their day-to-day jobs of delivering for their divisions—in the area that I represent, they are the divisions of the Moreton Bay and Sunshine Coast councils.

I hope to return to that, but I want to pick up on one element of this bill others may not have—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 clarification of the Moreton Bay Regional Council to Moreton Bay City Council, as well as other subordinate legislation to update references to MBRC. This bill makes consequential amendments to various acts to replace references to MBRC accordingly.

I think it is important to reflect on what has occurred in the Moreton Bay region—the southern part of the electorate of Glass House. Many may question why a state representative, who represents a very rural part of Moreton Bay, would want to reflect on the fact that we are no longer Moreton Bay Regional Council and we are now Moreton Bay City Council. I applaud this decision by Mayor Peter Flannery and his team and their consultation process with the broader community. I understand that there were a number of people who were concerned about this change and what it might mean, but let me just give you a couple of key statistics about Moreton Bay that will demonstrate why the change from region to city is actually very important.

At the moment, the region is doing the heavy lifting when it comes to population growth in South-East Queensland. By 2041 it is anticipated it will have a population of 700,000 people—that is larger than Tasmania. They are the third largest local government area in Australia—not Queensland but Australia. They are the fifth fastest growing region in Australia and they are the third largest in terms of regional dwellings in Australia. What is interesting is that after they were branded Moreton Bay Regional Council following the amalgamation of the Pine Rivers, Redcliffe and Caboolture shires and they would go to Brisbane or Canberra to pitch their case for infrastructure requirements in particular, the first question they would often be asked is: where are you again; which part of the state are you in; how far north are you; how far west are you? Little did people realise that they are literally across the Pine River from Brisbane City Council and the third largest LGA and the fifth fastest growing.

By becoming a city, it is now very clear that they operate within South-East Queensland and that they operate with many of the pressures that South-East Queensland local government areas are facing. I want to draw on that. The other thing I like about what Mayor Peter Flannery and his councillors of the now City of Moreton Bay are doing is that they realise they are not like Brisbane where there is a central business district. They are an amalgamation of three former shires. They have areas around Strathpine, North Lakes, Redcliffe and Caboolture and growing areas at Caboolture West and Morayfield South. They are now talking about becoming a polycentric city—not one central business district but five maybe even six. It is important for them that they get the public transport and road infrastructure they need to make that workable and that they are given the powers to develop employment opportunities locally so that people might be able to live around Strathpine and work at North Lakes or vice versa or live in Caboolture and work in Redcliffe and easily get to and fro—and ideally not just by car.

When the mayor and his councillors have sought infrastructure investment from the state and federal governments for the region, it has proved really challenging. We believe it will be less so as a city. There are some key projects that they desperately need like Buchanan Road—a \$300 million connector between the Bruce Highway at Morayfield and the future Caboolture West development known as Waraba, which sits inside the electorate of Glass House. We are eventually expecting to have a city the size of Gladstone in that area. Similarly, there is Blewers Road, a \$200 million project that will link Morayfield South to Waraba itself. Further south, Oakey Flat overpass is another \$200 million investment. That is without mentioning the two state projects—the Bruce Highway western alternative, which will ultimately link Beerburrum through Waraba, through Moorina and Rocksberg and down into Narangba and onto Bald Hills; and the Moreton Connector, which will do the same on the eastern side of the Bruce Highway. These projects are desperately needed in the City of Moreton Bay.

It is disappointing that it has come to this. They are concerned that the government has stopped listening to them at the state level. They have raised repeatedly that the projections that Treasury use, and then ultimately the infrastructure departments use around population, are woefully wrong. They are

out of whack with the reality of what is happening in terms of population growth. Therefore, investment decisions are not being made based on up-to-date population figures. They are failing to get the leadership they need, despite the fact that they have the Deputy Premier as one of their local members.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** I am interested. Back on 24 October I submitted a question on notice to the Premier asking to advise, since the 2020 election, how often the Premier had visited the City of Moreton Bay—Australia's third largest local government area—and/or met with the mayor to discuss this growing region's priorities.

**Mr Janetzki:** How many times?

**Mr POWELL:** Unfortunately, I do not have the answer to that because the response is not due until 23 November. I look forward to getting that response.


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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Member, I have been listening to your contribution. I ask you to come back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr POWELL:** As I said, one significant element of this bill is the changes to a number of acts—consequential amendments to acts—to replace references to the Moreton Bay Regional Council with Moreton Bay City Council. Therefore, it is really important that we listen to the needs of that growing community. We cannot make the mistakes of other council areas where we have retrofitted infrastructure after we have put the people in there. We cannot make those mistakes at Waraba or Morayfield South. This region is already bursting at the seams. We need to be investing—and investing quickly—to ensure people can move about and not only get from where they reside but also get to where they work and home again to enjoy precious time with their family.

I said that I wanted to return briefly to the local government councillor conduct aspect of the legislation. As I said, so many constituents of both Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay are frustrated that they cannot seem to get the action they used to from their local councillor. The councillor used to be the person closest to the grassroots. They were the ones in touch with their constituents around the potholes on the roads, their rubbish not being collected or the libraries not having the books they wanted. Now it is almost impossible because councillors are fearful because they are hamstrung and because of the OIA that they cannot give directions to the council officers. In some cases, there is some obscure conflict of interest which prevents them from doing the job they were elected to do.

It is my hope that the changes we are debating here today will free that up a bit and will take some of those pedantic, frivolous and vexatious claims about councillor conduct out of the OIA or allow the OIA to dismiss them relatively quickly and easily so that the councillors can get on with doing the job they were elected to do. That is what we need to empower them to do. To be blunt—and I reflect on contributions by our shadow minister for local government—we may have to come back and look at this again. We may not fully resolve this in this piece of legislation. I think it is important, as the committee mentioned, that we continually monitor the effectiveness of the OIA to pick up those local councillors who are categorically doing the wrong thing or not doing the job our constituents expect them to do.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (3.32 pm): I rise in support of the councillor conduct bill that is before the House. I want to talk about the conduct of two councillors in my local area—one who has demonstrated good conduct and one who has demonstrated poor conduct. This shows how the OIA has been used to attack the one who has displayed good conduct but not the other one who has performed well below the expectations of the community. We all know of the incident in June 2022 when the LNP mayor of the Redlands chose to get in her car while drunk and drink drive and crash that vehicle.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BROWN:** They do not want me to speak about it for some reason. I do not know why.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Order, members! The member on his feet is not taking interjections. He is entitled to be heard.

**Mr BROWN:** That night the LNP mayor let our city down and brought it into disrepute. It is now a matter for the OIA. The OIA has investigated that matter and it is before the tribunal. I put in that complaint to the OIA for assessment because it also relates to conduct before the incident. We can all recall that the LNP mayor Karen Williams was on a Zoom call with victims of drink driving before she jumped in her car—

**Mr HART:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek your guidance about the appropriateness of the member speaking to a matter before a tribunal.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Capalaba, can you assure the House that you are not breaching the standing orders regarding sub judice?

**Mr BROWN:** My understanding is that sub judice only relates to the civil court and the criminal court.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will take some advice.

**Mr BROWN:** The criminal matter is finalised. She served her community service.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you for that clarification. Member for Capalaba, you are correct.

**Mr BROWN:** Thank you. Of course I am correct. I will table the letter for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 23 November 2022, from the Senior Lawyer, Office of the Independent Assessor, Nilusha Rajapakse, to the member for Capalaba, Mr Don Brown MP, regarding a complaint in relation to the conduct of the Mayor of Redlands City Council [1894].

The OIA's response to me says—

The CCT has a large number of matters which have been referred to it by the OIA and which are being dealt with in chronological order. Therefore, it may be some time until this matter is dealt with.

That is why we have this bill before us now. There is a strong possibility that this tribunal hearing will not be held before the next election. The people of Redlands should have the right to know, through this tribunal process, the outcome of the matter involving the LNP mayor Karen Williams being drunk at work and then hopping into her car and crashing it. That is why this bill goes towards strengthening the number on the tribunal and making sure there is a speedy process so we can get those resolutions.

There is also a previous LNP councillor out my way who received over \$2,000 worth of fines from the tribunal six to 12 months after he lost at the last election in 2020. We need to ensure that the public knows the outcome of matters that are before the tribunal before the elections so they can make informed decisions about the conduct, particularly in my area of Redlands, where poor conduct from LNP councillors comes up time and time again.

Following this drink driving incident, Councillor Adelia Berridge, who is the Redland City councillor for division 9, which is in my electorate of Capalaba, called out the mayor for her behaviour and called for her to resign. That was fair; I called for her to resign as well. Since then, Councillor Berridge has received 34 complaints—and I think 32 have been anonymous complaints—to the OIA. The LNP and Karen's crew have put in anonymous complaint after anonymous complaint against this good, local serving councillor just because she had the guts to call it out. It is great that this bill goes some way towards making sure those vexatious complaints—

**Mrs GERBER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I want to draw the Deputy Speaker's attention to the unparliamentary language used by the member. I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I did not hear any unparliamentary language. Member, if you made an unparliamentary remark, I ask that you withdraw.

**Mr BROWN:** I withdraw. Councillor Berridge stood up against the LNP mayor's behaviour. I also table a letter in response to one of the claims that was dismissed against Councillor Berridge in which the OIA admitted that a level of 'dysfunctionality' has existed since June 2022.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 20 February 2023, from the Deputy Independent Assessor, Office of the Independent Assessor, Mr Charles Kohn, to Redland City Council Councillor, Ms Adelia Berridge, regarding an alleged complaint against Councillor Berridge [1895].

The OIA knows that when your leadership and the leadership of the whole city is put into such disrepute it only leads to dysfunction. It is shocking that one councillor calling this out has received 34 mostly anonymous—all of them dismissed, I might add—vexatious complaints. These mostly came from Karen Williams's crew, people like ex-LNP candidate for Springwood Julie Talty and the councillor for division 7, Rowanne McKenzie. I get her name mixed up because she went under the fake alias Scarlett Rivers that time she got caught creating fake Facebook accounts and putting in fake email complaints to police officers. The police had to investigate her. They went to her house and seized her computers. That just shows the level the LNP locally in the Redlands stoops to in order to attack good councillors.

**Mr Langbroek** interjected.

**Mr BROWN:** I take the interjection. I cannot believe those opposite are defending this LNP mayor. I cannot believe they are defending someone who gets in the car at over 3½ times—

**Mr Langbroek** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Surfers Paradise, you will withdraw that interjection.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** I withdraw.

**Mr BROWN:** This bill is about councillor conduct. I am talking about the conduct of an LNP mayor who decided, after a budget, to get on the wines and at over 3½ times the legal limit jump on a Zoom call with victims of drink driving, turning the camera off and on as she took swigs of wine, and then jumped in the council Lexus and decided to plough into a tree and tried to hide all of the facts about it.

**Dr Rowan:** Tell us about Karen Struthers.

**Mr BROWN:** I take the interjection. Matt Burnett was caught at .05—right on the limit—fessed up to it and did not crash the car.

**Ms Pease:** At least he owned up to it, didn't he?

**Mr BROWN:** He owned it.


**Ms Pease:** He owned it. He stood up to it.

**Mr BROWN:** He stood up to it. We have a mayor who should have resigned straightaway. Even the OIA letter that I tabled shows that massive dysfunctionality has occurred in the Redlands. She does not turn up to any events anymore. She does not turn up to Remembrance Day. She does not turn up to Anzac Day anymore. She goes to one meeting a month and collects the pay cheque, and that is what we are left with—

**Mr Power:** And that's what you're all defending.

**Mr BROWN:**—LNP dysfunction, and that is what those on that side are trying to defend. I do not understand why they do not want me to speak on this matter. This bill goes towards ensuring that we get to find out earlier through a more efficient tribunal what really happened that night. How drunk was Karen Williams that night? Why did she talk with victims of drink drivers that night? That is all before the tribunal right now and we need to ensure that we beef up that tribunal so we can ensure that we get outcomes before the election so we can go to the polls knowing the full extent of the conduct of the LNP mayor in Redlands.

Finally, I want to wrap up by saying that I congratulate councillors like Adelia Berridge who stood up to the mayor and who has endured, as I said, 34 frivolous and vexatious complaints. I am glad that this legislation goes towards ensuring that these vexatious complaints do not occur. We could go one step further in that a lot of the complaints at Redland City Council have come from fellow councillors against other councillors. A councillor complaining against another councillor should have to put their name to the complaint. I think that is a step further that we could take to ensure that when a person stands up and does the right thing there are not vexatious complaints made against them to ensure that we have the best behaviour in Redlands and that we have the best leadership in Redlands. The people of Redlands have a right to know the exact outcome of the tribunal before the election. I wholeheartedly support this bill.

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (3.43 pm): In speaking to the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill I reflect that this is a bill that impacts all of us through our local governments, and it is no different in the Scenic Rim electorate with the councils of Logan, Scenic Rim and Ipswich. I noted in the member for Jordan's contribution earlier that she indicated some reflection on the use of the councillor complaints conduct process by Ipswich city councillors against each other, but in that light I want to comment that the current Ipswich City Council, under the fine leadership of Mayor Teresa Harding, is certainly achieving a greater level of accountability and adhering to community standards and conducting themselves in the way that people expect them to than many of the previous councillors at Ipswich city before its administration a few years ago. It is terrific that the new leadership has brought that in, and there has even been national recognition of the processes put in place to improve integrity and transparency at that council.

That is in stark contrast to others. The member for Capalaba, in reflecting on the actions of Redland City Council, has given me cause to reflect on the actions of the former Ipswich City Council that this government defended until the CCC blew the lid on it—of all the corruption, the extortion, the impersonation that Paul Pisasale went on with and the standover tactics, bringing Ipswich into disrepute, all of which was defended by this Labor government until the CCC blew the lid on it. It is interesting to hear the member for Redlands reflect on the Redland City Council—

**Mr BAILEY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member's comments are highly misleading, and they include me. I find them grossly offensive and ask for them to be withdrawn.



**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Member for Scenic Rim, the minister has found the comments personally offensive. Will you withdraw?

**Mr KRAUSE:** May I make a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** First, can you withdraw and then make a point of order?

**Mr KRAUSE:** I withdraw. My point of order is that there was no personal reflection in my comments. However, I withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You have the call. It is your time.

**Mr KRAUSE:** The Labor Party supported Pisasale until the very end when the lid was blown on it by the CCC. He also brought the dumps to Ipswich. If we are talking about the actions of other councillors in Redlands, let us talk about the actions of Labor councillors in Ipswich. It is an act of gross hypocrisy by members opposite to bring these sorts of things into this debate when there is so much they need to reflect on in their past actions as well when it comes to places like Ipswich.

In turning to the issues of the complaints process, I want to make some comments about a particular former councillor from the Scenic Rim by the name of Derek Swanborough. He had 70 complaints made against him in the space of about three years or so. It forced his resignation. I do not agree with everything that that former councillor used to lobby for, but he was elected nonetheless. He was the people's representative in that division, but 70 complaints were brought, most of which I understand came from within council. The time and the effort that the legalistic process of the OIA and the councillor complaints tribunal imposed on him basically, as I understand it, drove him out of office, so reforms in this bill—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr KRAUSE:** Yes, that is how I understand it, member for Logan. Do you have an issue with that?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Through the chair, please.

**Mr KRAUSE:** That is exactly how I understand it. I simply do not understand the interjection from the member for Logan commenting on that because that is what has been put out there in the public domain. There were 70 complaints and it drove him out of office. If there is going to be an issue of retrospectivity introduced in this bill—and I understand there is in relation to complaints—I reflect on the committee's comments that that retrospectivity provision should also be considered to apply to councillors, because no doubt some of those complaints may have been made by fellow councillors, and if there is going to be a judgement made looking backwards, that issue of a vexatious complainant needs to be put in place.

**Ms Boyd:** No, they changed his role.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I understand, member for Pine Rivers, that he has vacated the role, but some of the councillors who have made complaints in the past may still be in their roles. There is an issue of retrospectivity for non-councillor complainants, but maybe it should also apply to councillors.

I also want to touch on the issue of acceptable request breaches not now being misconduct in this bill, and I think that that is a good move as well. That led to some ridiculous outcomes, the most apparent of which in Scenic Rim related to former councillor Waistell being taken to the CCT for a breach of acceptable request guidelines because he made the egregious error—and I am being sarcastic—of forwarding an internal email to a constituent in answer to a constituent's concern.


He was doing his job, but it was deemed to be misconduct and he was sent off to the tribunal even after he had left office. These issues were raised with the government well over three years ago—in fact, maybe even four years ago—yet it has taken quite a long time for this bill to come forward to fix that issue. Better late than never, I suppose.

What has not been dealt with in this bill that should have been, in my view, are the powers that the OIA has under section 150A to seize journalistic notes in relation to their investigations. This seems like a terrible overreach. It is power that I do not think even the CCC has—or, if they do, they have it with a lot more oversight than the OIA does. It was put in action against a local newspaper company in the electorate I represent when former councillor Swanborough, who was subject to a complaint—one of the 70-odd—and the OIA tried to subpoena—to seize—journalistic notes from a local newspaper to assist them with their investigation. That seems completely ridiculous. The facts of the investigation were fairly minor, but they had that power. It was outrageous that the newspaper had to go to the Supreme Court to try to quash that power. That power has not been revisited in this bill, but I think it is an issue that is outstanding and it should be dealt with in the future.

Putting in time frames for investigations and complaints is a good move. We have heard from various parts of the state that complaints have been brought well after the act is alleged to have occurred and also that investigation and hearing time frames have taken a long time and certainly impeded the ability of councillors to do their job while they have these things hanging over their heads. When it cuts across election time frames it can have the potential to damage people's electoral prospects if there are complaints outstanding because they have not been dealt with in a timely manner.

The issue of conduct of chairpersons of council meetings is also dealt with in this bill. Clause 40 of the bill inserts a new section to enable unsuitable meeting conduct of chairpersons to be dealt with. That is certainly something that councillors in the Scenic Rim have had cause to think about in the past couple of years. That was one of the issues that led to an adviser being appointed to Scenic Rim by the government about this time last year: to deal with the conduct of meetings and also the management of conflict-of-interest issues. That provision about being able to sanction or reprimand or deal with the conduct of chairpersons of a meeting no doubt will be welcomed by many councillors and is another step towards recognising that a majority on council represents the democratic will of a particular council area, and if they are in a position where they need to act in relation to a chair they should be able to.

The conflict-of-interest provision is something there have been many words spoken about, not only in the Scenic Rim area but also in this House. I think the member for Warrego may have reflected on the number of days it has taken for the government to bring forward reforms in this space since a commitment was made in 2021—777 was the number she said. That is a long time. Regardless, progress on that front is welcome because in some councils we have seen entire meetings with hours and hours of time taken dealing with conflict-of-interest allegations, counter allegations, people being removed from meetings to deal with the particular conflict and the weaponisation of those provisions to get people out of the room to change the numbers for particular votes. It is ridiculous how broadly they have been defined. I know that there is progress on improving them through this bill. That is one of the reasons we are supporting the bill. I commend the committee for the work they have done. It looks like they have had a very even-handed approach and I thank them for that work.

 **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) (3.53 pm), in reply: I thank members for their contribution to the debate on the Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In my opening remarks I emphasised that the bill will recalibrate the councillor conduct framework to make it more effective and more efficient and in line with the public interest. The bill comprehensively addresses recommendations from a wideranging parliamentary committee review and has been thoroughly examined through the committee process. I again highlight the broad support for the bill from stakeholders. The committee particularly emphasised stakeholder support for streamlining the system and removing some of the time delays and costs.

As outlined in the government's response to the committee's report on the bill, the department is continuing a range of measures to complement and strengthen implementation of these reforms. These include tailored support for Indigenous councils and the development of resources to assist in the interpretation of public and private conduct and recruitment processes for the Councillor Conduct Tribunal.

Amendments to the Local Government Regulation 2012 will also be progressed to approve an updated code of conduct for councillors and to prescribe the mandatory training for councillors. Ongoing oversight and review by the relevant parliamentary committee will be an important foundation to continue the improvements that we have already seen.

I would like to address some of the specific matters raised by members during the debate. The member for Warrego requested further information regarding the issues identified with the current Queen's Wharf Brisbane Act 2016. When the further freehold declarations were being developed to enable the opening of Queen's Wharf and to create freehold titles for the Treasury Precinct, Crown Law identified issues with the existing drafting. The existing drafting did not contemplate freehold declaration in respect of previous leasehold declarations. As amendments were necessary, Crown Law proposed a modified process for the nine parcels which had been identified for freeholding in order to meet the state's contractual obligations. The member for Warrego stated that the committee's 40 recommendations showed that the councillor conduct complaints system was broken. In fact, the committee found that the system was—

... broadly sound and working well, but improvement is needed. Specifically, the councillor complaints system needs to more closely and efficiently align with public interest and the intent of the legislation.

In relation to the Independent Assessor's preliminary assessment process, the member for Warrego referred to concerns in submissions that there is no definition of 'public interest' in the bill. What constitutes public interest in the context of the councillor conduct complaints system will be determined by the Independent Assessor on a case-by-case basis, informed by the circumstances of each matter. The bill does provide the following guidance to the Independent Assessor on the sorts of factors that may help the Independent Assessor in their consideration of the public interest. They are any reasons for or factors relevant to the conduct; for example, whether or not any training related to the conduct has been completed by the councillor or any Aboriginal traditions or island customs of the councillor, 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.

The member for Warrego also raised concerns about councils publishing summaries of investigation reports prior to meetings where those reports are considered. Requiring local governments to publish summaries of investigation reports about councillor conduct matters before the local government meeting where the matter is adjudicated enables complainants and other interested parties to know when a conduct matter is being considered. The councillor accused of a conduct breach is required to declare a conflict of interest at the meeting where the conduct matter is decided by the local government and, consequently, is not able to remain anonymous, even if the local government decides they did not engage in a conduct breach. For this reason it is considered that the increased transparency of local government deliberations from publishing summaries of investigation reports prior to local government meetings where the matter is decided outweighs any short-term impacts to the privacy of a councillor who is the subject of a report.

The member for Warrego also raised concerns that allowing the submission of anonymous complaints to the Independent Assessor could bypass the bill's vexatious complainant process. It is important to note that the Independent Assessor may decide to dismiss a complaint during preliminary assessment if the complaint is frivolous, vexatious or made other than in good faith, independently of the bill's vexatious complainant declaration process. On preliminary assessment, the Independent Assessor must also dismiss a complaint or take no further action for a notice or information about councillor conduct if satisfied dealing with the matter would not be in the public interest.

The Independent Assessor may also dismiss a matter if satisfied that dealing with it would be an unjustifiable use of resources. This would be the case if an anonymous complaint did not include sufficient information for the Independent Assessor to properly assess the complaint. The government acknowledges that people have different motivations for making anonymous complaints and does not want to rule out anonymous complaints for fear of excluding genuine and very important information.

The member for Bundaberg highlighted some important points and statistics about anonymous complaints that arose in the committee's recent public hearing with the Independent Assessor. The government acknowledges that some complainants may seek to circumvent a vexatious complainant declaration by making anonymous complaints to the Independent Assessor. However, this potential gap is justified by the ongoing need for the councillor conduct complaints system to allow complainants to remain anonymous to prevent reprisals, particularly where a local government employee is the complainant. Preventing the submission of anonymous complaints may require the introduction of a whistleblower protection scheme under the Local Government Act 2009, which would be complex, costly and not necessarily effective in protecting complainants.

The member for Warrego noted that the bill does not provide for an independent integrity and advisory service. To implement the government's policy in relation to recommendation 39 of the committee's 2022 report, the bill provides that the Independent Assessor must dismiss a complaint or take no further action for a notice or information if satisfied the conduct was engaged in by the councillor to comply with, honestly and without negligence, a guideline made by the department's chief executive. The amendment recognises that the department will provide advice to local governments and councillors on any number of topics, as required.

The member for Warrego stated that the bill amends legislation that 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. The bill does not alter how QCAT reviews decisions of the Councillor Conduct Tribunal except to clarify that the proper parties to QCAT's reviews are the subject councillor and the Independent Assessor rather than the subject councillor and the Councillor Conduct Tribunal. Because the Independent Assessor has acted as the investigator and prosecutor for conduct matters, it is appropriate that they can respond to any submissions or new evidence raised during QCAT proceedings.

Finally, the member for Warrego suggested that the bill's process for dealing with the unsuitable meeting conduct of a chairperson could be used improperly by councillors for political purposes. The LGAQ raised this concern with my department during consultation on the bill. The potential misuse of the provision was acknowledged and it was amended so that councillors could resolve to order that a chairperson be reprimanded for unsuitable meeting conduct but they could not order the chairperson to leave and stay away from the meeting. Any councillor, including a chairperson, who engages in unsuitable meeting conduct three times in one year engages in a conduct breach. This revised approach appropriately balances the need to provide councillors with an adequate power to promptly address a chairperson's unsuitable meeting conduct while preventing misuse of the power.

I note that, in his contribution to the debate, the member for Surfers Paradise suggested that there had not been consultation with traditional owners about the Queen's Wharf development. Given there were no native title issues associated with the proposed legislative amendments, consultation with the traditional owners did not occur. Engagement with the Yagara and Turrbal peoples has occurred consistently on other aspects of the development, particularly the public realm, and on other development and design matters.

I also note the member for Surfers Paradise has raised concerns about the cost to ratepayers of complying with the councillor conduct complaints system. It should be noted that the bill will introduce a number of efficiencies that are expected to reduce the resource implications for local governments and, consequently, for their communities. Local governments will not be required to continue investigating matters if a councillor vacates office and will be liable for less costs in cases where the Independent Assessor withdraws an application made to the Councillor Conduct Tribunal. Also, local governments will be no longer required to investigate allegations relating to the private conduct of councillors and will be able to start or discontinue investigations where the complainant consents or where the complainant fails to comply with a request for further information.

The member for Surfers Paradise raised concerns with the bill granting the Electoral Commission of Queensland a discretion regarding the costs it recovers from local governments for local government elections. Currently, the commission is unable to absorb any direct local government election costs and is required to invoice local governments for the full amount. While the amendments in the bill reinforce that a local government is liable to pay all costs incurred by the commission for conducting an election in its local government area, it provides the commission a discretion to recover only parts of the costs from the local government.

As I mentioned earlier, the government will be moving amendments to the bill to make two minor corrections. A clarifying amendment to a transitional provision will also be proposed in relation to the circumstances in which the Independent Assessor must withdraw from the Councillor Conduct Tribunal an undecided matter alleging a breach of the local government's acceptable requests guidelines. Only conduct that relates solely to an alleged contravention of the guidelines must be withdrawn on commencement.

Finally, amendments in relation to the election campaign accounts will also be proposed. The Local Government Electoral Act 2011 will be amended to address an unintended consequence of provisions in the Local Government Electoral and Other Legislation (Expenditure Caps) Amendment Act 2023. The amendments allow gifts and loans deposited into a candidate's or a group's dedicated account to be used to pay for non-electoral expenditure campaign expenses. Related amendments provide that candidates and groups must not use a credit card to pay non-electoral expenditure campaign expenses. The amendments are supported by the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Electoral Commission of Queensland.

In closing, once again I acknowledge the work of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee and thank stakeholders for their engagement with these reforms. I particularly thank the LGAQ and Queensland's mayors and councillors for working with us to deliver the reforms. I know our mayors and councillors work hard every day to deliver for their communities. 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.

Debate, on motion of Dr Miles, adjourned.

## MOTIONS

### Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.06 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders:

1. the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure be permitted to immediately move a motion without notice regarding infrastructure;
2. the following time limits to apply: 3 minutes for all members, with the question being put after 45 minutes of debate; and
3. the private member's motion commences at the conclusion of the debate of the Deputy Premier's motion.

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

**AYES, 49:**

**ALP, 48—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszcuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**KAP, 1—**Dametto.

**NOES, 32:**

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

**Gm, 1—**Berkman.

Pairs: Butcher, Bleijie; Howard, Mickelberg; S. King, Nicholls

Resolved in the affirmative.

### Infrastructure



**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) (4.12 pm): I move—


That this House:

1. notes the LNP under the leadership of the member for Broadwater announced \$10 billion of cuts to Queensland's Big Build infrastructure program;
2. notes that the LNP has announced plans to create a new productivity commission to identify further cuts targeting transport, utilities and social infrastructure;
3. notes that the previous LNP government's commission of audit proposed \$5.5 billion worth of cuts, including reducing the Public Service by up to 14,000 full-time positions and recommended selling off Queensland's assets;
4. notes that the LNP Brisbane City Council administration recently announced \$400 million of cuts affecting Brisbane residents;
5. notes that cutting infrastructure will jeopardise jobs and leaves the state without the infrastructure it needs for a growing population;
6. commends the Palaszcuk government's 2023-24 budget which includes Queensland's Big Build, a record four-year, \$89 billion capital program supporting around 58,000 jobs in 2023-24;
7. calls on the federal government to provide Queensland its fair share of infrastructure funding; and
8. condemns the LNP opposition's plans for cuts.

The Palaszcuk government is transforming the state through Queensland's Big Build. We are investing \$89 billion over four years, and more than half of our investment is in regional Queensland. This year alone we are investing \$20 billion supporting around 58,000 good jobs. We are delivering record road and transport projects to keep our state moving. Our Big Build includes a record health capital investment through the Health and Hospitals Plan.

Our Big Build is delivering for Queensland, but it is at risk if the Leader of the Opposition gets the chance to implement his so-called 'right priorities'. He has announced that he would create a productivity commission that he says will identify further cuts targeting transport, utilities and social infrastructure. Queenslanders know what that means when the LNP says it. The last time they created

a commission, it proposed \$5.5 billion of cuts and 14,000 public servants lost their jobs. Queenslanders know all too well what an LNP commission means: a blueprint, a razor gang, to cut, sack and sell services as well as infrastructure investment. It means a risk to jobs, our lifestyle and our Big Build.

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.15 pm): What we just heard was audition No. 3. Let me just remind the House what we have seen. First the health minister moved a motion which was one of the most spectacular failures. The sittings after, the Treasurer said, 'Please, it is my turn. I have an idea. I will get someone in the gallery to progress my story about the tax royalties. Let me at 'em; I'm going to splat 'em. I can do this. I can be better than the health minister.' It was a spectacular failure where the opposition agreed—

**Mr BAILEY:** I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. There is a motion before the House which the member is clearly avoiding nearly a third of the way into his speaking time.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! The House will come to order.

**Mr BAILEY:** He should be addressing the motion.

**Ms Simpson** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Maroochydore, I was on my feet. You are warned under the standing orders. Minister, I ask you to come to your points of order more quickly than that. I will take some advice. There is no point of order. It is a broad-ranging motion. The member has only just begun the contribution. I will continue to monitor that.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** Before I get onto audition No. 3, if that is audition No. 4 then the bottom of the barrel is being scraped! Surely there is someone in the pecking order above a minister who should not have his commission.

Audition No. 3 today was the worst of the lot of them. I will tell members why. What we have just seen is a juvenile motion designed for no other reason than to send a message to Canberra: 'I'm really sorry, guys. We had to manufacture a fake fight this morning but I will turn our glare back on the opposition.'


Let me give those across the chamber a little bit of a lesson when it comes to infrastructure. For 180 days the LNP has asked: where is Queensland's fair share? For 180 days we have seen a conga line of members opposite making excuse after excuse, looking for ways to deflect and distract and not hold the federal government to account.

**Mr Walker** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Mundingburra is warned.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** With the ink dry on the savage cuts from Canberra in the past 48 hours, the Premier has found her pen. She has written to the Prime Minister and said, 'I'm a little concerned about this and I'm going to take up the fight. In a week or so, once the announcement is made, we are going to lead a delegation to tell you that we weren't happy with the decisions that were made months ago.'

This is a motion that is nothing more than running a protection racket for Canberra to try and bring the LNP into a fight that should be between this government and its political masters in Canberra. It is this government that has presided over budget blowouts that have seen projects in this state overblown in time and in money. Now it is this government that does not have the ticker to stand up and say to Canberra, 'We want our fair share,' when it needed to do so 180 days ago.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.19 pm): We have just heard a lot of babble from the Leader of the Opposition, but what we did not hear was him rule out his plan for cuts. He never for one second ruled out his plan for cuts. When it comes to it, give the LNP a microphone and give them a pamphlet and they will tell you what they believe in.

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

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

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You are under a warning, member.

*Whereupon the honourable member for Mermaid Beach withdrew from the chamber at 4.19 pm.*

**Ms KING:** There is not much the LNP believe in, but they 100 per cent believe in cuts. Their 48 pages of dodgy dot points contain one policy—a brand new cuts commission to deliver their \$10 billion of LNP cuts to jobs, services and our Big Build. It is interesting, isn't it, that that \$10 billion in cuts lines up with our \$10 billion health Big Build? It is concerning. It is no coincidence.

The member for Mudgeeraba reminded us of exactly what the LNP stand for with her recent puff piece when she said the LNP's record on health is something she aspires to. Queenslanders remember that record on health. They remember the Newman-Crisafulli LNP record of health cuts. They remember the neglect of health infrastructure. They remember the closure of the Barrett Adolescent Centre with tragic results. They remember the \$45 million cut out of mental health services for Queenslanders.

The member for Mudgeeraba went further. She insisted that doctors and nurses have nothing to fear under an LNP government. Queenslanders have heard that before and they saw the consequences—4,400 people marched out the door from their health jobs. Nurses, doctors and allied health workers took to the streets. The member for Chatsworth still says, 'We already know that we can prune things back.' In Pumicestone that idea of pruning things back gives people chills because we know that the LNP have our satellite hospitals on their Big Build hit list. The LNP in Pumicestone demanded that we build a private hospital instead of our 100 per cent free public hospital. Given the chance, we know that they will sell-off—they will privatise—our satellite hospital.

Then we had the member for Burnett open his mouth: 'It's time we broke the back of unrealistic employee entitlements.' This is the same bunch who set up the LNP's cuts commission. They sat around the Campbell Newman cabinet table deciding what to cut. Now they are boasting about their plans for more cuts. The LNP leader needs to stand up and apologise to the 4,400 health workers that he sacked. He needs to go down on his knees and beg for the forgiveness of the 731 nurses that he sacked in Metro North. He needs to apologise for putting our health Big Build in his firing line—but he will not because, as they have said, the Crisafulli LNP opposition aspire to the Newman era. They want to cut services. They want to sack health workers. They want to sell off our healthcare system all over again. They have told Queenslanders what they believe in. They believe in cuts and Queenslanders are listening.

*(Time expired)*



**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.22 pm): I rise with much pleasure to speak on this motion and to follow the member for Pumicestone, 'Desali King'.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member, you will use correct titles in this chamber.

**Mr POWELL:** It is interesting. There is one element of this motion that 'notes that cutting infrastructure will jeopardise jobs and leaves the state without the infrastructure it needs for a growing population'. We in this House know that for many years our shadow minister for water has been calling on the state government to start building the water infrastructure that particularly South-East Queensland needs. Finally, they came out with a water plan, and what did it include?

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Ms Pease** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The members for Nanango and Lytton will cease their quarrelling across the chamber.

**Mr POWELL:** What did it include? It included a desalination plant somewhere north of Brisbane and south of the Sunshine Coast. The motion talks about jeopardising jobs and leaving the state without the infrastructure it needs for a growing population and there is also reference to utilities. However, the Minister for Water on two occasions was given the opportunity to rule out a desalination plant being built on Bribie Island—first here in the chamber when he was asked a question by the shadow minister for water. He was pulled up on relevance by me and was pulled up on relevance by the Speaker.

**Ms KING:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Glass House is currently deliberately misleading the House and I will be writing to you about this matter.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member, that is not a point of order. There is a process for members to follow if they believe someone is misleading the House. I will consider any further points of order of that nature to be frivolous and there will be warnings given. If you want to deal with misleading the House, follow the process for that.


**Mr POWELL:** He was asked in the chamber to rule it out, and he would not. He was then asked by a reporter with the *Island and Surrounds News* to rule out a desalination plant on Bribie Island, and again would not. He said that Seqwater are undertaking business planning to identify the right location.

It is surprising that today we have seen a joint statement from no other than the Deputy Premier, the member for Pumicestone's good friend, and the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water now categorically ruling out a desalination plant—one of those utilities that is mentioned in the motion—on Bribie Island.

The water minister somehow claims that he had repeatedly said that a new desalination plant is not going to be built on Bribie Island. Actually the opposite is true. On two or three occasions he did not do so. It is interesting that the Deputy Premier has had to step in and categorically rule it out. What is not written in the media release is that they are not ruling it out being built somewhere else in Pumicestone. It might be at Sandstone Point. It might be at Ningi. It might be at Toorbul or Donnybrook or Beachmere.

The only way that the people of Pumicestone can categorically rule out a desalination plant being built in the seat of Pumicestone is if they vote for the LNP at the next state election. I thank the Deputy Premier for providing this motion this afternoon to call on the Labor Party who cannot come clean with the people of Pumicestone, let alone the people of Queensland.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (4.26 pm): Yesterday I spoke about how the Leader of the Opposition could not even speak for 10 minutes in his MPI. He had to give half of it over to his deputy. He spoke for only three minutes today and all he could do was talk about the Labor Party. He could not talk about how they are actually going to build any infrastructure. He could not talk about how they are actually committed to any of our health projects. In fact, it reminded me of when I last saw the Leader of the Opposition talk more about the Labor Party than any of the LNP's plans and policies for Queensland. It was in their Right Priorities document. Over 30 times they talk about the Labor Party—over 30 times. In fact, they talk about the Labor Party more than they actually talk about labour, jobs and skills for the future of Queenslanders. They are obsessed.


They are also obsessed with cuts—cuts to major infrastructure. We know that the LNP are lining up the Wide Bay in their gunsight. They have them in the crosshairs because they do not like the fact that there are three local members in the Wide Bay who have brought unemployment down from more than 10 per cent to just near five per cent. They know that there are three local members in the Wide Bay who are delivering over \$100 million in hospital expansion in Hervey Bay and who are delivering billions in building trains in Maryborough. Those trains will be only 25 minutes away from the people in Childers and only an hour away on the highway from the people in Bundaberg. That means jobs for Maryborough, Hervey Bay and for the mighty electorate of Bundaberg as well.

We know that the LNP have their hit list. They do not want to build anything. How do we know? We know that because they preselect candidates who have already said they are going to bulldoze the TAFE in Hervey Bay. Imagine that—having an LNP councillor openly declaring he wants to bulldoze the TAFE and stop the delivery of the hospital being built in Bundaberg! What does the Leader of the Opposition do? He puts on his tie, does his hair and preselects him. He preselects a candidate openly calling for cuts across the Fraser Coast and Bundaberg—own goal! I know that the Leader of the Opposition is a mad soccer fan, but please! How many own goals do you need to kick?

In fact, even the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was on Facebook, late at night perhaps, saying that it is time to cut entitlements to Queensland health workers. I thought it was bad enough that their health spokesperson called our health workers 'duds'. Now they want to cut their entitlements. What do they want to do? They want to bulldoze the TAFE in Hervey Bay, they want to get rid of train manufacturing in Maryborough, they want to cut entitlements to Queensland health workers and they want to cut building the new Bundaberg Hospital. It is an own goal by the LNP. Everyone say it with me—shame! Shame on the LNP. What a waste. Cut yourselves.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): I remind all members that if you want to participate in the debate you do need to be in your own seat. I call the member for Chatsworth.

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (4.30 pm): I am incredulous that the ALP has the audacity to bring before the House a motion pertaining to infrastructure cuts, because there was a member who interjected earlier in this debate who has a track record for frivolous interjections, and that is the member for Miller. Let's have a look at the 'greatest hits' when it comes to infrastructure blowouts. I believe the figure is around \$4 billion for the Olympic Games. How amazing is it that there is a member on the opposite side of the chamber who could have funded the Olympics two times over through blowouts. Let's run through it: \$2.5 billion extra for New Generation Rolling Stock, but let's keep going—nearly



a billion. These are not figures that have been written out on the back of a cornflakes box—\$10 billion, 11, 9, 8—this is sheer nonsense. It is a waste of this assembly's time. The fact is that when you look at hard facts—which where I am coming from—the press releases from the member for Miller, 2½ billion extra was blown on New Generation Rolling Stock, \$965 million when it comes to Cross River Rail—

**Mr Saunders** interjected.


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member for Maryborough, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mr MINNIKIN**:—\$600 million for the Coomera Connector. When it comes to the Gold Coast—

**Mr BAILEY**: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Fascinating as this rendition is, it is certainly not addressing the motion in any way whatsoever and I ask the member to come back to the motion before the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Member, there is no point of order. The essence of the motion relates to an approach to infrastructure and many members have adopted or explored other approaches to infrastructure.

**Mr MINNIKIN**: The difference is that there has been a hypothetical amount added by the government. What I have just quoted are hard facts as denoted in media releases by the member for Miller, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. It keeps on going though. When you look at cuts it is not just quantum; it is the bang you get for your buck. Take, for example, the Coomera Connector—there goes eight lanes, six lanes, four lanes. You get less and less. It is a bit like this: the member for Miller has his own call centre, his own IVR. When it comes to whom to blame for cuts, 'press 1 for the former Morrison government'. There is one big problem now: oops, it is an Albanese government that is actually cutting 80-20 to 50-50. The problem is that there was always going to be a day of reckoning when the incessant budget blowouts of the incompetent Minister for Transport and Main Roads came back to haunt him because now when he says, 'We need to make sure the Bruce Highway is safe,' it is very noble but there is only problem: he has continually blown his budget. He is totally incompetent.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (4.34 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion. I also want to take this opportunity to mention the member for Chatsworth's disgraceful comment earlier that discussing these topics is a waste of time. This gentleman is known as the person who talks about pruning. He wants to go through and prune. What is he going to prune? We already know he has mentioned this and that. What is he going to prune? He also talks about tough love, so that is the calibre of the person. He talks about tough love, he talks about pruning and he says that what we are talking about here is a waste of time. I do not know about you, Mr Deputy Speaker and members of the House on this side, but none of this is a waste of time to the people in my community. Under the LNP government during the Campbell Newman years we lost the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit. You can shake your head in dismay and say—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Direct your comments through the chair, member for Lytton.


**Ms PEASE**: Eighty-five people lost their homes during that era. At the time we did not know what happened to them. They were moved off to other places because they lost their homes. At that time we also lost bayside housing, we lost bayside child safety, we lost CAMRA and we lost our TASQ service. Do you know who those people are? They are the most vulnerable people in everyone's community, particularly my community. What are you going to cut? What will be on the agenda? Will it be the elderly, like it was before? Will it be the schoolkids in our communities? Will it be people who need help going about their day-to-day work? Come on! Stand up and tell us what you are going to deliver in cuts because—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Direct your comments through the chair.

**Ms PEASE**:—we saw what you did to communities. Mental health services were removed completely from my electorate under the LNP government of the day. We were punished, and the people who were punished in my community were the most vulnerable. This is what we are going to be faced with again. Stand up and tell us which of the Big Build you are going to cut. I do not know about you, but my electorate is thrilled with all of the great health services that have been delivered. I am sorry, member for Broadwater, that I am boring you. He is yawning as he is listening to this. How disgraceful is that! I do not know about anyone else, but my community has not forgotten about the treatment they received from that government. I am so proud to stand here and talk about the great infrastructure build we have done as a Labor government. We have delivered satellite hospitals, transport infrastructure, school services and new schools in my electorate alone. I am proud to be part


of a government that delivers—not one that wastes time, not one that wants to deliver tough love, and not one that wants to cut. Let us know what you are going to cut. My electorate wants to know and I want to know which ones you are going to cut. It is time for you to stand up and tell us.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (4.37 pm): Over the last couple of weeks, every time I hear one of these motions moved by the Palaszczuk government there is only one question that comes to my mind: don't you have anything to do? Don't you have meetings? Don't you have policy discussions? Don't you actually have constituents or ministerial duties to attend to? You drag the front bench in here; my hope is that they are actually doing something. Are they in fact doing anything to run the state of Queensland right now? Why are we being inflicted with these ridiculous motions? We have seen it week after week now. We have seen three auditions.

There are not many people left in Queensland who have not been polled by the unions, the Palaszczuk government or YouGov. We saw the numbers coming out. In the first audition we saw the health minister at eight per cent as preferred premier, if not the premier of the day. She came in and introduced a motion about health. It went nowhere, and egg was all over the faces of the Palaszczuk government as they tried to make their pathetic point. Next we had the Treasurer. I am down to 1½ minutes but I need half an hour for the Treasurer—let's just say 'Mr Eight per cent'—who cannot even get more than that in a preferred premier ballot. The coal royalties motion went absolutely nowhere, and today we have the Deputy Premier—at least with 11 per cent—with the most ridiculous motion you have ever seen. We are absolutely focused on the right priorities. The colour of the government in Canberra is not going to matter to us. We will always stand up for Queensland regardless of the colour of the government in Canberra.

We will not wait 180 days before pathetically squeezing out a few weasel words about standing up for Queensland. We will never wait for Queensland. We would not sit around on budget night, like this Treasurer and these ministers did, when Jim Chalmers cut the water infrastructure projects for Queensland that would have set up economic development for generations. Where were they for Hells Gates, Urannah and the Hughenden irrigation scheme? That is right. There was nothing—absolutely nothing from this mob on budget night with Jim Chalmers. We will never be silent when we are standing up for the interests of Queenslanders. You can rest assured that we on this side of the House will always focus on the right priorities, and that is what is right for Queensland.

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (4.40 pm): I am pleased to rise in support of the motion by the Deputy Premier. I want to start my contribution by quoting a great song by Whitesnake. Don't worry, I am not going to sing it, but it is a good one. The words go—

Here I go again on my own

Going down the only road I've ever known


I think it really sums up those opposite. There is only one road they ever know, one mode of operation, and that is to cut. I think it really sums them up. Already we are seeing this playing out. I think we should be a little more grateful that those opposite are at least giving Queenslanders a little hint of what is to come, unlike last time. We already know that they will not honour progressive coal royalties, so that is \$7 billion of cuts right there. We know that the member for Chatsworth already said in a radio interview in March—

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.

Okay, so we have that on the record. Of course we have the LNP's plans to create a new Productivity Commission to identify further cuts targeting transport, utilities and social infrastructure, like housing—because, of course, their last Commission of Audit was so successful, with \$5.5 billion worth of cuts. Woo hoo! If you believe success is sacking 14,000 public servants, recommending the selling of Queensland assets and wrecking Queensland's economy on your way through, then, yes, what a success. The LNP have already predetermined \$10 billion worth of projects they do not like, so the new Productivity Commission under them already has a head start.

I do like that the Leader of the Opposition, when publishing online his cuts list of infrastructure projects, made the effort to include a cute emoji for each project. If he is looking for productivity savings, can I suggest the member for Broadwater not worry about the emojis. For growing regions like mine where we are seeing significant population growth through internal interstate migration, I can say that we want more infrastructure, not less. We want Cross River Rail because we know that this will allow us to open up the network in the city centre and ensure that rail extensions—like the Springfield to

Ipswich rail line and the Salisbury to Flagstone rail line—can be progressed. We want the Centenary Bridge and more upgrades to the Centenary Highway to ensure that those living in my electorate can get to and from their families faster each and every day. We want satellite hospitals, expansions to our major hospitals and new hospitals like the Mater Springfield public hospital to ensure that everyone can have quality health care close to where they live. I tell you what we do not want: an LNP in government fixated on an ideological bent once again to cut, sack and sell everything in their sight.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.43 pm): Talking about ‘Going down the only road I’ve ever known’, the only road the last speaker is ever going to know is the backbench. This was from the supposed Assistant Treasurer of the state on a day when Anthony Albanese, the Prime Minister of this country, reduced our funding from 80-20 to 50-50. If that is the future of the Labor treasury benches, goodness help the lot of us. What I can say is that we can never trust Labor. Before the last state election, how many times did they say there would be no new or increased taxes? They said it twenty-six times.

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member for Glass House, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON**: We have now got five new or increased taxes under this useless Palaszczuk government. When they have come out today, we have seen a bit of right and left Labor action with the member for Pumicestone in relation to the desal in Pumicestone. Let’s give a bit of history in relation to that infrastructure project. I say that under the Palaszczuk government it will be built on Bribie Island because we cannot trust a word that this Premier or this Deputy Premier say. We have the water minister, who is actually unable to be in the House this week, and I hope he is okay.

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

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON**: I said I hope that he is okay.

**Mr BAILEY**: Under the standing orders, a member is not allowed to refer to the absence of a member. The member is experienced and she should understand that standing order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: I will take some advice and rule on the point of order. I take this opportunity to say that there have been a number of interjections I have overheard from various members noting the absence of various members of the House. Member for Nanango, I appreciate the intent of what you were trying to do, but there is a convention that we do not refer to the absence of a member. I remind you of that.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON**: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The Labor government have become so desperate and so chaotic that they will say and do anything to cling to power. When it comes to building a desal on Bribie Island, let us give a bit of a history lesson. We know full well that the Premier came out and announced a desal and the water minister did not rule out a desal on Bribie Island. Then there was a text between the Deputy Premier and the member for Pumicestone, with the Deputy Premier saying, ‘It’s okay. I’ll make sure I rule it out,’ but the water minister has been unable to rule it out because we know there will be a desal in Pumicestone.

**Ms KING**: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at the member’s words and ask that she withdraw them.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: I will take some advice. Member for Nanango, neither myself nor the clerks at the table heard you refer in that way, but if you did refer to the member personally she has taken offence and I ask you to withdraw.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON**: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I understand the convention is to withdraw and I will withdraw when I do name a member. I talked about the Deputy Premier, I talked about the Premier and I talked about the electorate of Pumicestone.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: What is your point of order?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON**: My point of order is that I did not reflect on the member.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Okay. As I ruled, please do so if you did, but because we did not hear it then move on and continue your contribution.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON**: I am happy to withdraw. What we see here is a desperate and chaotic government that is under so much pressure because the seat of Pumicestone is gone under the Labor government. It is the Deputy Premier, the Premier and the water minister who have thrown the member for Pumicestone under the bus.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

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

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** On the day that they put out a statement to try to rule it out, what have they done? They have come in here and moved a motion that is throwing the member for Pumicestone under the bus once again. If they are going to rule out a desal on Bribie Island, what about just over the bridge? Is it Ningi? Is it going to be another part of Pumicestone? We know the Labor government have announced a desal and they have not said where it is going to be. If it is not going to be Bribie Island, is it going to be Caloundra? Is the desal now going to be in Caloundra? Are they going to rule that one out and try to save that? We cannot trust a thing the Labor government say. They say one thing before an election and they do another thing after they are elected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Moggill, you are warned under the standing orders as well. You were interjecting when you were not in your seat.



**Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.48 pm): I thought we should take this debate back to what is in the motion. Let me talk about point No. 1. It states—

Notes the LNP under the leadership of the Member for Broadwater announced \$10 billion of cuts to Queensland's Big Build Infrastructure program—

I noticed that not one single member of the opposition can speak about that. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about everything but, so what are Queenslanders to conclude? They are to conclude that the \$10 billion of cuts are going to hurt growing areas like Logan because they will not deny that they are their plans as they announced them.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I do not know if you noticed but we have seen LNP members skulking around recently with a little blue and white document with 'Right wing priorities' labelled on it. Being a former teacher, I immediately looked at what they are going to do for school investment, especially school infrastructure, which is a big part of our Big Build. We have built the Park Ridge State School admin block that we have just opened. Logan Village has new schools with Yarrabilba State School and South Rock State School—which is a huge investment—and we have the new Park Ridge State School.

When I looked in that book there was nothing, and that fits with what they did in the last government. Do members know that there were no new schools built in the growing areas of Logan during the LNP's last term in government? In fact, there were no classrooms built. They did not build a single classroom in the growing area. This \$10 billion worth of cuts that they have announced, thanks to the member for Chatsworth—they have announced them—is going to hurt Logan people the worst. We also saw that under the LNP there were no new beds added to the Logan Hospital, whereas we have built ward 2B and ward 2M, both rapid builds, and we are doing stage 1 and stage 2. We had no help from the Morrison government whatsoever, but we went ahead and did it.

This is clear: in a growing area cuts hurt the worst, because it is not just about improvements. They have let it out of the bag—\$10 billion worth of cuts that will hurt Logan and the growing areas of Logan. We saw more than \$160 million worth of cuts on the Mount Lindesay Highway under the LNP. Now we are seeing investment. We have a minister who backs investment on the Mount Lindesay Highway. We are seeing the four-laning of the Mount Lindesay Highway at Chambers Flat. We will continue to fight for funding. We will continue to fight to make it a road that gets the investment. Logan cannot afford the \$10 billion of cuts that they are absolutely—

*(Time expired)*



**Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (4.51 pm): If this state Labor government wants to move ridiculous motions like this, talking about savage cuts, let's talk about Labor's savage cuts in the electorate of Currumbin. It has a growing population and this state Labor government promised at the 2020 election to upgrade the intersection of Bienvenue Drive and Currumbin Creek Road. They stood on that intersection and they waved signs saying, 'We will fix this intersection.' They promised the funding, but now that funding is on the chopping block and it is going to be cut by the federal government.

I wrote to the Minister for Transport and, in fact, in October I asked a question on notice to the Minister for Transport. I asked him why construction on the promised upgrade did not start when it was promised. It was promised to start two years ago. The promise was made in 2020. Construction was meant to start before 2022. Because construction did not start, the funding is being pulled. This lazy state government cannot deliver projects on budget and on time. What did the minister tell me when I

asked him whether they will commit to upgrading this intersection if the funding is cut and why construction was not started? The minister did not answer the question. More disgracefully for my community, he did not promise to upgrade the intersection—just left it hanging.

**Mr Watts:** A broken promise.

**Mrs GERBER:** An absolute broken promise to my community. Let's listen to what some Currumbin Waters residents have said about this state government's broken promise to upgrade the intersection. John from Currumbin Waters wrote to me saying—

As a local resident who has to negotiate this intersection daily, this response indicates to me there is a lack of vision in alleviating the congestion that is occurring on a daily basis on Currumbin Creek road these days. We have already been waiting over three years for the current plan to be delivered.


It is absolutely disgraceful. Michael from Currumbin Waters wrote to me saying—

I know you aware, Laura, Currumbin Waters has become an absolute nightmare for traffic.

We need this upgrade and it is disgraceful that this state Labor government is not delivering it. I started a petition in my community regarding this intersection. I letterboxed it and I spoke to locals all around that intersection. I want to table that petition today because this is an upgrade that my community want to see delivered. They want to see it delivered. I have the petition here right now. I will table it for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Nonconforming petition regarding the upgrade of an intersection in Currumbin [1896].

It is absolutely disgraceful that this government has lied to us. You cannot trust the Palaszczuk Labor government to deliver infrastructure in this state.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (4.54 pm): I rise to speak to the motion before the House. The Palaszczuk government's 2023-24 budget includes Queensland's Big Build, a record four-year, \$89 billion capital program supporting around 58,000 jobs in 2023-24. To keep our region strong, most of that will be spent outside Brisbane. That is more funding for Townsville and the people of my electorate of Mundingburra, which includes the \$530 million Townsville University Hospital expansion.

I will not back off when it comes to getting our fair share of funding for the people I represent in Mundingburra and the broader community. We are beginning our biggest decade of infrastructure delivery, creating more good Queensland jobs, delivering better services and building more of the infrastructure Queensland relies on every day. This work will generate jobs, improve services, protect our enviable lifestyle, grow economic investment, boost our regions and help secure the future for our kids. That growth gives us an opportunity for more and better infrastructure to maintain our lifestyle and our economic prosperity. That is why the Queensland government is funding the Big Build: building more renewable energy generation and storage and a new Queensland SuperGrid and CopperString 2032—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr WALKER:** Listen up! We are expanding the services we rely on, with more social housing, new school halls and better road networks in my electorate of Mundingburra; and keeping our state moving, with big investments in transport infrastructure such as Bruce Highway upgrades, the Townsville Connection Road upgrade and the new Bowen Road Bridge duplication. The list goes on.

The Leader of the Opposition and the LNP have announced \$10 billion worth of cuts to Queensland's Big Build infrastructure program. If the LNP will not fund the true costs of these infrastructure projects, that means they will cut them. The previous LNP government's commission of audit proposed \$5 billion worth of cuts—this includes reducing the Public Service by up to 14,000 full-time positions—and recommended selling off Queensland assets. They have form! The former member for Mundingburra, now the member for Broadwater, was there when he sold the Stuart State School—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr WALKER:** He was there when he closed the Stuart State School—I apologise. It has not been sold.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Direct your comments through the chair, member for Mundingburra.

**Mr WALKER:** He was there when they sold the West End State School. Guess what: the member for Surfers Paradise was the education minister at the time and he helped sell off the assets—Department of Education assets. Those opposite want to lecture us on how to protect our future and jobs for our kids. Those sitting opposite are the biggest hypocrites in this parliament.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member, I will ask you to withdraw that unparliamentary language.

**Mr WALKER:** I withdraw.

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

**AYES, 48:**

**ALP, 48—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszcuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 30:**

**LNP, 30—**Bates, Bennett, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Watts, Weir.

Pairs: Butcher, Bleijie; Howard, Mickelberg; S. King, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

## MOTION

### Palaszcuk Labor Government, Polling



**Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (5.02 pm): I move—

That this House calls on the Labor government to immediately cease the taxpayer funded Ipsos polling commissioned by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and immediately release to the public the full results received to date.

The LNP is calling on Labor to immediately stop taxpayer funded secret polling and to publicly release all results. We are demanding action from this Palaszcuk Labor government because keeping these polls hidden only fuels the reasonable belief that taxpayer money is being surreptitiously used to run the Premier's re-election campaign. This cannot be allowed to continue. Executive government should not be an engine room for Labor's campaign machine that is funded by taxpayers. Some \$400,000 of taxpayers' money is being funnelled into electioneering that is so secret that the Premier is blocking its release in cabinet papers. What could possibly justify information about Queenslanders being too secret to share with the very people it impacts and who have funded it?

Labor treats executive government and the Public Service like its own political plaything. When Queenslanders' money is being spent, there must be transparency and accountability. There is simply no justification for this secret polling to continue to be locked away from public view. Queenslanders value integrity in government and their priority is a government that works for Queensland's best interests. The only interest Labor is working for is their re-election. They are more interested in fixing their image than in fixing the problems that are faced by Queenslanders.

Some 500 days ago the Coaldrake review *Let the sunshine in* was released in response to the integrity inferno engulfing this state Labor government. Premier Palaszcuk said she would 'lock, stock and barrel' adopt the recommendations, which included releasing cabinet documents within 30 days. Well, 500 days later, that still has not happened and the Premier's department is blocking the release of the Ipsos sentiment polling results—funded by the taxpayer—claiming cabinet in confidence. The reaction to the Palaszcuk Labor government's latest integrity scandal over secret polling funded by the taxpayer has riled up a lot of people in our community, and with good reason. The Centre for Public Integrity chair, Anthony Whealy KC, said—

It is really disgraceful. It is black and white, it's a complete undermining of public integrity.


This secrecy, I think it's indefensible and the public is entitled to know the outcome of this polling and what it is really about.

Transparency International Australia Chief Executive Clancy Moore said—

With an election around the corner, it does appear this public funded polling of people's views on government policies could be for political purposes and a potential misuse of public money.

When Premier Palaszcuk was elected in 2015, she said that 'accountability and transparency would be at the forefront of her government's agenda' and 'no-one is more committed to good, honest government than me'. Well, hasn't a lot changed? Did the Premier mean it when she stated that in 2015? She may have, but she is certainly not demonstrating it now. This taxpayer funded polling is a complete rort. This government, in the way that it is acting, is opening itself up to allegations of corruption. It is time they released this polling. It is an abuse of the public purse; it is abuse of public trust.

Only the LNP has the right priorities for Queensland's future and will restore integrity to government. An LNP government will always prioritise the needs of Queenslanders above media, spin and manipulation. We saw in the lead-up to the 2020 election this government spend over half a million dollars on secret polling—so they have form. Why is it secret? If it is in the public interest, the public has a right to know. It is time that polling done in the dark is brought into the light. This government controls what its opponents can spend of their own money, of non-taxpayers' money in an election campaign, but they dip their sticky fingers into the hard-earned cash of Queenslanders in order to stay elected—that is corrupt. It is a rot, and it has to stop.

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (5.07 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'government' be omitted and the following inserted:

to continue listening to Queenslanders to help deliver the best service delivery outcomes possible right across the state and notes:

- (a) that all governments across the country undertake projects to seek community views;
- (b) the array of cost-of-living measures and infrastructure programs which the government is delivering to support Queenslanders, developed based on the views of Queenslanders;
- (c) the Newman LNP government used \$2.3 million of taxpayer's money to pay Liberal pollster Crosby Textor to promote asset sales, with the costs remaining secret during their term of government;
- (d) the Newman LNP government wasted \$70 million on their Strong Choices campaign to flog off assets.

Even for the LNP, the motion that they have put up is the most gobsmacking own goal. Their hypocrisy really takes your breath away. This is the party that spent \$70 million on the Strong Choices campaign. It was not to ask Queenslanders their views on what was important to them, like the Palaszczuk government did to develop solutions to cost-of-living issues and to generate the Big Build. No, it was not to ask Queenslanders what was important to them; it was to see what they could do to their cut, sack and sell agenda not look so bad? They were working out how to best to get their agenda up so they could know how much money to pay spin doctors to sell their message.

Before they went to that election they had told all the pensioners they were going to give them a \$120 electricity price cut. It went up \$440. Every pensioner, every Queenslander, had to pay an extra \$440. That lot opposite went out with Strong Choices and they paid Crosby Textor \$2.3 million of taxpayers' money to tell them how to deal with the political backlash; how to sell the Townsville and Gladstone ports; how to sell the Mount Isa rail line; how to sell Powerlink, Energex, Ergon, Stanwell Corporation, CS Energy and Sunwater; how to sell schools or parts of schools like the playing field at my Balmoral State High School; how to sell TAFE campuses; and how to scrap that power bill rebate they had promised all the pensioners. Boy, did they find out some other interesting things as well! They found out who Queenslanders absolutely hated. Do honourable members know who it was? It was the bloke they have picked to be their deputy leader. If they had been re-elected, this bloke would have been the Deputy Premier of Queensland.

There is this great article from January 2015 by John Harrison in the *Conversation*, titled 'How Operation Boring changed the government'. He said—


The first step was to remove from public gaze those ministers who were seen as having offended public sensibilities—

This is what they paid \$70 million to find out: who to hide. It goes on—

notably, Newman's "strutting Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie", as he was described so colourfully in The Australian newspaper.

This is what they found out with their \$70 million: who they hate and who they like. We know that if they get into government again they will have that same agenda. That is why all Queenslanders need to be afraid—very afraid.

We have spoken to Queenslanders through our research. We have asked Queenslanders what is important to them. Do honourable members know what is the No. 1 issue? It is cost of living. Can someone on that side of the House tell me it is wrong that 1.6 million households are receiving a \$550 cost-of-living rebate? Can someone on that side of the House tell me it is wrong that 600,000 seniors and concession card holders are receiving over \$1,000 off their electricity bills—not pushing them up—because we have kept energy in public hands? Can someone tell me it is wrong that 205,000 small businesses are receiving \$650 off their electricity bill or that 690,000 seniors have had 50 per cent off their car rego? On and on it goes, because we have asked Queenslanders, 'What is important to you?', not, 'How can we look good because we want to do something dodgy for you?', or, 'Who are the people you really hate so we can hide them away so you won't know until after you elect us?' This government is about meeting the needs of Queenslanders and we make no apology for doing so.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (5.12 pm): I am happy to rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Maroochydhore. I am happy to touch on some of the points in the amendment moved by the member for Bulimba, particularly point 1 about listening to Queenslanders. As long as I have been in this place I have heard the Premier and ministers come in here and talk about listening to Queenslanders, and now we find that they are outsourcing that key responsibility to the tune of \$400,000. As the minister just alluded to, we all know what the biggest issue impacting Queenslanders is at the moment. It is cost of living. It is amazing that the Premier could spend \$400,000 on that polling, because we know that the only person she needs to call when it comes to setting the agenda for this government and for her future is a guy by the name of 'Blocker'. The amount of \$400,000 has been wasted on polling when we all know what the biggest issue is.

Unfortunately, Queensland is the capital of the cost-of-living crisis in this country. We know off the back of recent CPI data that rent is up 9.5 per cent, health costs are up seven per cent, transport costs are up 6.4 per cent and the cost of community sport is up over 10 per cent. The critical thing with these stats is that every single one of these is a key state government responsibility and all four are the highest in the nation. What is the government doing about this? We know that they have the wrong priorities and that inflation and skyrocketing prices, which are putting an enormous burden on families, particularly leading up to Christmas, are a result of wasteful, excessive spending by this government that is no doubt in crisis and chaos. I would like to mention a couple of examples.

Recently Foodbank released their annual report. They acknowledged that one in five families in Queensland is suffering from food insecurity. They also report that for every \$1 given to Foodbank they can produce two nutritious meals. In the last budget this government allocated \$315,000 to Foodbank. We now know that they are spending \$400,000 of hardworking Queensland taxpayers' money on polling. We now know that, thanks to Foodbank, that \$400,000 could provide 800,000 nutritious meals for Queenslanders. One in five families is suffering from food insecurity at the moment. A lot of us would know about the Eat Up program in schools such as Richlands State School in the Premier's own electorate. An amount of \$400,000 could include another 400 schools in that program and feed vulnerable young Queenslanders in communities right across Queensland.

Closer to home, just last week I went to the electorate of Nicklin, where I caught up with the former and soon-to-be member for Nicklin, Marty Hunt. We caught up with the founders of Trees of Hope at The Shack. Every year The Shack runs a program called Trees of Hope where they call for donations to feed the most vulnerable people in Nicklin and across the Sunshine Coast. For about \$100 they could provide a family—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member, you will not use that as a prop. You will read from it or you will table it.

**Mr PURDIE:** I am about to table it, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Then table it.

**Mr PURDIE:** I am happy to table that document.

*Tabled paper:* Document, undated, titled 'Your Can! Will Make A Tonne of Difference' [\[1897\]](#).

This document shows a list of nutritious foods and other items that a family can enjoy on Christmas Day to the value of \$100. An amount of \$400,000 would provide 4,000 of those family meals for Christmas Day. That is a quarter of the families in Nicklin. Similarly, Gateway Care in Caloundra, which I have been to, as has the member for Kawana—I know that the candidate for Caloundra has also been to it and is going to it—can provide meals for 50 cents a meal. How far could \$400,000 go?

Last week I went down to Baby Give Back on the Gold Coast, in the electorate of Burleigh. There I met Carly. For years they have been providing a service to vulnerable young mums and young families on the Gold Coast. They are seeing that, whereas they used to provide second-hand prams and cots to help families, young mums are now turning up asking for boxes of nappies. If they can get a free box of nappies, they can instead spend that money on food for their family. Mums are having to decide between nappies and food. They have never seen such demand for their service. Based on a quick Google search that shows that nappies are now about \$10 a box, \$400,000 would provide tens of thousands of nappies to young families on the Gold Coast.

It is only the LNP that will prioritise policies that will put money back in the pockets of Queenslanders. We do not need polls from Palaszczuk; we need policies. The LNP will devise policies that will ensure that every Queensland family and every Queensland business has money in their pocket and that it is not wasted by this government, which is in chaos and crisis.





**Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.17 pm): I rise to speak to the amendment because I am always pleased to have the opportunity to speak about the assistance the Palaszczuk government is giving for cost-of-living issues. In my community, when I am on the doors or I am calling seniors or I am doing a mobile office, the feedback is always clear and consistent: they love our cost-of-living plan, and why wouldn't they? It is the biggest in the nation.

The Palaszczuk government is delivering the largest cost-of-living relief package in the nation. Members of the House, of course, would be aware that the cost-of-living measures under the Palaszczuk government's \$8.2 billion support program include 1.6 million households receiving the \$550 cost-of-living rebate on their energy bills. Of course, all members of this House need to declare that. We should have received that as well. I certainly did on my most recent power bill.

My constituents are very happy about it. We have 600,000 seniors and concession card holders receiving over a thousand dollars off their electricity bills over the coming financial year. Those discounts have already started rolling off. There are 205,000 small businesses receiving \$650 off their electricity bills. We have 38,000 Queenslanders receiving their Climate Smart Energy Savers rebate. We have 690,000 seniors who received 50 per cent off their car registration in the last year. I think of my grandad over in New Zealand when I read this one: 34,000 Queenslanders have been getting discounts off their boat rego in the last year. Murray would absolutely love that one, but he cannot have it because he is in New Zealand. Sorry, Murray.

Some 325,000 seniors have received free glasses, and there may be some members of the House who were eligible for this fantastic scheme being seniors themselves. From next year I do not have to tell members of this House how exciting it is that 64,000 Queensland families can save up to \$4,600 on average through free kindy. Whenever I go and visit kindies about this, the parents are excited, the kids are excited and, especially at our local C&Ks, the teachers are excited too, because every single C&K in my electorate has told me that since this program was introduced it has seen a significant increase in their enrolments for next year. It has provided them with a really great competition point with the larger longer day care providers. While it still applies to those longer day care programs, it is giving those program providers in the C&Ks in those traditional kindy models a really fantastic opportunity to provide that service to some of our most vulnerable kids. We know how critical it is that young people are engaged in the education system as early as possible so that when they start in primary school they have already had that grounding in the education system with prep and they are ready to start alongside their peers with the same level of knowledge and socialisation. It is just wonderful to see. I must also declare that I will probably be a beneficiary with my daughter Elyse for the wonderful free kindy program because it applies to all Queensland families who have a child who fits into that age bracket.

Some 36,000 families have received our FairPlay sports vouchers. For people who want to see what cost-of-living relief is available, I always encourage everyone in my community when I am out and about doing my 'Pugh's polling', as I call it, when I am doing my mobile offices, to visit the Queensland Savers website. I sit down with some of my elderly constituents and get out my laptop and say, 'Let's go through and see what you're eligible for.' It usually takes us about 15 minutes, but it could save you thousands if you are missing out on some of the things that you are eligible for. The Palaszczuk government is committed to doing our bit to help Queensland families make ends meet as the cost-of-living pressures continue to rise nationally. Concessions like our cost-of-living rebates are only possible because we own our energy assets, and that is why we are legislating to keep our public assets in public hands.

In the time that I have left I want to say how excited my community is about the Big Build program. Obviously Mount Ommaney is a big beneficiary of the Big Build. We have the Centenary Bridge currently underway and planning is underway for the Darra to Toowong stretch of the Centenary Motorway. Consultation on the draft master plan for that fantastic project starts early next year and I encourage all residents to have their say to shape the future of this vital piece of infrastructure. Work is continuing apace in Mount Ommaney and I am proud to be part of the Palaszczuk government that backs it.



**Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (5.22 pm): When I saw that I was one of the very fortunate few who got a chance to speak on this motion I was delighted, because this is like shooting fish in a barrel.

**Mr Purdie:** So were we, mate.

**Mr LISTER:** I am glad to hear the member for Ninderry express confidence in me. This is a shameful low, even by the unique standards of turpitude of this Labor government. It is a deep stain on even it to appropriate \$400,000 for political polling for the benefit of the Labor Party. One would think that with the union movement's coffers being filled with the special deals that the Labor Party has done for it Blocker Bullock could have done this polling for it, but of course that is not the point, is it, because Blocker Bullock's polling is designed to get rid of the Premier? This \$400,000 has the sovereign purpose of trying to re-elect this Labor Party—this shameful rump of a government.

I want to make sure that my contribution to this motion is relevant to my electorate of Southern Downs, so I want to talk about what \$400,000 would buy in my electorate of Southern Downs. It would buy 20 kilometres of fencing to fix the farmers' fences that were burnt out in the last fires or dog exclusion fencing to protect the hardworking graziers in my electorate of Southern Downs from dog attacks. The Labor Party has closed two schools in my electorate, Lundavra State School and Bungunya State School—fine institutions and very important squares on the board in the communities in which they are located. We could reopen those schools that were closed with no notice at all—fine schools that had been a feature of the community in those areas for decades.

That amount of money could go a long way towards providing a dialysis service at Warwick for the many people in my electorate who have to travel to Toowoomba to have their dialysis done at great cost to them in terms of money and their health, because they would much rather be in their own home town to get the dialysis that they need on a weekly basis. What about Driver Reviver and that miserable decision by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads who claimed that it was not used and claimed that no volunteers could be found, but in the space of two weeks we could get 3,000 signatures on a petition? What a miserable and disgraceful decision that was, perhaps the worst I have seen in my time here in the parliament. We could rebuild the Gladfield Driver Reviver and make it even better and give those volunteers who were so proud of the work that they did there a chance to contribute once again.

We could build a roundabout at Goondiwindi at the intersection of Russell and Sandhurst streets so that the mums and dads who pick up their kids from school there do not have to wait half an hour to be able to turn right and head out to the west of Goondiwindi. What about the nursing homes that are part of the hospitals in Inglewood, Texas and Millmerran? We could buy a bus for them. We could probably even build a bus for 400,000 grand. We could buy a bus to take the residents there on outings to make sure that they have a good experience in the community even though they are residents in those really nice nursing homes.

Most importantly, we could fix one of the bridges on the Wallangarra railway line which this government has been silent on. I saw the Premier asked about: 'Will you rebuild the bridges on the Wallangarra railway line?' The Premier ummed and ahed. She dissembled and said, 'Oh well, we'd have to think about that. It's not really very well used.'

**Ms Leahy** interjected.

**Mr LISTER:** The Premier, as I understand things, member for Warrego, has not been there to see it. We need that railway line fixed. We need it for tourism and it is an important strategic asset for my community. We could fix at least one of the bridges or maybe more.

The fact that this Labor government tells us that it cannot build Emu Swamp Dam but it can spend \$400,000 on polling is a disgrace. This is a government which sang from the rafters that it was going to be accountable and open. That is perhaps the greatest falsehood put forward in history. Perhaps maybe the Premier promising that the member for Mulgrave would be returned as Treasurer ranks among those as well, but we will not go into that one. This money is not just a sum on a piece of paper. To this Labor government that borrows and spends and throws money around with gay abandon it might not mean much, but to the people of my electorate of Southern Downs \$400,000 is a very significant amount of money.

**Mrs Frecklington:** And it's their money.

**Mr LISTER:** Yes, it is taxpayers' money; I take that interjection from the member for Nanango. Most importantly, I want to speak about the children in my electorate who need to get a diagnoses for their conditions so that they can go to school and have a proper school program. We need more money for the Child and Youth Mental Health Service. How many extra kids who cannot see a paediatrician or an occupational therapist or a speech therapist would be able to do so in my electorate of Southern Downs and in other regional electorates if that \$400,000 was, instead of being spent on the personal interests of the Labor government, spent on the people in my electorate who deserve it? This is a disgrace and another example of the corruption of this rump of a Labor government.

*(Time expired)*



**Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (5.27 pm): I oppose the motion as it was moved and I support the amendment to the motion and wording moved by the member for Bulimba. When we see the opposition motion in its original wording, it is clearly a case of 'do as I say and not as I do'. The best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour, and the biggest, baddest legacy of those opposite is Strong Choices—a crazy combination of a range of LNP views mixed in with its unwillingness and inability to run anything when in government. Every time the LNP gets in it does not know how to run things, so it turns to its mates in the private sector to help it out. Every time those opposite outsource basic government operations like communications to consultants and others in the private sector, and Strong Choices is the ultimate example of that. As we know, this is not small money; this is upwards of \$70 million and consultants got about \$20 million of that for Strong Choices. I imagine you could buy a few Emu Swamp Dams for that amount. Reading from a 9News article from 2015, multinational ad agency MediaCom got over \$11 million, political strategists Crosby Textor got \$1.8 million, digital grassroots agency Bluegrass Consulting \$1.6 million, and the list goes on.

Some of this money was for monitoring feedback to the Strong Choices website. I have nothing against any of these organisations for bidding for the work at the time, as is their right to do by and large, but what a colossal waste of money. We remember coming in after the 2015 election and seeing the enormous war room on level 9 at 100 George Street and completely outsourced Treasury communications—indeed central government communications—to the private sector.

It does say something about the member for Clayfield's communication skills that when he was Treasurer he needed an entire army—a war room—of private sector communications professionals to try to sell his message. What was that message? I am sure the LNP would love Queenslanders to forget all about Strong Choices, but they did such an effective job of telling the public about their plan to sell assets that they won an award. Strong Choices was actually awarded the Public Affairs Asia gold standard award for government relations in 2015. It was awarded after the election, notably. It even went on to be nominated for a world award in public affairs in 2016. I would agree with them that it was gold standard in fleecing the taxpayer of funds. What are we talking about when it comes to this gold standard, award-winning Strong Choices? Was it simply public sentiment polling? Let us hear from the award description itself. It states—

Queensland Treasury engaged a senior multi-disciplinary team to develop a new approach to communicate the State's debt position so that the public would understand the problem and why tough choices were required.

As we go through this, let's compare and contrast it with seeking public sentiment and see the differences between Strong Choices and what the LNP's motion is about. I continue—

Allowing input into policy decisions prior to the Queensland election cycle the integrated communications and public affairs campaign employed community engagement, the development of a community response document and a manifesto on the choices required to tackle the debt problems.

...

The 'Strong Choices' campaign was the most intensive engagement program ever undertaken by any branch of Australian government on finance issues and the outcomes were significant. In 56 days ... 70,000+ Queenslanders engaged with the digital and online tools—

and it goes on to say that 50,000 people joined virtual town halls, 55,000 individual submissions were sent to the Treasurer and there were 255,000 website visits. Government share of media voice also increased 200 per cent during the campaign. I continue—

As a result of the insight, the government developed a new policy model based on people's support for long-term leases that would replace sales ... While detailed research results were not released, it was publicly revealed that the Strong Choices campaign achieved 77% awareness among Queenslanders, 72% approval for the campaign itself, 89% support for action on debt.

It concludes—

'Strong Choices' was credited as Australia's largest and most innovative government campaign around budget and debt issues because it successfully engaged the population, helped frame a way forward for the State, and created widespread support for what were strong but difficult economic choices.

We have a spoiler. I think we know the ending. It did not do any of that. All it did was inform the public of the LNP's wrong priorities. They have wrong priorities now; they had wrong priorities then. When we are talking about contrasting seeking public sentiment with a \$70 million campaign to sell assets that they botched at the end and could not deal with the outcome, we are talking about two entirely different things. It is a case of 'do as I say, not as I do' from the LNP opposition.



**Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (5.33 pm): I am pleased to speak in support of the shadow minister's motion to stop the waste of public money and to release the information received to date. There is a clear contrast between the two sides of this parliament: the Labor government, which has stopped listening to Queenslanders—they have outsourced that job, as the member for Ninderry said—versus the LNP, who are genuinely listening to Queenslanders. We are listening to Queenslanders right across this state with our 34 members and our 18 candidates who are out in the field—candidates like Bree Watson in Bundaberg and Natalie Marr in Thuringowa.

We are genuinely listening to Queenslanders. Our shadow minister for health went across the state, from Cooktown to Coolangatta, and held 35 town hall meetings listening to Queenslanders and developing the right priorities for Queensland—the right priorities that are contained in that dossier that we have all been proudly carrying around. It is a dossier that the Labor government are so worried about. The LNP are listening to Queenslanders. That is the foundation of good government. Good government puts in place structures based on what the people are saying. What gets measured gets done.

I commend our leadership on having a shadow minister for integrity, a shadow minister for customer service and a shadow minister for open data. Just recently they made a very smart move to have a champion for cost of living—a shadow assistant minister for cost of living and energy, Dan Purdie, the member for Ninderry. When a government puts in place structures to deliver outcomes for Queenslanders, governments are successful. This tired Labor government is just not listening.

This \$393,000 would mean so much for my community. For struggling families, this cost-of-living crisis is real. This government is spending nearly \$400,000 over 66 weeks leading up to an election to understand and listen to what Queenslanders are doing. Do not do that, Labor. Listen to Queenslanders. Do your job. My church and community groups that are struggling would turn that money into real solutions in our community. The Laidley Community Centre, with Alana Wahl and her team, who are doing a magic job; Linda Roberts and her team at the Lockyer Community Centre in Gatton; and the church groups that are giving out so much aid to our community could only wish to have that sort of money or even a part of it. Ten thousand dollars would feed a thousand people. This is a real solution that this Labor government is not considering. I worry that this waste is just the tip of the iceberg. There are millions of dollars of waste that we have been able to identify. I support the shadow minister's call to action to release this information and stop the waste of money.

It is absolutely clear to me that this government has stopped listening. Whenever the Premier and ministers fail to turn up, like to the youth crime forum in Toowoomba that the Premier did not attend, it is another sign of this tired Labor government giving up. It is another clear sign to Queenslanders that they are giving up on them. It is another sign that they have stopped listening and they are outsourcing that job to expensive consultants.

The LNP has been listening. The most recent example was the referendum that was held. From the result of the vote it was clear that Queenslanders did not want to see a divided country. I am proud that Australians voted that way. Many on the other side were out of touch and did not listen to their communities. I ask the government to stop the waste of money, follow the Coaldrake review and release the cabinet documents, release this document, stop using public moneys for political purposes and stop using public moneys in a desperate attempt to cling to power. Queenslanders deserve better and they will get better when they get an LNP government in Queensland.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Before I call the member for Redlands, I remind all members not to walk between the Speaker and the person on their feet.



**Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (5.38 pm): What we have heard in the last four contributions from the opposition is discombobulating. The member for Lockyer said 'do not talk to Queenslanders', 'talk to Queenslanders', 'do not talk to Queenslanders', 'the government should stop talking to Queenslanders'. This motion very much says that the government should not be talking to Queenslanders. That is absolutely crazy. We have literally just heard the member for Lockyer say that the government should not be talking to Queenslanders. Those opposite are trotting around the precinct and the chamber with that little blue pamphlet. Maybe the member has not yet read what is in it. I think it says that it is important to listen to Queenslanders. That is what the Palaszczuk government will do. That is what the Palaszczuk government has always done.

I was listening to the contribution from the member for Ninderry in terms of the spend. When we think about the \$70 million that was spent on the Strong Choices campaign, what does that look like? That is 2½ Jacaranda Places. If you put that back into the math of the day—I am not sure what the Barrett centre cost when they closed it, but I think \$70 million would have probably been at least two Barrett centres.

If we talk about cost comparisons and draw it back to nappies, I can tell the member for Ninderry that that is seven million boxes of nappies. That is an awful lot of nappies. I wonder if they have picked up the phone to call their friend Ian Macfarlane from the Queensland Resources Council. I know what \$40 million looks like in an advertising campaign because I have seen it on the TV. Imagine what \$40 million would do in our communities. That is a stark contrast. Back in the day, \$40 million would probably have built a satellite hospital. That is what our progressive royal royalties are doing. They are ensuring that our Palaszczuk government will continue to deliver the Big Build for all Queenslanders.

I am extraordinarily proud of the track record that we have in delivery for the Redlands. People have tapped me on the shoulder to talk about the satellite hospital and what a fantastic asset it is for our community. We know what the LNP's agenda is. I would not be surprised if there is a secret little plan in some of their polling that has them saying, 'I think we might privatise those satellite hospitals because that is in our DNA.'

They talk about costs, but let us look at their track record. The member for Maroochydore spoke about the Public Service. I was thinking, 'Wow, have you forgotten that you sacked 14,000 public servants? Have you forgotten that?' It is selective. They talk about transparency and accountability, but have they forgotten that they sacked the PCCC in the middle of the night? That is their track record. I have previously asked members opposite to put up their hands. Fifty per cent of them sat in the Campbell Newman government, but they are not keen to put up their hands and say whether they are tied to that track record and that history, which was appalling.

I think about how they closed the Wynnum hospital and the Barrett centre. They cut Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which is a program that we know delivers for our young people. Skilling Queenslanders for Work is an extraordinary program. We know what their plan was for our TAFEs. You only needed to look at how Alexandra TAFE had been absolutely gutted to know what their agenda was in that space.

Queenslanders are smart. Our communities can absolutely see that that blue pamphlet contains absolutely no content whatsoever. There is no real plan in there. It is just marketing spin and glossy words. The Palaszczuk government will always work hard to deliver for Queenslanders and we will do it in the Redlands. I want to talk about Cleveland-Redland Bay Road—

**Mr Smith** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member for Bundaberg, you are warned under the standing orders.


**Mr McDONALD:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Bundaberg is not in his proper seat.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Lockyer, I maintain the order in this House. I had warned the member for Bundaberg. I do not need the assistance of members in managing the behaviour of this House. You are warned as well.

**Ms RICHARDS:** I am sorry for that little interruption. It is designed to interrupt. We have put \$110 million into the stage 1 duplication of Cleveland-Redland Bay Road. The LNP was not going to look at that project until 2026. It is in the records that 2026 was when they were going to look at that road. We have committed a further \$80 million to continue the duplication.

We know that pruning, cutting, sacking, selling and privatising is absolutely in the DNA of the LNP. To bring forward a motion that says 'don't talk to Queenslanders' is absolutely outrageous. I think that it speaks to their track record and to what Queenslanders can expect from an LNP government. If they ever get in, heaven help us.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (5.43 pm): I support the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore. I think it is pretty odd that the government wants to talk about the Strong Choices survey that was done nearly 10 years ago—it was a long time ago—given that the reason they know the results of that survey is that they were released. Maybe they should release the data that has been secretly gathered using taxpayer dollars. I also think it is odd that they want to talk about this because of who sold the assets in Queensland. The Labor Party sold the assets! If they want to talk about Strong Choices and privatisation, they should remember that the Labor Party sold the assets under the Bligh government. Billions of dollars worth of assets were sold off by the Labor Party.

When I look at this motion about releasing polling data, one name that comes to mind is Coaldrake. What would Coaldrake say about this? He must be dismayed that the review that he authored last year has been so completely effaced by this government through their actions and their negligence in implementing its recommendations. He made recommendations against using consultants for exactly this type of work. He made recommendations against that and yet we now see the virtual theft of Queensland taxpayer dollars to commission research to support the political aims of this government. It is a disgrace. Coaldrake said to let the sunshine in and I say it too: release the polling data.

I never thought that I would get to use the phrase 'lock, stock and barrel' twice in two days. Yesterday, we were talking about how the government will not fix the CCC legislation to let the reports about Peter Carne and Jackie Trad see the light of day. Today, I can use the phrase again because, on 28 June last year, the Premier released a media statement titled, "Lock, stock and barrel" Premier embraces Coaldrake Review'. That statement is still on [statements.qld.gov.au](https://statements.qld.gov.au). The Premier was quoted as saying, 'I don't just welcome it—I embrace it.' Here is an invitation to the Premier to embrace it again and release the taxpayer funded research, which they will use for political purposes. The media statement is still there. The record does not lie. They should implement it lock, stock and barrel just as she proposed.

In that media statement, there is not an asterisk that says, 'I'm only going to implement it lock, stock and barrel if it's not politically inconvenient.' Did the Premier have her fingers crossed behind her back when she said that at the media conference? Did she say, 'I don't really mean it and I'll only do it if it's not inconvenient'? No! She said, 'Lock, stock and barrel.' That is exactly what she said and she should implement that.

Cramming the research into this half of the year, just before they have made the commitment to release cabinet documents in the first half of next year, is very convenient. They say they will release cabinet documents after the start of next year, but it has been 18 months since the Coaldrake report was released. Why has it taken so long to cram in the research and take it to cabinet? If they stood by the recommendations, those cabinet documents would already be open. I do wonder what the cabinet would do. I wonder what they would be able to transact if they had to make all of the papers in cabinet open. We remember some of the guidance that cabinet ministers were given by people, especially one person in particular—

**An opposition member:** Blocker?

**Mr KRAUSE:** No, not Blocker, although he probably gives a bit of guidance too.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I take that interjection: Simmo. Last year, the PCCC released documents that came from the State Archivist in a report that members opposite did not want to see the light of day. It contained guidance from Simmo. It was part of the mangocube saga—very foolish. An email, which was released to the public, stated—

Comrade,

You're apparently getting three options to vote upon tomorrow for the WorkCover changes


Then the options are listed: option A, option B, option C. If those sorts of things are going on in cabinet then what are they going to do in cabinet because none of those documents will be able to be released? It is a disgrace that they have walked away so recklessly from the reforms that Coaldrake said they should embrace.

**Mrs Gerber** interjected.

**Mr KRAUSE:** I take that interjection. The Premier said she would embrace the recommendations lock, stock and barrel. I do not think that she really meant it. There should have been an asterisk in the media release.

**Mr PERRETT:** Ts and Cs apply.

**Mr KRAUSE:** Ts and Cs apply and, in this case, Ts and Cs and fees apply as well.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (5.48 pm): I start by saying that it is a typical LNP low to use the words of a man who has passed away from cancer in a debate in this House. That man did so much for the laws of Queensland so that we could bring in voluntary assisted dying. They have no shame. They are using the words of a dead man in a political debate. That man contributed so much to Queensland. Talk about a disgrace. To add to that disgrace, the most corrupt government in

Queensland's history was the Liberal National Party government under Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Without that hung jury, the former premier would have ended up in the slammer where half of you would have ended up as well.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! Comments will come through the chair, member.

**Mr WHITING:** I want to make three points. First, members of the LNP have a hide, trying to criticise us in their motion. The Newman government spent \$70 million on its failed Strong Choices advertising campaign. The survey part of this campaign revealed that Queenslanders reject privatisation. They prefer an increase to gambling taxes and mining royalties—anything but selling off the assets of Queenslanders.

Speaking of surveys and campaigns, that reminds me of mining royalties. I do not need polling to tell me that the Queensland Resources Council's \$40 million advertising campaign, trying to convince Queenslanders we should tax the big mining companies less, has worked—for us! So many Queenslanders have told me that they thought it was our ad. They came away convinced that we were right in imposing a tiered coal royalties scheme. They are supportive of those companies paying more for the huge profits they get out of our minerals and that, in fact, they should pay even more. I want to thank the Resources Council and encourage it to keep running its awareness campaign. It was one of the most effective campaigns for a government I have ever seen.


There is one part of the LNP Campbell Newman-era Strong Choices campaign—the \$70 million shocker—that always makes me chuckle; that is, the launch of 'Operation Boring' to save the Campbell Newman government. Its key strategy was to hide the member for Kawana. I quote from an article at the time—

The first step was to remove from public gaze those ministers who were seen as having offended public sensibilities: notably, Newman's "strutting Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie".

I say to the LNP: this still applies. This finding of the survey is still relevant. Please do not listen to me: the more you wheel him out, the more votes we get. I hope that he has a really prominent role in next year's election campaign.

Secondly, I think these campaigns and surveys are very useful when they are used by a responsible government such as ours. We will use these tools to continue listening to Queenslanders and informing Queenslanders. We will tell them that we are delivering the best outcomes for Queenslanders. We want to ask, 'Have you heard about our \$8.2 billion support program?' That is what we are delivering. The cost-of-living rebates make a real difference to the lives of ordinary Queenslanders. We are not ashamed to let them know about it.

Under this program, 1.6 million households are receiving a \$550 cost-of-living rebate for electricity; 600,000 seniors and concession card holders are receiving \$1,072 off their electricity bills; 205,000 small businesses are receiving \$650 off their electricity bills; over 38,000 Queensland households have received Climate Smart Energy Saver rebates; 690,000 seniors have received 50 per cent off their car registration in the last year; 325,000 seniors have received free glasses through the Spectacle Supply Scheme; and next year over 64,000 Queensland families will save up to \$4,600, on average, through free kindy. What a great roll call of cost-of-living relief measures. This is the best in Australia. We can do this because Queenslanders own their energy assets. This is absolutely crucial, but the LNP would not have done it.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (5.53 pm): Who sold the assets? The Labor government sold the assets. If they had their chance, they would do it again. They sold the forestry—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order!

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I take that back; I would hate to mislead the House. They gave away our forestry. This government that is so riddled in crisis and chaos—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr Millar** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Logan! Order, member for Gregory!

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:**—and has completely the wrong priorities has now decided, at a time when Queenslanders are struggling with the cost of living, to take \$393,000 out of Queensland taxpayers' coffers—

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr Millar** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Logan and member for Gregory, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:**—we just heard it from the member for Bancroft—for push polling. They are pushing the Labor government's agenda using taxpayers' money. Should anyone be doing this polling to see how bad the government is going? We know that they are already doing it. 'Blocker' Bullock has been referred to today. Why is the Labor Party spending money working out who should replace this incompetent Premier? That is exactly what they are doing. Given the Deputy Premier's behaviour in the House this afternoon, we know that it is not looking good for him.

What have we seen? We have seen a government that has completely stopped listening. If they want to seek community views, they should take a leaf out of the LNP's book. What have we been doing? The Leader of the Opposition, the member for Broadwater, has been going up and down the state listening to Queenslanders. With the shadow health minister there have been over 35 health town halls, including the one in Kingaroy, where we heard disgusting stories—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Over 200 people came to Kingaroy to hear about the fact that the Labor government refuses to put decent services in the hospital, as we called for. The shadow police minister has held crime forum after crime forum up and down the state. In fact, as late as last week the opposition leader, the member for Burdekin, the incredible LNP candidate for Noosa, Clare Stewart, and I held a crime forum and listened to Queenslanders about the devastation to their businesses and homes. That is exactly what the LNP is doing.

In Bundaberg we have Bree Watson. Bring on Bree Watson! She is someone who is so distressed about the 43 per cent ambulance ramping across this state—and I am not even starting on the crime issues in Bundaberg. Bundaberg residents have a member who is supposedly representing them but who is not listening. What does the member for Bundaberg think he should do: support a government that is wasting Queenslanders' money to do a push poll—

**Mr SMITH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and I ask that the member withdraw.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I will hear points of order in silence. The member has asked you to withdraw.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I withdraw. Bree Watson will be a brilliant representative. I can tell the people of Bundaberg right now: here is someone who will never stop listening to her community. She is part of her community; she lives and breathes the community. Bring on Bree Watson for Bundaberg, because Bree Watson has the right priorities for Queenslanders.

I refer to Labor's failures. The LNP has the right priorities—to save Queenslanders from Labor's priorities. What does the local media in Brisbane and Queensland think about this wasteful and disgraceful action of the Palaszczuk government? It is not going to release these outcomes and it has nothing to do with the budget, because it goes right up to the election—just like the \$500,000 that was spent before the last election. The *Australian* editorial says—

If Annastacia Palaszczuk wants to find out what Queenslanders are thinking a year out from the state election, she need not waste \$393,000 of taxpayers' money ...

That is just what the *Australian* has said. I love the first paragraph of the editorial of the *Courier-Mail* that states—

The Palaszczuk government is outrageously at it again, treating taxpayer money as if it's their own personal plaything and spending it blatantly for political purposes.

This from a Premier who said that she would be open, transparent and accountable! This is a Premier who is anything but. Where is the sunshine? The sunshine has not been let onto the Labor government.

(Time expired)





**Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (5.58 pm): I rise to support the amendment as moved by the minister. When it comes to the LNP record, they say they aspire to 2012-15, so we know that their history would be Queensland's terrible future. Isn't it telling that I am speaking after the member who served as assistant minister to the then treasurer, who sat around the CBRC table that sacked those 14,000 workers and who then served as assistant minister to the premier, who as leader of the LNP party never apologised once for what they did in government, who sits on the frontbench now and has not apologised for what they did.

The LNP record is not just the 14,000 cuts and the impact that they had on those individuals but the economic impact that those cuts had on the state. For example, the loss of jobs led to families not building an extension on their house. It is also what it did to integrity. When people fear that they are going to be sacked, they do not put their head above the turret.

**Mr Head** interjected.

**Mr SULLIVAN:** I take the interjection from the member for Callide because he is just a broken record.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): And then they will cease.

**Mr SULLIVAN:** I am happy to take it. The member should probably pay more attention to question time. The Premier and the education minister have explained time and time again—this week and last week—that free kindy is available. He might want to avail himself of that sort of educational experience. He might learn something. He might be able to colour in the booklet that he has been carrying around for two weeks.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SULLIVAN:** I am not actually having a go at the member for Callide. I feel proud for him. I feel support for him. Imagine the strength it takes to get up every morning, to get out of bed, put your suit on and look at yourself in the mirror and say, 'We can do it, mate. I can fulfil this really important role for the party of being a crow squawking at the breeze every day.'

**Mr Head** interjected.

**Mr SULLIVAN:** Imagine the indignation and hurt of those public servants who were sacked. The member was not here, so he may not realise that at the time the premier said about sacking 14,000 people that he was taking out the 'pooper scooper'. Those of us who speak in debates all the time thank our secretariat. We thank the departments who brief us. We thank the departments who prepare the bills that we all debate and vote on. Sacking 14,000 of them and describing that as a 'pooper scooper' is beyond terrible. Those opposite, including the Leader of the Opposition, have not apologised to this day—to this day.

In terms of their record of integrity, we will not be lectured to by the party that increased the threshold for donations to \$12,000. That is not poetic licence. It meant that a businessperson could walk into an MP's office with \$12,000 in cash, hand it over to an MP and nobody would know about it—nobody! That was the law under those opposite, and then they voted against it when we changed it. They voted against it when we introduced the nation-leading real-time disclosure so that people would actually know who is donating to all parties, or Independents for that matter. That is our record. We are absolutely happy to stand on our record on that.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SULLIVAN:** I understand why they are upset. This is the party who sacked the Parliamentary Crime and Misconduct Commission in the middle of the night, including the then Independent member for Gladstone, who was chair at the time. What an irony that I now have the privilege to serve on the committee that came after. I know why those opposite hate it when I get on my feet, because I am a living, breathing record of how far their political failings have gone. When I first came across that mob I was just a humble but hardworking staffer, working for the then leader of the opposition, working against the largest parliamentary majority in the country's history, and we took it back in one term—in one term—because of those opposite. I completely understand why they do not like hearing my voice. Not only do I get to stand here representing my beautiful community; I get to serve in a third-term Palaszczuk Labor government delivering for Queensland and delivering for Stafford.

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

**AYES, 48:**

**ALP, 48**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczyk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 34:**

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

**KAP, 3**—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

Pairs: Butcher, Bleijie; Howard, Mickelberg; S. King, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** Ring the bells for one minute.

**AYES, 48:**

**ALP, 48**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczyk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 34:**

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

**KAP, 3**—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

Pairs: Butcher, Bleijie; Howard, Mickelberg; S. King, Nicholls.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House calls on the Labor government to continue listening to Queenslanders to help deliver the best service delivery outcomes possible right across the state and notes:

- (a) that all governments across the country undertake projects to seek community views;
- (b) the array of cost-of-living measures and infrastructure programs which the government is delivering to support Queenslanders, developed based on the views of Queenslanders;
- (c) the Newman LNP government used \$2.3 million of taxpayer's money to pay Liberal pollster Crosby Texter to promote asset sales, with the costs remaining secret during their term of government;
- (d) the Newman LNP government wasted \$70 million on their Strong Choices campaign to flog off assets.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT (COUNCILLOR CONDUCT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from p. 3540.

### Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 23, as read, agreed to.

Clause 24—



**Dr MILES** (6.13 pm): I move the following amendment—

**1 Clause 24 (Amendment of s 178 (Councillors))**

Page 22, after line 6—

*insert—*

- (6A) Section 178(1)(f)(vii) to (ix)—  
*renumber* as section 178(1)(f)(v) to (vii).

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

*Tabled paper:* Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Dr Steven Miles's amendments [\[1898\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Local Government (Councillor Conduct) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Dr Steven Miles's amendments [\[1899\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 24, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 25 to 45, as read, agreed to.

Clause 46—



**Dr MILES** (6.14 pm): I move the following amendment—

**2 Clause 46 (Insertion of new ch 5A, pt 3, divs 3A and 3B)**

Page 39, line 24, after 'effects'—

*insert—*

of

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 46, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 47 to 101, as read, agreed to.

Clause 102—



**Dr MILES** (6.14 pm): I move the following amendments—

**3 Clause 102 (Insertion of new ch 9, pt 18)**

Page 88, line 1, 'taken'—

*omit.*

**4 Clause 102 (Insertion of new ch 9, pt 18)**

Page 88, lines 22 to 28—

*omit, insert—*

(iv) the conduct relates solely to a contravention of the acceptable requests guidelines mentioned in former section 150L(1)(c)(ii);

**5 Clause 102 (Insertion of new ch 9, pt 18)**

Page 89, line 22, 'or (ii)'—

*omit, insert—*

, (ii) or (iv)

**6 Clause 102 (Insertion of new ch 9, pt 18)**

Page 89, lines 23 and 24, from 'if' to 'applies'—

*omit, insert—*

otherwise

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 102, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 103 and 104, as read, agreed to.

Clause 105—



**Dr MILES** (6.15 pm): I move the following amendment—

**7 Clause 105 (Amendment of s 186 (Councillors))**

Page 94, after line 18—

*insert—*

(6A) Section 186(1)(f)(vii) to (ix)—

*renumber* as section 186(1)(f)(v) to (vii).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 105, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 106 to 113, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Dr MILES** (6.15 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

**Dr MILES:** I move the following amendment—

**8 After clause 113**

Page 98, after line 8—

*insert—*

**113A Amendment of s 126 (Requirement for candidate to operate dedicated account)**

Section 126(4), from 'electoral' to 'candidate'—

*omit, insert—*

the conduct of the candidate's election campaign, including electoral expenditure incurred by the candidate,

Amendment agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Dr MILES** (6.16 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

**Dr MILES:** I move the following amendment—

**9 After clause 113**

Page 98, after line 8—

*insert—*

**113B Amendment of s 127 (Requirement for group of candidates to operate dedicated account)**

Section 127(4), from 'electoral' to 'group'—

*omit, insert—*

the conduct of the group's election campaign, including electoral expenditure incurred by the group,

Amendment agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



**Dr MILES** (6.16 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

**Dr MILES:** I move the following amendment—

**10 After clause 113**

Page 98, after line 8—

*insert—*

**113C Amendment of s 127B (Payment of amount of electoral expenditure by credit card prohibited)**

Section 127B(1)(a), from 'pay'—

*omit, insert—*

pay any of the following amounts—

- (i) an amount of electoral expenditure incurred by, or with the authority of, a candidate, group of candidates, registered political party or relevant third party;
- (ii) for a person to whom section 126(8) or 127(8) applies—any other amount for the conduct of an election campaign incurred by, or with the authority of, a candidate or group of candidates; or

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 114 to 119, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

### Third 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) (6.17 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. 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) (6.17 pm): I move—

That the long title of the bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## EMBLEMS OF QUEENSLAND AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 14 September (see p. 2713).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (6.18 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to speak again on the Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I note that the Economics and Governance Committee tabled its report on the bill on Friday, 27 October. I thank the committee for its prompt consideration and support of the bill. I also want to acknowledge all of the committee members, the committee secretariat, and organisations and individuals who made submissions in relation to the bill. I heard very good feedback from all of the members of the committee about their engagement with the community across Queensland in relation to the bill.

The bill amends the Emblems of Queensland Act 2005 to officially recognise the *Muttaburrasaurus langdoni*, or the muttaburra dinosaur, as Queensland's state fossil emblem. The bill also makes a number of amendments to legislation relating to the Queensland parliament to improve and clarify certain parliamentary processes and procedures. The bill responds to community interest in having a fossil emblem and confirms the outcome of a public vote on which fossil should become the state's fossil emblem.

In 2020 a petition was tabled in this House by the Winton community seeking the installation of *Diamantinasaurus matildae* as the state fossil emblem for Queensland. To ensure the selection of a state fossil emblem that had the support of the broader Queensland community, the government undertook a process to identify other fossil candidates. Queenslanders were then invited to vote for their preferred state fossil during the public consultation period from 11 April 2022 to 10 July 2022. Queenslanders voted on 12 candidates short-listed by the state fossil emblem interdepartmental working group. The working group comprised representatives from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport, the Department of Environment and Science, the Department of Education, very importantly the Queensland Museum, the State Library of Queensland and Tourism and Events Queensland. There were 8,745 votes received, including 2,409 votes for the *Muttaburrasaurus langdoni* and 1,179 votes for the *Australotitan cooperensis*, representing the first and second ranked nominations.

On 12 July 2022 the Queensland government confirmed that the *Muttaburrasaurus langdoni* was the preferred state fossil for Queensland based on the results of that public consultation process. This fossil has only ever been found in Queensland and was named by the Queensland Museum director, Alan Bartholomai, and the Queensland Museum curator, Ralph Molnar. The name was formed from the names of the town of Muttaburra in Central Queensland and local grazier Doug Langdon who discovered the first fossil specimen while mustering in 1963.

**Mr Power:** 1962, in December.

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** It was 1962. Queensland's proposed fossil emblem, *Muttaburrasaurus langdoni*, will recognise our rich and diverse palaeontological history and provide an official symbol for dinosaur tourism. Illustrations that were artistic representations of the short-listed fossils were used for the purpose of the public consultation and voting campaign, with the acknowledgement that they were not exact scientific illustrations. The Emblems of Queensland Act 2005 will not prescribe a particular image to depict the fossil emblem. This is consistent with the approach that is taken for other state emblems, like the koala, anemone fish, brolga, sapphire and Cooktown orchid. The Queensland

government webpage will use an image provided by the Queensland Museum which depicts a reconstruction of *Muttaburrasaurus langdoni*. Much like the clownfish has become synonymous with the Great Barrier Reef and the koala with other parts of Queensland, it is expected the emblem will be recognised as a symbol of Queensland's outback and add to the unique selling proposition that exists for the region.

The Queensland government will continue to work closely with the outback dinosaur tourism industry to identify opportunities to leverage the emblem. In November 2022 the Queensland government released, in partnership with the tourism industry, *Towards Tourism 2032: Transforming Queensland's visitor economy future*—the state's tourism strategy that sets out the direction of tourism in Queensland for the 10 years to 2032. In terms of tourism supply, success in 2032 is defined by Queensland being a global leader of vibrant, authentic, accessible and transformative visitor experiences and events—reflecting our natural and cultural values, vibrant communities and regions, catering for different types of visitors and delivering on our brand promise. The introduction of a new state fossil emblem for Queensland and leveraging the new emblem to grow palaeo tourism is an action in the first phase of the Towards Tourism 2032 implementation plan. The bill is an essential step in implementing this action.

Dinosaur or palaeo tourism experiences in Outback Queensland form an important part of the breadth of experiences visitors can enjoy. Dinosaur tourism is a Hero Experience for Queensland, is part of the Queensland story and represents where our competitive advantage lies. Dinosaurs have a broad appeal; they are not limited to a specific generation or time. They connect to human nature through a sense of fantasy, curiosity and scientific reality. As a result, dinosaur tourism attracts a diverse market, including young families who make up the bulk of the dinosaur tourism opportunity, young travellers, grey nomads as well as dinosaur enthusiasts of all ages, and I can see a number in the House tonight. Outback Queensland has a unique opportunity to grow its tourism economy through the use of the state fossil emblem and by consolidating the region behind the unique selling proposition of dinosaurs, complementing its existing tourism appeal.

The Australian Dinosaur Trail is a current Outback Queensland experience connecting the towns of Hughenden, Richmond and Winton to share some of the world's best preserved fossils via self-drive road trips. With the Dinosaur Trail, dinosaur tourism in Outback Queensland is represented by 10 main dinosaur attractions including: the Australian Age of Dinosaurs in Winton; the Dinosaur Stampede National Monument in Winton; Kronosaurus Korner in Richmond; the Flinders Discovery Centre and museum in Hughenden; the Eromanga Natural History Museum; the Outback at Isa Riversleigh Fossil Discovery Centre in Mount Isa; the Riversleigh World Heritage site near Boodjamulla National Park; the Marine Reptile Fossil Display in Boulia; the Outer Barcoo Interpretation Centre in Isisford in the Longreach area; and the Muttaburrasaurus Interpretation Centre in Muttaburra. We already have a scale model of a muttaburra dinosaur at the Muttaburrasaurus Interpretation Centre. The centre has interpretive displays, including replicas of the original bones, history of the dinosaurs and the story of how the muttaburra dinosaur was discovered in 1962.

The introduction of a fossil emblem for Queensland will help bring together our rich palaeo story across these experiences and further capitalise on the demand for unique tourism experiences in the future. Dinosaurs are a key component of Queensland's outback tourism offering, as these experiences set Queensland apart from other destinations—they are distinct to Queensland. With development, dinosaur tourism will become a unique selling point for not just Outback Queensland but the whole state.

On 2 May 2021 the Premier launched the Outback Queensland Dinosaur Roadmap to grow dinosaur tourism in Outback Queensland. The three-year \$500,000 investment was made possible through joint funding from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Tourism and Events Queensland. In 2021-22 one of the key actions of the Outback Queensland Dinosaur Roadmap was the establishment of an interim Dinosaur Tourism Advisory Panel, which in turn established the Dinosaur Tourism Collective. With the establishment of the industry-led body, the Dinosaur Tourism Collective, in June 2023, the region will also have the industry leadership necessary to drive activities across the regions that will grow dinosaur tourism.

Outback Queensland dinosaur tourism visitation is expected to increase to 1.2 million visitor days/nights over the next 15 years. This level of visitation contributes to the broader tourism and economic activity across the region. Research produced for Tourism and Events Queensland identifies that visitors spend more than seven times what they spend at the dinosaur attraction in the local economy before and after their visit. The 2022 AEC Group research also found that the direct and

indirect impact generated by visitors attending dinosaur tourism attractions in 2020-21 was \$36.8 million, which provided for 612 full-time-equivalent jobs. The future potential for dinosaur tourism in both direct and indirect impact is estimated to more than double over the next 15 years to 2035-36, generating some \$82.7 million for Queensland's visitor economy and supporting 1,373 jobs. Outback Queensland dinosaur tourism visitation is expected to increase as targeted marketing campaign efforts are coordinated across the majority of operators. By 2035 dinosaur tourism is estimated to more than double its contribution towards industry output, gross regional product, income and employment.

While promotion of the state fossil emblem can be a symbol of pride and heritage for Queensland, the emblem will also provide additional brand awareness for the Outback. Growth in dinosaur tourism is expected to directly benefit Outback Queensland tourism and the many communities encompassed by the region. With development, dinosaur tourism will become a unique selling point, as I said, not only for Outback Queensland but also for the whole state. The Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport has supported projects related to palaeo tourism through a number of programs such as the Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund, the North West Minerals Province Economic Diversification Strategy, the Outback Tourism Infrastructure Fund and the Tourism Experience Development Fund. In addition to this, the Australian Age of Dinosaurs also received funding through the Queensland Tourism Icons Program in 2020 which was a key element of Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan to help accelerate the state's recovery from COVID-19.

Dinosaur tourism offers that unique opportunity to connect with the ancient past and foster a deep appreciation for the incredible creatures that once roamed the earth. It provides a chance for visitors to engage in educational and immersive experiences, fostering a love of science and palaeontology in younger generations. Industry and government have the opportunity to empower regional communities to develop the unique stories of their region and play a role in the management and conservation of their heritage. Dinosaur tourism in Outback Queensland is not just a journey in the past; it has the potential to be a step toward a thriving economic future for the region.

I turn to the rest of the bill, which will progress a number of technical amendments to legislation related to the parliament. As I stated in my explanatory speech, these amendments were outlined to the House by the Speaker on 11 May 2023 and have been developed in consultation with the Speaker and the Clerk of the Parliament.

The bill will amend the Crime and Corruption Act 2001, Parliamentary Service Act 1988 and the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to improve and clarify parliamentary processes and procedures. The amendments to the Crime and Corruption Act and Parliament of Queensland Act will clarify that committee members have been allowed to participate and vote in committee meetings in person or by telephone, video or other electronic means since 23 April 1998, aligning the legislation with the standing orders that have been in effect since this date. As noted in the committee's report, this clarification removes any doubt that committee meetings were quorate and decisions validly made.

There are three amendments to the Parliamentary Service Act. The first of these amendments will amend the definition of 'parliamentary precinct'. This is necessary for the application of by-laws made by the Speaker under section 50 of the act. The amendment will clarify that the Legislative Assembly and its galleries are considered part of the precinct while the Legislative Assembly is in session. The amendment corrects an anomaly that currently exists and ensures that the by-laws made by the Speaker to control the behaviour of persons, other than members of the Legislative Assembly, entering upon the parliamentary precinct on a sitting day are able to be enforced. Disturbing the Legislative Assembly has long been recognised as a contempt of parliament, and the Criminal Code includes offences for disturbing the legislature. The amendment will ensure, should there be a disturbance in the chamber or the galleries, alternative offences will be available to the Queensland Police Service if a person is accused of an offence against the Speaker's by-laws.

The bill also provides that in a proceeding against a person accused of an offence against the Speaker's by-laws, evidence may be given in court or other place out of the Legislative Assembly of a direction made or purportedly made by the Speaker or a person authorised to make such directions during proceedings in the Assembly. An excluding provision of this nature is necessary to override the provision of the Parliament of Queensland Act that the proceedings in the Legislative Assembly cannot be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of the Assembly. A similar excluding provision currently exists in the Criminal Code in relation to the prosecution of a person under the Criminal Code for interfering or disturbing the legislature.

The final amendments to the Parliamentary Service Act will allow for the Speaker to prepare the human rights certificate and explanatory notes for by-laws and rules made by the Speaker for the parliamentary precinct under the Parliamentary Service Act. As noted in my explanatory speech, this amendment will give effect to the independence of the Office of the Speaker and the independence of the parliament from the government.

Finally, the remaining amendments are to the Parliament of Queensland Act to address some technical cross-referencing of definitions cited in the act and to also refine the process for a member of the Legislative Assembly who is unable to attend sittings of the Assembly due to ill health to notify the Speaker of their intention to vote during sittings by way of a proxy. This proxy voting issue was initially raised with the government by the Speaker, who advised that the provisions of the Parliament of Queensland Act requiring the details of a member's medical certificate to be read in the Legislative Assembly and appear in the *Record of Proceedings* are particularly onerous and potentially invasive of a member's privacy. It was suggested that it would be sufficient for the Speaker to receive a member's notification and medical certificates and advise the Assembly of the Speaker's decision accordingly. The bill will amend the Parliament of Queensland Act to provide that the Speaker will no longer be required to read the member's medical certificates to the House. I thank the Speaker, the member for Greenslopes while he was Acting Speaker, and the Clerk for their advice and feedback on these parliamentary amendments.

In closing, I would again like to thank the Economics and Governance Committee for its consideration of the bill. I acknowledge the chair, who is in the chamber with us at the moment, and the deputy chair and the great work that they did. The bill officially recognises the *Muttaburrasaurus langdoni* dinosaur as the state's fossil emblem, delivering an implementation action of the tourism strategy, Towards Tourism 2032, and makes necessary procedural changes to legislation relating to the Queensland parliament. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.36 pm): I rise to make a contribution on behalf of the LNP to the Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The opposition will be supporting this bill. I start by thanking the committee for its work and its diligence in this matter. Whilst there was only a handful of submissions to this bill, it is important that we use it as an opportunity to highlight an important part of our history as a state and of future opportunities when it comes to tourism in this great state of ours.

I want to start by talking about the amendments to the Emblems of Queensland Act and why it is important. We know that the muttaburrasaurus was first discovered in Queensland in the early 1960s. I am mindful that there is a bit of conjecture in the House, so I will be broad with that. Its discovery allowed a proud country town in a beautiful part of Queensland to highlight its identity. They have done a great job in building their tourism reputation in this space. The animal lived in what is now north-eastern Australia sometime between 103 million and 112 million years ago, during the Cretaceous period.

The muttaburrasaurus was selected as Queensland's fossil emblem after a public vote. As the minister said, there were 12 short-listed candidates. This one received nearly 28 per cent of the vote. Second place came in at less than half of that, so that was a great response for the muttaburrasaurus. I note that the ACT, New South Wales, Western Australia and South Australia already have fossil emblems. This is important for us as a state, ensuring our identity is represented and celebrated. The selection of a fossil emblem will aid in the promotion of Queensland as a palaeo tourism destination, and I really want to focus my contribution on the diversity of Queensland's tourism offering.

There is no doubt that, post COVID, Queenslanders discovered what was in their backyard, and we should be so proud of our tourism offering. We should be so proud because of how diverse, unique and special that offering is. I want to see the 2032 Olympics Games used as an opportunity to focus minds and the investment opportunities that come with developing new tourism offerings for this state. We need a 20-year tourism vision that is broken into three parts: we need to be up-front about creating new opportunities and new investment in tourism between now and 2032; we need to promote our state and every square inch of it during those games opportunities that will come when the eyes of the world are on Queensland; and then the years following will be a golden opportunity for us, having used that brand to capitalise on that investment and on that awareness of Queensland's great tourism product.

Indigenous tourism is a golden opportunity for this state. Palaeo tourism is a golden opportunity for this state. When I talk about a 20-year tourism vision, it will be a great legacy—if we get it right—for the games because, while people are here and the eyes of the world are on Queensland, we need to




celebrate every inch of Queensland. We need to make sure that emblems like the muttaburrasaurus are part of people's focus when they think about where to go in Queensland. As the minister said, palaeo tourism is a great opportunity which comes with a growth trajectory. There is a great opportunity to tap into people who have the flexibility to stay longer when they visit. When people stay longer, they spend more and they fall in love with the places they go—that is good news for us as a state.

I might touch briefly on the second part of the bill—that is, the amendments to the Crime and Corruption Act, the Parliamentary Services Act and the Parliament of Queensland Act. Having consulted with the Clerk and others, the changes to these acts address minor issues regarding matters such as participation in committee meetings by telephone, video or other electronic means; clarifications around the definition of the parliamentary precinct; and the Speaker being responsible for explanatory notes and human rights certificates for by-laws and rules made by the Speaker.

For clarity, I take the opportunity to read to the House the amendments contained in this bill as they pertain to the different acts. The bill amends the Crime and Corruption Act 2021 to retrospectively clarify that since 23 April 1998 members of the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Committee and its predecessor committees have been able to participate in committee meetings in person or by telephone, video or other electronic means. The bill amends the Parliamentary Services Act 1988 to clarify that the parliamentary precinct includes the Legislative Assembly chamber and its galleries when the Legislative Assembly is sitting. The bill amends the Parliamentary Services Act 1998 to provide that in a proceeding for an offence relating to a person's behaviour on the parliamentary precinct, despite section 8 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2021, evidence may be given in a court or other place out of the Legislative Assembly of a direction made or purportedly made by the Speaker or a person authorised to make such directions during the proceedings in the Legislative Assembly. The bill amends the Parliamentary Services Act 1988 to provide that the Speaker is to provide the human rights certificate and explanatory notes for by-laws and rules made by the Speaker under the Parliamentary Services Act. The bill amends the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to refine the process by which a member of the Legislative Assembly in a state of ill health has their request for a proxy vote noted to the assembly. The bill amends the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 to retrospectively clarify that since 23 April 1998, members of parliamentary committees have been able to participate in committee meetings in person or by telephone, video or other electronic means. Finally, the bill amends the Parliament of Queensland Act 2021 to update a number of cross-references in the act to definitions that are explained and provided for in the Electoral Act 1992.

The LNP supports the Emblems of Queensland and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. We hope that, in doing so, particularly with reference to palaeo tourism, we send the clearest of signals that everybody in this House sees it as a great opportunity. I again reaffirm my strong support for ensuring that a tourism strategy focuses on the opportunity to develop outback tourism as a part of new offerings when it comes to the lead-up to the 2032 games. This will make sure that every part of Queensland can benefit from the games and that tourism is front and centre of what we do. Proud communities in Western Queensland towns, such as Muttaborra, that have a fine history and presence when it comes to dinosaurs, can be embraced and celebrated. By doing this, these communities will understand that this type of tourism matters to Queensland. It matters to our way of life. It matters to our identity. The opposition supports this bill.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.45 pm): Last night, I saw members of the Indian community celebrating Diwali with the Premier. On the way out, they took the time to take photos in front of the great Queensland coat of arms that is in the Annexe—the very coat of arms that is above your head, Madam Deputy Speaker. I was reminded that emblems really matter. The symbols that we adopt as a state tell us something about us. That is why when it comes to our state fossil emblem, I am extraordinarily proud, together with the entire committee, to endorse the choice of the muttaburrasaurus.

We are rightfully proud of the 60,000 years or so of human habitation of Queensland and the living continuing cultures that add so much to our state. We should also recognise our extraordinary much longer history. Just think, over 100 million years ago, our state was much more temperate. The great Eromanga Sea and swamps covered the state, from the gulf to beyond the New South Wales and South Australian borders. Through these ancient forests and swamps lived an extraordinary herbaceous ornithomimid dinosaur. From tip to tail the beast was about eight metres long and weighed nearly 3,000 kilograms. The femur bone alone was over a metre long. It roamed the banks of this great sea, eating temperate plants such as ferns, cycads and conifers with its rows of grinding teeth.

Though our history of 100 million years ago is incredible, I want to focus on the events that occurred years later. This is a story of serendipity, of perseverance, of fording rivers and of discovery. It is worthy of a movie and it is a lasting legacy to an extraordinary family, a pioneering town and, of course, our state.

As the committee drove down the road between Winton and Muttaborra, each of us was searching for yet another dinosaur find. I was also thinking of the discoverer of the muttaburrasaurus, Doug Langdon. Unfortunately, I never met Doug, but by all accounts he was an extraordinary Queenslander. Doug served our country in not one but two wars. When he returned home to his wife, Pearl, on the farm he must have heard something about fossils in the area. In December 1962 he was out mustering. His wife, Pearl Langdon, told us at the hearing that when he first saw the formation on the ground he was riding off. He went a bit further and it got the better of him and he said, 'No, I am going to go back and have a look.' He got off his pony—this time—and he had a look and brought a piece back home. Pearl told us he said, 'I have found a dinosaur,' and he showed her a piece of what looked like a rock. Pearl said, 'It looked like a rock or stone to me' but he said her, 'Don't drop it, we'll send it down to the museum in Brisbane.'

To adapt the words of Banjo Paterson, who wrote poems in nearby Winton—

In my wild erratic fancy visions come to me of Doug Langdon,  
Gone a-droving "down the Thompson" where the Western drovers go;  
As the stock are slowly stringing ...

I imagine him packing that strange stone in his saddlebags returning to the herd. Further, I imagine him and Pearl wrapping it on the kitchen table in old copies of the *Western Champion* and carefully placing it on the train at Barcaldine to rattle down to Brisbane addressed 'Just "on spec" to Dr Alan Bartholomai of the Queensland Museum'.

I can imagine Dr Bartholomai unwrapping this strange western treasure in the back rooms of the old museum near the Ekka—the museum that we remember and loved as kids. He wrote back saying that he did think it was a dinosaur, but he would need more photos. The committee heard from Pearl Langdon that Doug said, 'I do not know because of the floods.' Anyway, Doug got there. He had to swim the pony across a couple of small channels, but he got the photos. He sent them to Longreach to have them developed, they got the photos back, they sent them to Alan via the mail service and Alan said, 'You have got something.'

Doug and Pearl, you bet you had something. You held in your hands at the kitchen table a piece of Queensland history. Dr Bartholomai and his team came out and dug out that first specimen. They found the bones and the head and preserved them in the Queensland Museum for hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders, especially Queensland kids, to see.

For honourable members who do not know, Doug has now passed away. When I asked his widow, Pearl, 'What would Doug think of this now, all these years later?'—his forethought and interest in creating the state's fossil emblem—in that hall in Muttaborra where the committee was sitting, she said—and there was not a dry eye in the house when she said it—

To be quite honest, I think if he is looking down here, I think he would be saying that is the best thing he had ever done for Muttaborra. He put Muttaborra on the map by saying, 'I don't want it. I've been asked for millions of dollars for it. I will not sell it.' He sent it to the museum and he said 'Queensland has Muttaborra, has the dinosaur, they can work out how they are going to clean it up and display it for everybody to see.' When that was done he was very proud when they rang up and said it was going to be called the *Muttaborrasaurus langdoni*, our surname with an 'i' on the end of it. He was so proud of it.

Pearl went on to say—


Unfortunately, he has not seen the interpretation centre. He knew of it, but he did not survive to see it. I think he would be so proud of the Muttaborra community that has worked so hard to get this building up to honour the town and, of course, it is honouring him and it has got his name now.

Doug and Pearl, you are great Queenslanders and we are honoured by your gift to us. It is right and proper that we have these animals and these bones as our fossil emblem. It is a story 100 million years in the making and has been told since 1962. It is an ancient story from a different Australia but also Doug's, Pearl's and Muttaborra's story of believing that their little piece of history was worth preserving for their town, for all Queenslanders, for all time. Today we can elevate that humble piece of stone on the Langdons' kitchen table to its honoured place as a state fossil emblem.

I want to thank all the members of the committee, especially my esteemed deputy chair. We were welcomed so warmly in the town of Winton by the Mayor of the Winton shire Council, Councillor Gavin Baskett, and by the Mayor of Barcaldine Regional Council, Councillor Sean Dillon. They did a great job in advocating for their town and for dinosaur tourism. I certainly hope I have not ruined any of their preselection chances by saying they are great blokes!

I also want to recognise the Australian Age of Dinosaurs and the Museum of Natural History—Mr David Elliott and Ms Naomi Miles, who both welcomed us so warmly to the museum. They were the ones who kicked off this process of having a fossil emblem. They had a different nominee, a fantastic nominee we thought. They were so warm and generous about the muttaburrasaurus getting the gong because they knew it was going to be great for the entire region. They also know it was a great story. I want to thank them. Every Queenslanders should take the time to drive out to Barcaldine and to Winton and to visit the Australian Age of Dinosaurs. It is an extraordinary piece of history and an extraordinary testament to David's dedication to the fossils of Queensland.

Lastly, I want to inform the opposition leader that this committee is so committed to dinosaur and Palaeolithic tourism that we are—and I am surprised he has not been following it, as many Queenslanders are following our great examination of this—going to conduct a further inquiry that we self-initiated into Palaeolithic and dinosaur tourism. We see extraordinary opportunities to showcase—not just to use as a hook—our dinosaur and Palaeolithic history as well as the dedication of those communities and the warmth of Central and Outback Queensland, which is absolutely fantastic. One of the things we will be concentrating on is getting international visitors to feel that warmth and to see the welcoming and fantastic communities out there. I again thank Doug and Pearl and I thank all of Muttaborra, Winton and Barcaldine for the warmth they showed to the committee.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (6.54 pm): In January of this year I saw the announcement by the Premier, which was as a result of David Elliott putting the idea to the government, that she had decided we would have a dinosaur emblem for Queensland. That would obviously promote our palaeo tourism and recognise the fantastic interest that is out there, particularly with our young people, in the dinosaurs of an age gone by. I texted the Premier pretty quickly and advised her that the *Kronosaurus queenslandicus*, which is a big sea-dwelling dinosaur, was found in Richmond, North-West Queensland, which happened to be my home town. It was actually found on our family property in 1926. I was not there at the time. We did not actually own the property at the time; we owned the property next door. My father tells me he saw the camps and the excavation and that type of thing. It ended up in Harvard University because they paid for the expedition to come out to Australia. There was not much money around then for Australian people to put dinosaur skeletons together, which is quite an expensive, painstaking process.

Since I was a young boy I have had an enormous interest in the dinosaurs of another era. Every time I went mustering, chasing sheep on a Suzuki 250 around that particular paddock where the *Kronosaurus* was found, I would go up and down gullies looking for more dinosaurs. We had plenty of ammonites and plenty of cephalopods—they were a dime a dozen—but no big score. My interest in dinosaurs and an age gone by was absolutely cemented from a young age and it passed on to my kids, who loved the dinosaurs, particularly the T-rex. Unfortunately, I am assured we will never find a T-rex in Australia. Now the grandkids—their kids—are absolutely fascinated with dinosaurs and I am great with the *Tyrannosaurus rex* puppet.

When the Premier advised that we were going to make an emblem for Queensland, I knew the great advantage that would have for our Outback towns. Richmond was a little whistlestop town that everyone drove through until the *Kronosaurus* Korner was built. Robbie levers, a guy I grew up with on Marathon Station, found another dinosaur out there that is yet to be named. Someone suggested it should be named the 'Rayasaurus'. Robbie turned the old Richmond picture show into a museum with the support of the Borbidge government—about \$2 million, as I recall—which turned it into a major tourism stop for Richmond. You can see the big crocodile, the *Kronosaurus queenslandicus*, on that corner in Richmond near the caravan park and the lake. It has really made the tourism industry a major support for the town.

I am totally committed to—and I am pleased to hear the chair speak about it—exploring further palaeo tourism opportunities early next year with the committee. The fact of the matter is that there are many opportunities for those Outback towns to enjoy extra money coming in from a tourism industry that at the moment basically consists of the grey nomads and the young people who are fascinated with the dinosaur era and the muttaburrasaurus.

I will be making a dissected speech tonight, delivering the second part in the adjournment debate, when I will talk more about how this has really improved things in terms of tourism and also the wonderful effort of David Elliott. I have to say: in Winton, which is part of the promotional dinosaur triangle that takes in Hughenden, Richmond and Winton, there is a magnificent facility paid for by AB Paterson College on the Gold Coast—about \$4 million worth—for the Outward Bound camps. They

truck their students from the Gold Coast to Winton so they can get a feel for what the dinosaur world was all about. It is a fascinating world. It is a great opportunity because Queensland is an important area in the world for palaeo tourism. As the chairman said, we are going to explore it further early next year. I will have more to say about the muttaburrasaurus in part 2 of my contribution.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stevens, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

### Nature Freedom



**Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (7.00 pm): There are many hardworking groups within our community performing amazing work, often with little recognition or support. I want to specifically commend the work of one such group, and that is Nature Freedom run by Mathew Townsend, a Chatsworth local. Nature Freedom aims to create inclusive and accessible nature-based activities for people living with a disability. In addition, it seeks to provide employment opportunities within the organisation for those with disabilities—a virtuous circle you could say. Many of the activities involved are water based such as canoeing and kayaking. It also offers hiking and bushwalking in some of the most spectacular areas of not only Brisbane but also South-East Queensland. This enables many people who are living with a disability an opportunity to get out and experience the great outdoors with an added measure of freedom. This has the benefit of affording people with disabilities the chance to experience firsthand nature at its best.

What is impressive about Nature Freedom is the collaborative approach it adopts in undertaking its valuable work. Nature Freedom works with industry, government, other community groups and individuals to help maximise the potential of its offerings. As such, its outdoor activities and tours are co-designed by people with disabilities along with other community groups. This collaborative approach is something we can all learn from to ensure that collective ideas are taken into consideration when formulating plans for the future.

While the success of Nature Freedom is attributed to many individuals within the organisation, it can be traced back to the determination, hard work and passion of its founder—an outstanding young man, Mr Mathew Townsend. To his credit, Mathew did not let his own disabilities of Asperger's syndrome and loss of hearing stand in the way of exploring his passions. Not only did he achieve a bachelor of environmental science from James Cook University in Townsville; he also then went on an eight-month trip through the national parks of the United States. It was there that he discovered his love of nature and exploring the outdoors. Mathew brought that passion to Nature Freedom where it satisfied a number of key initiatives. Mathew understands the difficulties faced by people living with a disability, feeling isolated and being rejected at times for jobs. Unfortunately this is an all too familiar scenario for many people, but in Mathew's case he showed the determination needed to get a project off the ground and this led to the creation of Nature Freedom.

This organisation, founded with the goal of facilitating the engagement of people with disabilities within our community, has continued to thrive under Mathew's stewardship. Along the way, many people who might otherwise not have experienced the marvels that South-East Queensland has to offer have had the chance of a lifetime. This story is both inspiring as well as humbling. Thank you on behalf of the Chatsworth community to Mathew and Nature Freedom for the important work that they do.

### Emergency Services, Personnel



**Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (7.03 pm): It is with honour that they serve—the men and women in the Queensland police and Protective Services and in the Fire and Emergency Services. The Palaszczuk government has a plan to deliver the services and infrastructure to meet a growing need. We acknowledge the commitment that these officers make. The biggest risks to Queensland are the secret cuts planned by the opposition. The LNP leader must reveal its plans to Queenslanders. Queenslanders have a right to know what will be cut.


I have attended many graduation ceremonies at the Tom Molloy Parade Ground at the Queensland Police Service Academy. The Tom Molloy Parade Ground, where recruits are inducted and graduate, is also known as the Sacred Acre. The Sacred Acre was named in honour of Sergeant Tom Molloy following his retirement from the Queensland Police Service. Tom Molloy was a well-known

drill sergeant and he was one of the original sergeants at the academy when it first opened in 1972. At each graduation ceremony I have witnessed the determination and commitment of the men and women graduating. They display an inner strength and a desire to serve the people of Queensland. I was impressed when I read their stories. They have diverse backgrounds and interests, and I know the value of diversity as I see it every day in my local community.

As I reflect on these men and women, I worry. I worry about the opposition's secret cuts to services and infrastructure across the board. How will this dent their enthusiasm or impact on the pride they demonstrate? Will their job be a part of these unrevealed LNP cuts? How will they be able to do their job to the best of their abilities if they are hamstrung with a lack of support and poor infrastructure? We ask a lot of these men and women. It is our responsibility to provide the resources they need for their job. The Palaszczuk government has a plan to deliver the services and infrastructure to meet growing needs. I call on the opposition and the LNP to reveal to Queenslanders what services and infrastructure they will cut. As we heard from the Minister for Police in his ministerial statement this week, there are approximately 300 applicants in the pipeline and there has been—

*(Time expired)*

### Toowoomba South Electorate

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (7.06 pm): One of the most important things you can do as the local member is to continue to fight for those particular projects that provide community safety. This is something that I take very seriously from corner to corner of my electorate in terms of those areas that we need to work on to improve community safety and develop community infrastructure. Tonight I want to talk about some of the projects that are key throughout my electorate, including the Glenvale State School drop-off and pick-up zone, which has been delivered. Some 2,000 cars go up and down Glenvale Road. We have the drop-off and pick-up zone delivered now which is providing extra security for the kids and staff, but now I want to see some flashing lights on McDougall Street. A lot of kids cross over McDougall Street. I want to make sure that we get the flashing lights there as soon as we possibly can to protect our kids, staff and families.

Further across in Glenvale is the Toowoomba West Men's Shed. The Men's Shed was set up by Murray many years ago, a mental health worker. It provides a great support to older men in the community. It is time for them to get an upgrade. I met with them recently. Rob, the new president, is looking for an upgrade. I want to keep fighting for that because the least we can offer our older citizens is that support as they age in a place where they can go and be comfortable and share their lives with each other.

Further across the electorate is Darling Heights State School. Three kids have been hospitalised in the last six years from accidents there. I want to make sure that we get the signage right and we get additional flashing lights, because the kids at Darling Heights State School deserve that. I stood recently with Jessica and her young lad, who had been narrowly missed by a vehicle. We really need to fix that and make sure we get security and safety there again for the children and staff getting to and from school.

I want to spend some time talking about Neighbourhood Watch. It plays a vital role. Toowoomba has been through a terrible crime wave over the last 12 to 18 months. We need to make sure that people and the community are equipped with what they need to look out for each other. That is why I am calling for additional funding into some Neighbourhood Watch groups for additional support. I think of Ken who is running the Neighbourhood Watch out of Rangeville which covers Middle Ridge and Centenary Heights. I think of Brian who has done an amazing job at Harristown with his team. We want to get that Neighbourhood Watch up and going again because it offers valuable support across the community, sharing with each other, making sure people are looking out for each other.

Finally, I want to make sure that we get the parking that we need at Gabbinbar State School. I recently caught up with Lisa and a whole bunch of other mums including Sally, Steph and Emma. We have to make sure that there are additional car parks there. The council recently came through and gave a whole bunch of families parking tickets. That is not good enough. We need to get that park sorted on the corner of Stenner and MacKenzie streets, get additional parks and make sure that those students and their families can get to and from school safely.

*(Time expired)*

### Mansfield Electorate



**Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (7.10 pm): Comprising nine suburbs, Mansfield stands as a proud community with a rich cultural tapestry, encompassing approximately 30 per cent of Chinese heritage, 30 per cent of Indian heritage and the remaining residents Caucasian—Australian, New Zealand, English, Canadian and South African. This diverse blend is what truly makes Mansfield special. At the heart of our community lies our world-class schools, not mere educational institutions but creative hubs fostering critical and deep thinking. Having secured more than \$180 million in funding for our local schools, I take pride in ensuring our students access the best possible education, attracting families from across Australia's east coast and Asia who choose to move to the Mansfield electorate.

Exciting developments in connectivity are reshaping our community. The direct flight from Brisbane to China marks a significant milestone for our community. I have dedicated considerable efforts to collaborating with the federal government, the state government, the Consulate-General of China in Brisbane and various community leaders to make this a reality. This new era of connectivity will have a positive impact on families who commute each week and on our tourism export industries and job markets. It is not just a flight to my community; it is a leap towards a more prosperous future for Mansfield.

The Palaszczuk government has recently unveiled the \$62 billion Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. Queensland is embarking on an exciting journey towards cheaper, cleaner and more secure energy. We are taking action on climate change while delivering cheaper power bills for our residents. Renewable energy is the way of the future and we are committed to harnessing its potential. Around 20 per cent of Queensland's energy is currently sourced from renewables, and we are targeting 50 per cent by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. This transition is expected to create approximately 100,000 new industrial jobs in hydrogen, renewables, manufacturing and critical minerals. As we approach the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Queensland anticipates a golden decade of rapid growth and increased investment, with businesses set to share \$180 billion in government procurement leading up to 2032.

China, our largest trading partner, plays a crucial role in our state's economy. The implementation of the China-Australia Free Trade Agreement is stimulating Chinese investment in a number of strategic industries, including in the renewable energy sector. As the state member representing the electorate of Mansfield, I am thrilled to witness the positive changes shaping our community. From our world-class schools to the direct flights to China and our commitment to renewable energy and job creation, Mansfield is indeed a place of opportunity and growth.

### Southern Downs Electorate, Bushfires




**Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (7.13 pm): I rise to speak to the House about the fires which have occurred in South-West Queensland and in my electorate of Southern Downs. Members would be aware that the areas south-west of Millmerran in Cypress Gardens experienced fires in which homes and property were lost. Also on the eastern side of my electorate of Southern Downs, the townships of Dalveen and Wallangarra experienced fires. They are dealing with it very well. The rural fire brigade emergency services did a great job. I acknowledge that the state government has sent the department of communities and other agencies into those towns to assist locals, which is great to see.

I would like to point out that it is not just in the townships where there has been damage. Fire has ravaged the pastures of many of our primary producers. This has left them without feed for their animals and also with damage to fences. This is very serious in that stock cannot be confined to the landholder's property. I would ask the state government to be mindful of the need to assist farmers who have lost fences. I know that in the past they have co-contributed with the federal government to a scheme to assist farmers with replacing fences damaged by fires, but I ask that they be mindful of the fact that it is sometimes difficult to obtain contractors at the moment. I ask that they let the farmers do so themselves and claim the amount, or at least allow the scheme to operate for long enough so that those who are affected are able to get contractors to do their fences for them and charge it back.

I note the presence in the chamber of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I ask that the state government, without delay, move to repair the Wallangarra railway line. I have written to the minister about this. It is an important line in my electorate for the businesses that rely on the tourist trade. That line takes the Southern Downs steam railway to Wallangarra. Many of the wineries and shops depend on people who seek that experience. It is also a very strategically important line in that

it provides access to the military presence at Wallangarra and Jennings just over the border, where very important strategic reserves of engineering stores are kept, plus explosive ordnance—shells, bullets and so forth. In a national emergency we may well need rail access to those sites to access those stores. I was very sad to see that there was damage to the line. One would not think the wooden structures would be able to burn as they were so strong and such hard wood, but, nevertheless, they did. Until those several bridges are replaced, trains will not be able to operate on that line. I implore the government to act without delay to restore that railway line to operation.

### Stafford Electorate, School Graduations


 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (7.16 pm): It is an exciting time of year for year 12 students. I would like to say a big congratulations and best wishes to all those graduating this week. I have been to all of my schools for speech nights, academic awards, graduations and vale ceremonies—with a couple more to come this week. I want to say a particular thank you to my team—Dana, Darren and Artie—for making sure that, despite my presence here in parliament, I was represented at some this week and for providing the graduation packs for the year 12 students. It is a really important time of year for them and an important time in their lives.

I particularly want to give a shout-out to the school captains of the high schools that I have worked with over the last 12 months. I love seeing their contribution to their schools. I thank them for their contribution to the school and to the community more broadly. I love seeing the growth in them over the year. It is really rewarding seeing them walk out of the school with such pride. I give a particular shout-out to: at Wavell High, Madi, Louis, Eamon, Charlie-Rose and Jaeden, the SRC captain; at Mount A, Erin and Lizzie; at Padua, Dom and Will; at Craigslea, Zane, Mikiah, Morgan and Nick; and at Everton Park—I did get there on Monday night for their speech night—Ellen and Dan. All of them in their own way created their own identity throughout the year and I think our community is better for their contribution.

With some self-indulgence—I have said this privately and I will say it publicly—education was absolutely a motivation for getting into public life. The next thing was not a motivation but it is an added bonus that I have realised in public life—that is, the ability to embarrass your children. Our household is one of those households with a year 12 graduating student this year, so congratulations to Olivia for her hard work. I wish her all the best. It also means I am one of those parents who will be fretful for the next week with the onset of schoolies. Minister Enoch has assured me that there is nothing to worry about and it is going to be safe. I know that there are a few of us on this side of the House and I express empathy with those on the other side if they are in the same boat. Joking aside, we are very proud of them.

I wish the best of luck to all graduating students across Queensland, particularly from my local schools in Stafford. We wish you the best for the years to come. I acknowledge the partnership it takes to deliver that—the departmental staff, the teachers, the school principals and leaders and the support staff—as well as, of course, the partnership with parents and families to make that happen, when you think back on the number of school uniforms washed, lunches made and school drop-offs and pick-ups done over those 13 years. Congratulations to everyone involved.

### Hinchinbrook Electorate, Health Services

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (7.19 pm): Tonight I rise to reaffirm my commitment to the Hinchinbrook electorate to improve and protect health services across the electorate. At the start of this term, we were able to open dialysis services at the Ingham Hospital to help patients who have been travelling back and forth from Townsville on a daily basis. We coined the phrase ‘dying slowly on the highway’ because those people were spending up to eight hours a day travelling backwards and forwards for their dialysis treatment, which was really starting to wear down some of those families.


We have also worked closely with Queensland Health and the Townsville Hospital and Health Service. Our maternity services were almost put on bypass, but they were able to work with the local doctors—people such as Dr Carmen Cockburn—to make sure we could cover the services. We wanted to ensure babies can be born at the Ingham Hospital, just as my son and I were.

I have also been working with the Cardwell community, Queensland Health and the primary health network to come up with a hybrid model to save the Cardwell Family Practice, which we feared would shut down. Because of our hard work, 1,000 patients will continue to have services delivered by that medical centre.

Today I was very proud to be in the House when the Minister for Health told us that, after five years of hard lobbying by the community, a CT scanner will be delivered to the Ingham Hospital. A CT scanner is very important for people who perhaps have had or are suspected of having a stroke or who have suffered a trauma incident. A CT scan enables doctors to understand how best to treat such patients in a timely manner, which will save lives and improve health outcomes for all in the community.

I take this opportunity to thank a number of people including Peter Smith, the chair of the Ingham Health Service Community Advisory Network. I acknowledge the ATSI Community Advisory Network for the Ingham Hospital, the Townsville University Hospital and Mayor Ramon Jayo, who advocated very heavily for the scanner. Thirty community organisations and representatives met at the front of the hospital to sign a charter of support. Those organisations included Ingham Disability Support Services, Ingham Gymnastics, Meals on Wheels, Herbert River Jockey Club, the Ingham Theatre Group, Ozcare, Canegrowers, Forrest Beach Progress Association, Ingham Tennis Association, Hinchinbrook Shire Council, Ingham Golf Club, Lions Club, Taylors Beach Progress Association and Queensland County Women's Association Forrest Beach branch. That goes to show that it was not just me and some people at the hospital advocating for the CT scanner; it was a project that the whole of the Hinchinbrook shire and electorate wanted. Once again, I thank the minister and I look forward to the delivery of the project.

### Redland Housing Strategy

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (7.21 pm): Following on from the contribution of the member for Stafford, I start by reminding anybody who came into this place in 2018 that this will be the year that the little year 7s we saw then will graduate from year 12. That it is exciting. I think it is really lovely. I am looking forward to attending the Victoria Point State High School for their graduation on Friday. I congratulate everybody who is graduating. What an achievement.


I want to talk about the Redland Housing Strategy. Today I had the opportunity to tune in to hear a little of the Redland City Council meeting, which was quite illuminating on a number of fronts. I will give a bit of history on the Redland City Council's existing housing strategy. It was developed in 2011 and it was underpinned by 2006 data. That data is nearly 20 years old. Everybody in this chamber would know that that is totally redundant data, particularly as we are in the midst of a housing crisis, yet it is being held up as the gold standard for what planning for housing and growth looks like.

Four times the state government asked the Redland City Council to redo that strategy. They refused. They absolutely rejected the premise of doing that good piece of planning work that every council should want to do. They rejected it. Since the state has stepped in to assist them to deliver the housing strategy, they have come out criticising. I struggle with the whole context of their position.

This afternoon I had the chance to listen to Mayor Karen Williams and Steve Austin on drivetime radio. In her discussion with Steve, not once did she mention the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. Barely once are the Southern Moreton Bay Islands mentioned in the original housing strategy. Today in the council meeting, council officer Drew certainly drew the short straw because he had to deliver the news that Redland City have incorporated into their old housing strategy 6½ thousand more blocks across the four Southern Moreton Bay Islands.

Everybody in this room will have heard me talk endlessly about those islands. Anyone who thinks that you can put residential housing supply onto an island that already has constrained infrastructure and limitations is absolutely off their rocker. For the mayor to not have mentioned that is absolutely outrageous. To talk about how the growth being planned for in the housing strategy will be like shoving sardines into the Redlands—I can tell you where she wants to shove her sardines and it is into the Southern Moreton Bay Islands. It is literally on the record—and today council officer Drew told the council—that over the past five years they have allowed 1,000 homes to be developed on those islands. That is absolutely outrageous. Anybody who knows how the ferry services work and the way that services are delivered over there should be absolutely outraged. The mayor should hang her head in shame.

### Mount Lindesay Highway

 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (7.24 pm): We have all heard about the Albanese government's shameful infrastructure cuts that are coming to Queensland and the fake fight that this Labor government has been putting up against them. As if going from 80-20 funding to 50-50 funding on all road and rail projects around the state is not bad enough, I fear that one upgrade project near the Scenic Rim electorate has already been chopped as a result of the reviews being undertaken by the Albanese government to cut funding.



I refer to the Mount Lindesay Highway upgrade project where \$53 million was budgeted to build four lanes through Jimboomba. It is an essential project for congestion busting. It was meant to start in early 2023 and yet still we have not seen a sod turned on that project. A long time ago we saw the banners go up to advertise that it would be a great project for Jimboomba but not a single sod has been turned. Of that \$53 million in funding, \$42 million was secured by Scott Buchholz, the federal LNP member for Wright, during the term of the previous government. As I said, it was supposed to start early in 2023. I want to know: where is the money? Where is the project? More importantly, has it been a victim of the Albanese government cuts?

It is a disgraceful effort by the Albanese government to cut infrastructure funding for Queensland. The Labor government in Canberra does not care about rural and regional Queensland and the Labor government here in Brisbane has spent 30 of the past 35 years neglecting rural and regional Queensland. The LNP is the only party that has cared about the Mount Lindesay Highway over the past 10 years. When Scott Buchholz was the assistant minister for transport, the Morrison government invested nearly \$100 million into the Mount Lindesay Highway. The only reason that upgrades have occurred between Stoney Camp Road and Chambers Flat Road is because the LNP federal government actually invested in that road.

**Mr Watts:** What did Labor do?

**Mr KRAUSE:** They got into government in Canberra and they cut the funding. I have said before that the member for Logan is the luckiest state member around because he had Scotty Buchholz and the LNP to back his efforts. It had nothing to do with the minister. If it were not for the LNP, none of those upgrades would have occurred. There are other things that we could speak about in terms of infrastructure cuts such as the Cunningham Highway and the Warrego Highway, which are all on the chopping block. The Mount Lindesay Highway cuts are a disgrace.

*(Time expired)*

### **Capalaba Electorate, Redland City Council**



**Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (7.27 pm): The LNP's savage cuts came to Capalaba today and it was the poor Redlands BMX Club that has suffered. It has been cut out of the Redlands sports precinct on Heinemann Road. Not only has the BMX club been cut out; so too has the cycling club and the water playground. Why did all of this happen today? We have seen cuts made in other city council budgets. I know that the Brisbane City Council has cut \$400 million. Savage cuts are being made by the LNP mayor in the Redlands and our sporting clubs will suffer.

Currently, the BMX club is located in Capalaba behind the PCYC. It has outgrown that location and there are parking restrictions. The basketball club is expanding. They are all restricted by the land there. What did council promise? They promised them brand new facilities. They used them in the promo videos in 2021. They used the kids in the promo videos in 2022. What did they do in 2023? They cut them out! It is the poor kids who will suffer. They were promised a new facility. I went back and looked at the promo videos. The kids were so excited about the World Cup coming in 2026. It is an Olympic sport that will be held at Chandler, right next door.

The club was cut away because of a dodgy land deal done with an LNP mate. Karen Williams brought her place from Betty Goleby, who is an LNP stalwart down in the Redlands. A few years later, the council conveniently bought Betty Goleby's land. Ever since then it has been a disaster. They paid way too much because they did the negotiations. They did not do it through the council officers but through the Redland Investment Corporation. They made the negotiations secret. They hid it away, but things have come home to roost. They did not do the geological studies. They did not do any studies from what I can see. Ever since then, the environmental impacts have come home to roost and they cannot do what they said they would do.

They promised a water playground but today it was cut. They promised a cycling course, which was going to be the first cycling course and club in the Redlands. It was cut. Now, the poor old Redlands BMX Club will not get what they were promised because the council did not do their due diligence. They spend lots of money on planning. The rates are the highest in South-East Queensland. We are not getting what we were promised. The rates are going through the roof. Now we see savage cuts. We have had close to 12 years of LNP rule in the Redlands. If those opposite get in then they will cut as well, just as we are seeing savage LNP cuts right now in the Redlands.

The House adjourned at 7.31 pm.

**ATTENDANCE**

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Camm, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gerber, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Head, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Janetzki, Katter, Kelly, King A, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, Madden, Mander, Martin, McCallum, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, 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