



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

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## WEDNESDAY, 29 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

#### Photographs in Chamber



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have approved for staff of the Parliamentary Service to take photographs in the chamber this morning during preliminary business for use in parliamentary social media and education promotions. Photographs will be taken from the gallery and from the rear of the chamber.

#### Parliamentary Annexe, Christmas Tree



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, once again Timber Queensland has kindly installed a live Christmas tree in the foyer of the parliamentary annexe which I am sure most of you have admired. The tree has become a Christmas fixture here at the Queensland parliament. I thank Timber Queensland for their work in making this happen each year. I am delighted to have been informed that the tree has been decorated differently this year, incorporating sustainable decorations made from natural products such as a star tree topper made from straw, twig garlands, pine cones and seed pods. I also commend the member for Maryborough and the member for Gympie for their efforts in supporting Queensland's timber industry as co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of the Forest and Timber Industry. Tomorrow at 12.30 pm Timber Queensland and the Parliamentary Friends of the Forest and Timber Industry are officially launching the tree for 2023. I look forward to members being at that event at that time.

#### School Group Tour



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from St John Fisher College Bracken Ridge in the electorate of Sandgate.

### PETITION

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

#### Edmonton, Proposed Youth Detention Centre

387 petitioners, requesting the House to consult with the local community and residents to find a more appropriate site than Edmonton to locate a youth detention centre [\[2020\]](#).

Petition received.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Job Creation




**Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.33 am): Our government is committed to creating good jobs for all Queenslanders. It has been three years since I launched our COVID economic recovery plan. It is a plan that has made Queensland's economy the strongest in the nation, with the fastest jobs growth on the east coast of Australia. There are more than 286,900 more jobs in Queensland than in March 2020. Our economy is set to grow at three per cent this financial year—or twice as fast as the nation.

In more good news, new regional labour force data has revealed low unemployment rates across regional Queensland. When the Townsville nickel refinery closed, unemployment was over 11 per cent. Today it is 2.9 per cent, one of the lowest in Queensland. There are 7,000 more jobs in Central Queensland than this time last year. There are 21,800 more on the Sunshine Coast, where the unemployment rate is 3.1 per cent. Unemployment in the Wide Bay has fallen from 10.1 per cent to six per cent, helped in large part by the reshoring of train and defence manufacturing. In Cairns, unemployment has fallen from 7.9 per cent when we came to government to 3.2 per cent.

These fantastic job numbers are because our government invests in our people. It is why this year we have provided free TAFE to more than 65,000 students in critical employment areas like nursing, early childhood, accounting and bookkeeping. On top of that, we are continuing to invest in Skilling Queenslanders for Work and Back to Work. More than \$675 million in funding has assisted more than 81,000 Queenslanders. Our Back to Work program has seen nearly 30,000 Queenslanders employed since its inception. Something else we know that will drive down Queensland unemployment is free kindy. That means parents like Elizabeth, whom I met at Lady Gowrie childcare centre with Minister Grace, will be able to go back to full-time work thanks to free kindy for her two boys.

We have the biggest infrastructure build in our state's history. Our Energy and Jobs Plan will mean more good, secure jobs across our state, and we are blazing the trail for more new industries. We are committed to job creation, and I know that Queensland's best days are well and truly ahead of us.


### Tourism Industry

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.35 am): At last count there were 64,000 Queensland businesses associated with the tourism industry. It creates one in 15 jobs. Last week I visited Cairns to celebrate the best of Queensland's tourism operators and share ideas about how we can grow the \$33 billion a year industry. At the tourism awards we celebrated more than 180 businesses across more than 30 categories, including Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary for best major tourist attraction; Bundaberg Rum Distillery for best tourist attraction; Cairns Paronella Park for the people's choice award; and Cape York Peninsula Lodge for best Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism. Fittingly, the forum and tourism awards were held at our newly expanded Cairns Convention Centre, which our government built and backed, supporting more than 1,000 jobs. This convention centre will contribute \$100 million to the Cairns economy in the next financial year alone.

We know that Queensland is home to international drawcards, bringing visitors from across the world. When our airports are busy, Queensland is busy. That is why our government invested \$200 million in our Aviation Attraction Fund, so far adding 26 routes and 1.9 million more passengers. Other airlines are taking up Queensland's call. Today I can announce one more. In February next year, China Eastern Airlines will be flying direct from Shanghai to beautiful Cairns. Over the Chinese New Year period, China Eastern will operate 10 flights to Cairns four times a week—on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. These services are expected to bring more than 2,300 passengers into the Far North and pour \$3 million into the Tropical Far North visitor economy.

Attracting more flights from China, especially to Cairns, was a key feature of my recent trade mission to Shanghai and Beijing. It was something my delegation strongly advocated for in our meeting with China Eastern's executive vice-president, Mr Wan Qingchao. We know that reconnecting with Chinese visitors is an extremely important part of growing our state's visitor economy because the money goes into coffee shops, hotels, motels, restaurants, clothes shops, bus and boat companies and, most importantly, back into Queensland households.

### Knife Crime

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.38 am): The death of Jack Beasley in 2019 was a tragedy. Since then his family has worked with our government to implement Jack's Law. Jack's Law has seen more than 36,000 people wanded, resulting in 380 weapons being confiscated. It is making a material difference by removing dangerous weapons from our streets and preventing knife crime. Today we go even further. New laws will be introduced by the police minister to ban the sale of knives and other weapons to children. Knives, replica firearms like some gel blasters, axes and machetes will be banned from being sold to anyone under the age of 18.

The changes will mean that retailers must securely store dangerous weapons, including machetes and axes, making it harder for dangerous items to end up in the wrong hands. The proposed maximum penalty for a retailer who sells a knife or other controlled item to a minor will be \$21,672. That goes up to \$65,016 for multiple failures to prohibit sales. These new amendments will aim to reduce the accessibility of those dangerous items to young people, deterring violent offences before they can happen. We are giving our police another tool to combat youth crime and, most importantly, to keep Queenslanders safe.

I want to thank Brett and Belinda Beasley for their continued advocacy on this very important matter. It is with their drive and support that Queensland is leading the nation in knife crime prevention. Our government is committed to keeping Queenslanders safe. We will continue to deliver early intervention and community safety programs that work, backed by a record \$446 million investment, and provide our police force with the personnel and equipment they need to protect communities. We will keep listening and acting for the benefit of Queenslanders and their families.

### **Rookwood Weir; Brisbane City Council, Infrastructure Funding**



**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.40 am): The Palaszczuk government's \$89 billion Big Build is delivering the hospitals, roads, railways, schools and energy system our growing state deserves. However, that is not the only infrastructure we are delivering for Queensland, because it is only Labor governments that deliver new dams and weirs for our state. Our government understands the importance of water security, which is why, since 2015, we have delivered more than \$5 billion in water infrastructure for our state.

Last week, when I had the opportunity to open Rookwood Weir with the Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Water, Glenn Butcher; the member for Rockhampton, Barry O'Rourke; and the federal minister for water, Tanya Plibersek, we were delivering on our commitment to the people of Queensland. Delivering on that commitment was not easy, but it was critically important. As Sunwater CEO Glenn Stockton said last Wednesday, building crews had to deal with six major flooding events during the course of construction. That meant pulling all of the construction equipment out of the second biggest river catchment in Australia and then, when the water receded, starting work again. Because of those flooding events and the rising costs of materials such as concrete and steel, the cost of Rookwood Weir rose like the floodwaters.

Faced with a construction bill that increased by more than \$200 million, some like the LNP would have called it an embarrassing cost blowout and would have cut the project. Our government did not hesitate; we pushed on. We worked with the federal government to meet those rising costs in a great example of state and federal governments working together. Because of that cooperation and the diligence of so many workers and companies on the project, Rookwood Weir now stands as a job-creating, prosperity-building piece of infrastructure for Central Queensland. Sunwater estimates that over the next 20 years Rookwood Weir will add up to \$3½ billion to Central Queensland's agricultural sector. Rookwood Weir, the biggest weir built in this country since the Second World War, will stand for generations.

That is in very stark contrast to the attitude of Brisbane's LNP council when it comes to infrastructure. At the first sign of budget pressure, Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner has gone straight to his party's playbook for when things get tough.

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection from the member for Everton. How dare he? How dare he cut! In the electorate of Lytton, the LNP Lord Mayor has cut the Lindum Road level crossing project. In the electorate of Sandgate, he has cut the Bracken Ridge SES depot.

**An honourable member** interjected.


**Mr DICK:** I take the interjection: it is an absolute disgrace. Imagine cutting funding for an SES depot when we are heading into a summer that might have record rainfall. That SES depot would help to protect communities. The LNP Lord Mayor has even cut the budget for grass cutting.

If the Lord Mayor was looking for ways to save, I could have suggested he cut the billboards he has plastered across the north side claiming credit for the Gympie Road tunnel. Mayor Schrinner should cut the billboards instead of cutting contractors before Christmas. Stop the billboards: that is what I say. Despite media reports to the contrary, the Gympie Road tunnel is not a council project. It is being led by the Palaszczuk Labor government. I say for the benefit of the House that, to deliver for that

community on the north side, that project is being led on the urgings of the Labor members for Aspley, Pine Rivers and Stafford. Adrian Schrinner has not put one cent into the Gympie Road tunnel so he might want to stop stealing other people's homework.

When costs rise, governments at all levels have a choice: they can cut and run and cut projects or they can stay the course. Our government will always do the right thing by Queenslanders. Our government will always abide by our commitments to deliver the infrastructure that the people of our state deserve.

### Kindergarten

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.45 am): I would add that they may want to cut the newsletters so that they can cut the grass. The Palaszczuk government is making kindy free for Queensland kids in 2024. This will save families up to \$4,600 a year, providing much needed cost-of-living relief and delivering a great start in life to Queensland kids. Last week I met with representatives from across the early childhood sector at the Early Childhood Forum, where there was overwhelming support for free kindy. Our providers are ready and raring to go.

I can advise the House that our Kindy for All initiative, which started this year, is already delivering positive results, with kindergarten enrolments up 3.6 per cent in 2023 and significant increases across all target cohorts: a 16.3 per cent increase for children with disability, a 10.7 per cent increase for vulnerable and disadvantaged children and a 10.4 per cent increase for First Nations children. These fantastic results are being achieved through our existing Kindy for All initiative, and we look forward to further improvements when free kindy commences next year.

In total, the Palaszczuk government will pour \$2 billion into free kindy over the next four years, underpinned by targeted investments that include: \$120 million on our early childhood workforce strategy, paying dividends; a \$20 million increase in our kindy uplift program, which will rise to \$112 million over four years, already paying dividends; our \$50 million boost to support children with inclusion support needs, taking the total investment in kindergarten inclusion to \$91 million over four years, paying dividends now.

Our investment in the new online kindy finder has also paid dividends. There have been more than 330,000 visits to the site and more than 12,500 free kindy finder searches since the launch in early October. Hopefully, we will get many more as the Wiggles tour Queensland in coming weeks, spreading the free kindy message in concerts from Cairns to Townsville, Mackay and Brisbane. I cannot wait to join them in Brisbane to spread that message around.

I am also delighted to report that every one of our 2,109 approved providers operating a kindergarten program in 2024 will deliver free kindy. This will be spread across both long day care services and sessional kindergartens. Free kindy is coming in 2024, just in case you missed it. I encourage all families with kindy-age children to enrol for next year if they have not already done so.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.


**Ms GRACE:** I take the interjection: 'From enrolments'.

**Mr Bleijie:** 'Minister Bailey, first enrolment'. That's what I said.

**Ms GRACE:** I will not take that interjection. If there is any way that someone opposite can find a negative and have a whinge and a whine about a good program, I will leave it to the member for Kawana. This is yet another way that the Palaszczuk government is delivering great services and cost-of-living support to Queensland families no matter where they live. If the member for Kawana wants to enrol in kindy, I am sure they will accept his application as well.

**Mr SPEAKER:** They might not; that is actually true.

### Knife Crime

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (9.49 am): When you look around the world, there are lessons to be learned. Sadly, there are jurisdictions in other parts of the world where a knife culture has taken hold, and those communities have experienced the terrible consequences that flow from that. In Queensland, we have led the nation in taking measures to combat such a culture becoming prevalent. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts and advocacy of Jack Beasley's parents, Brett and Belinda, we now have Jack's



Law. What started as a trial of police wandering powers on the Gold Coast has now been rolled out across Queensland's safe night precincts and transport hubs. Jack's Law is working to disrupt and prevent crime and harm. Jack's Law is saving lives.

Today we take another important step against the scourge of knife crime. As mentioned by the Premier, today I will introduce to this parliament new laws banning the sale of knives to juveniles. This legislation will prohibit the sale of controlled items including, for example, knives, replica firearms such as certain gel blasters, axes and machetes to anyone under the age of 18. The proposed new laws include penalties for sellers who sell a knife or other controlled item to a juvenile. Should a seller fail to prohibit the sale of a controlled item a second time, the maximum penalty doubles. To further curb the notoriety of weapon possession amongst juveniles, it will also be prohibited for knives and other items to be sold or advertised in a way that suggests the item is suitable for combat, intended to be used for violence or likely to simulate or encourage violent or criminal behaviour.

We have consulted widely with the retail sector and we acknowledge that there is to be an implementation process for these changes. I am pleased to say that retail associations and major retailers are broadly supportive of the reforms we will introduce, because they are on the same page as everyone in our community—that is, they want a safe community too. The laws we introduce today will support a safer retail environment and a safer community. That is what the Palaszczuk Labor government always does. Our government always puts the community first—the people of Queensland, first.

### Youth Crime



**Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (9.51 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to addressing the serious issue of youth crime by putting evidence-based measures in place to keep the community safe, to tackle the complex causes of crime, to target serious repeat offenders and to support victims. We have committed almost half a billion dollars to early intervention and prevention programs in youth justice since 2015. With the support of the LNP, we have put in place some of the strongest youth justice laws in the country. We have committed to build two new detention centres, but, like the West Moreton Youth Detention Centre, our most recent centre—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Sorry, minister. Premier and Leader of the Opposition, you both will cease your interjections. I am trying to hear a ministerial statement.

**Ms FARMER:** We have committed to build two new detention centres but, like the West Moreton Youth Detention Centre—our most recent build—they will be therapeutic detention centres, because we do not want to see those young people back in the system once they leave. Earlier this year we introduced the \$132 million supporting community safety package of initiatives, including the extreme high-visibility police patrol. This week we heard from Deputy Commissioner Shane Chelepy about the great work police are doing with this initiative in Logan, which has resulted in a 25 per cent decrease in youth offending compared to the previous quarter. This is how we are know our new laws are starting to work.


It is a result of our significant investment in youth justice that the number of 10- to 16-year-old offenders has decreased by 35 per cent in the past 10 years; 30 per cent in the past five years; and 42 per cent do not return to the youth justice system after their first offence. However, it remains that 20 per cent of young offenders commit over 50 per cent of the crime. This is where we are aiming our efforts. We are starting to see the positive results: intensive case management—a 51 per cent drop in the frequency of offending; youth co-responder—a 24/7 service that has engaged with over 81,000 across 13 locations; intensive bail support; and the Townsville Street University—50 per cent of the young people who stayed with the program reduced their drug dependence. This is hugely important when drugs are such a prominent issue amongst young offenders. There is so much more.

As soon as young people come into detention, a range of specialists conduct health and behavioural assessments and then design the programs that will help best divert them from offending. One of the many great stories I wanted to share from this process was about a 17-year-old First Nations person who was admitted to the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre in January this year for their 14th admission to custody. Our education staff engaged them in educational programs such as maths, English, health and PE, art and music. Our cultural advisors engaged her in culturally specific activities including art, dance and women's circles. Training was provided and by the time the young person was coming to the end of her admission she had commenced a hospitality course, a certificate III barista

course, a certificate in fitness and, after a visit by a representative from the ADF, had identified interest in the Australian Defence Force Indigenous program. Our team worked closely with the young person post release to keep her on track. We have heard through the ADF recruitment officer that this young person has successfully passed all three required assessments and she is due to enter the intake phase of the ADF early next year.

These are the sorts of stories we all want to hear. Stopping crime before it occurs is the most effective way to break the cycle of youth offending. It is why the Palaszczuk government is absolutely committed to early intervention and prevention.

### **Rail Infrastructure; Digital Driver's Licence**

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (9.56 am): The Cross River Rail project has benefited more than 2,100 subcontractors to date, including 1,577 Queensland businesses. The project has also supported 421 apprentice and trainee opportunities. Through Cross River Rail and disability compliant trains made in Maryborough, we are backing Queensland workers and setting a new benchmark for accessibility for our transport network. With the Dutton Park to Salisbury station accessibility upgrades, the Yeronga and Fairfield stations already open and fully built, three new Gold Coast stations, 12 completed Queensland Rail station accessibility upgrades—not actually eight; I undersold it yesterday in the House—and the new Cross River Rail underground and full-time Ekka stations, we have about 30 accessible stations delivered, in delivery or in the planning phase.

I am proud to be part of a government that fully supports the one in five Queenslanders with a disability and that consistently invests in Queensland workers. We have seen that investment across the state. The Logan and Gold Coast Faster Rail project has been subject to negotiations between the state and federal governments due to the cost pressures being felt across all states and territories. Following the federal government's online publication of the revised figure, I can confirm to the House that the project estimate is now \$5.7 billion. Any adjustments to total project estimates are usually released as part of each governments' respective budget processes. When we receive formal confirmation from the Commonwealth and confirm Queensland's investment as part of our midyear budget update, I will confirm updated project funding. This is the normal process as outlined in national partnership agreement documents. We have been fighting to ensure that this critical rail double-track duplication between Kuraby and Beenleigh is funded—


**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Sorry, minister. Members to my left, I am having difficulty hearing the minister. You will cease your interjections or you will be warned under the standing orders.

**Mr BAILEY:** We will continue to fight for all our Queensland projects. I spoke yesterday about the Palaszczuk government's Queensland made trains in Maryborough. I am pleased to report today that the Palaszczuk government's digital licence is also Queensland made. Thales, the global technology and security expert which led the app development, was supported by two Queensland-based tech companies, Code Heroes and Aliva. The Palaszczuk government's digital licence is the first Australian digital licence to comply with the international ISO security standard. That means it has world-class security and is easy to use overseas.

Over 216,000 Queenslanders are now on board with our digital licence, and this number is growing every single day. The digital licence is not only better for customers but also better for Queensland businesses, with over 100,000 downloads of the verifier app as well as the 216,000 downloads of the licence itself. Whether it is delivering on a more accessible transport network or a world-class digital licence with the highest standard in the nation, I am proud to be part of a government that delivers nation-leading services that are built by Queenslanders for Queenslanders—and not cuts.

### **Maternity Services**

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (10.00 am): Yesterday I met with Meg and James, parents of baby Thea, as well as baby Thea's grandmother Salli. Their grief is heartbreaking. While that grief will continue, I want to commend Meg for her incredible bravery and conviction in bringing to my attention some commonsense improvements that Meg believes can be made in the delivery of maternity care in Queensland.

While the clinical review into Meg and baby Thea's care is ongoing, I can advise that we will progress a number of Meg's suggestions immediately including: increasing training in advanced neonatal resuscitation for all clinicians working in birthing suites and nurseries; providing clearer advice on the risks and options of induction medications for women; and, importantly, expanding postnatal support for women who experience stillbirth or neonatal death including home visits and fast-tracking grief and psychological counselling. These are simple changes, but they will make an enormous difference for so many families. Once again, I want to thank Meg, James and Salli for their bravery in sharing their story. I will continue to work with them to ensure our health system is providing the very best care to women and their babies.

I have made it clear that one of my top priorities is ensuring that all women in Queensland have access to high-quality, reliable and safe maternity services close to home. That is why the Palaszczuk government has committed \$42 million for regional, rural and remote maternity services. This funding is enabling models of maternity care to be strengthened and will support existing maternity sites to continue to provide safe birthing services.

I also recently announced that \$16 million will be invested over four years to support the expansion of midwifery care for women in regional and rural communities. Our government is also investing more than \$4 million in quality improvement activities including a comprehensive models of care review to make sure we can have sustainable models of maternity care in those locations that are most exposed to bypass.

We have established the new Queensland Chief Midwife Officer position—an Australian first—to further support woman-centred maternity care and expanded virtual care through providing 24/7 access to specialist obstetric and midwifery advice to better support those clinicians in regional and rural hospitals.

Last week I also announced that publicly funded homebirths will be available for women on the Sunshine Coast from the middle of next year. This initial investment of \$1.2 million will transform the landscape of childbirth in Queensland. It provides women with more choice and empowerment in maternity care. As Ann-Marie, a mum who had a homebirth said, 'I am really excited and happy for the women of Queensland to have this choice of care. Women should be able to choose where they birth.'

Women at our maternity round table told me they wanted three things: they wanted choice, they wanted continuity of care and they wanted it close to home, and that is what we are delivering. By listening to people like Meg and Ann-Marie, I want to ensure that Queensland hospitals are delivering the most compassionate and highest care possible.

### Scams Awareness Week



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.03 am): Queenslanders are losing more each year to scams—already reporting more than \$83 million in losses between January and October this year. Across the country, that figure is almost \$430 million. This week is Scams Awareness Week, and it has never been more important for Queenslanders to be vigilant against scammers and to ask themselves: 'Who is really contacting or messaging me?'

Investment scams continue to swindle the most money out of Queenslanders, with more than \$52 million in reported losses to these types of scams this year. One Queensland woman reported being scammed out of \$110,000 by a cryptocurrency scam this year after seeing an ad pop up on social media about goldmining shares for \$250. The woman rang the phone number on the ad and a representative called her back to help her open a cryptocurrency account and invest using her credit card. Following multiple dealings and transfers with the company, the woman asked for some funds to be transferred back and was notified her account was closed and funds frozen until a tax bill was paid via PayID. This raised the consumer's suspicions, but communication from the scammer stopped and she is now unsure if she will get her money back.

This is why I want all Queenslanders to know how to protect themselves from scams. Our advice is: do not automatically assume the person you are dealing with is who they say they are; if you are looking to invest money, do your research and check the company or scheme is licensed on the Australian Securities and Investments Commission website; be cautious of messages or emails asking you to click on a link or open an attachment; if you receive calls, emails or texts asking you to verify your personal details, do not reply—contact the organisation directly using contact details you have sourced yourself, such as through online searches for their website; and be very suspicious of any requests for money. My biggest piece of advice is: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

The Palaszczuk government will continue to raise awareness of scams and encourage Queenslanders not only to report scams to Scamwatch but also to talk about scams. Talk to your friends, family and colleagues about the scams you are seeing or have heard about. Talk about what they look like, how you received them and how you hung up, deleted or ignored them, because the more we talk about them, the more we can stop Queenslanders falling victim to scams.

### China, Tourism; Tourism Awards

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (10.06 am): The coming 2024 Chinese New Year will be not only ushering in the Year of the Dragon but also delivering a huge opportunity for Tropical North Queensland's visitor economy. As the Premier announced earlier, more than 2,000 Chinese visitors are tipped to fly direct from Shanghai to Cairns for Lunar New Year celebrations.

Seasonal China Eastern flights to Cairns were secured by the Premier's recent trade mission to China. I want to congratulate her and the whole of that trade mission on the work they have done. China Eastern Airlines will land in Cairns four times week from 1 to 18 February. This is the peak travel season for Chinese visitors, generating up to \$3 million of good news for our world-class hospitality providers and tourism operators and for good quality Queensland jobs. We want to see that pent-up demand in China for Tropical North Queensland holidays put Cairns in the pilot's seat for more services as global aviation recovery continues.


In traditional Chinese culture, the dragon symbolises honour, success, talent and excellence. These traits characterised the winners circle at Friday's Queensland Tourism Awards in Cairns to cap off Tourism Week. Congratulations to all winners, finalists and nominees for making Queensland the nation's favourite holiday destination. With the Year of Accessible Tourism extended into 2024—thank you, Premier—BIG4 Adventure Whitsunday Resort has taken home the Palaszczuk government's inaugural Excellence in Accessible Tourism Award. Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary won gold in the Major Tourism Attraction category. Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers was 'picked' for Major Festivals and Events gold. The Award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism went to Cape York Peninsula Lodge. Whitsundays' Ocean Rafting was recognised as best Adventure Tourism operator, while Fun Over 50 Holidays—Immersive Tours and Adventures, Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, Paronella Park and Bundaberg Rum Visitor Experience all entered the Queensland Tourism Industry Council's Hall of Fame.

Queensland's gold award-winning operators will compete in 25 categories at the Australian Tourism Awards in March—each determined to scoop the pool for the second year running on the national tourism stage and do Queenslanders proud, demonstrating why Queensland is Australia's destination of choice.

### Japan, Trade Mission

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities.

**An opposition member** interjected.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.09 am): Some of those opposite might benefit from the free kindly offer the Minister for Education spoke about. They might learn something.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Kawana, it was noted.

**Mr FURNER:** Last week I undertook a trade mission to one of Queensland's key agriculture export markets: Japan. I was joined by a number of growers and industry representatives on this mission, including: Frank Sciacca of Eco Bananas; Shaun Jackson of Daintree Fresh; Alister Brown of Harrowsmiths International; and that great promoter of Bowen, the legend Carl Walker with Ry Collins of the Bowen Gumlu Growers Association. The Japanese market is a key high-end market where Australian produce—especially Queensland's—is in demand. Our reputation is of quality, consistency and safety.

While I was at the market I assisted growers with an in-store promotion of Eco Bananas and fresh Emperor's Pearl melons. This fruit was quite the hit with Japanese consumers on the day and it will be with importers for a long time to come. In fact, after every sample Carl and I handed out those consumers picked up a couple of bananas and melons after tasting them. Queensland beef dominates the market. Of the \$1.7 billion in agricultural exports to Japan, Queensland beef makes up \$1.3 billion of that value.

I was pleased to join MLA and NAPCO at the Australian embassy for the launch of Five Founders carbon-neutral beef, which was a real hit with the journalists present. I sometimes wish that all of my engagements with the media were catered with Queensland beef. Sustainability was a key message across all of our meetings. There was strong interest in what Queensland is doing and our actions under the Queensland Low Emissions Agriculture Roadmap and the AgTech road map. Japanese corporate culture has embraced sustainability, and it is very common to see executives wearing UN Sustainable Development Goals pins.

The practices of some of our sustainable farmers such as Qualipac were emphasised as part of the mix of agricultural produce that is consumed on a daily basis within the market. There is exciting potential for our agricultural sector, and I want to thank Trade and Investment Queensland and my department for their ongoing promotion of our produce in the Japanese market. In particular I want to give a big shout-out to Tak Adachi, the Japanese commissioner with Trade and Investment Queensland, for the excellent program he put together for my trade mission.

**Mr Head** interjected.

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

### **Energy-Efficient Appliances, Rebate**




**Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy, Renewables and Hydrogen and Minister for Public Works and Procurement) (10.12 am): It matters to Queenslanders what their leaders do when times are tough. Whether it is when we have been faced with the wrath of Mother Nature or, more recently, a global pandemic, the leader of Queensland has delivered Queenslanders vital support. When post-pandemic inflation pressures are impacting every nation, the Palaszczuk government is helping Queenslanders with real financial help. There is \$1.3 billion in energy bill relief, with 700,000 regional households benefiting from at least \$550 in support and \$1,072 being delivered to around 600,000 vulnerable households. This is possible because Queenslanders own their energy system and we put people before profits. It is possible because of a fair share of huge coal profits funding cost-of-living relief.

Last week we announced how significant the take-up has been on real relief for energy-efficient appliances. This program is so popular that the Premier doubled it. That has enabled an extra 40,000 households to be eligible. I am pleased to advise the House that 55 per cent of the program's funds have gone to lower income earners. Queenslanders who are doing it the toughest are getting the most help from this government. I am also pleased to update the House that advice received from the Department of Energy and Public Works is that home owners can expect to save a further \$103 a year on their electricity bills year on year, year after year. This program has delivered immediate relief and long-term support for Queenslanders.

I have to update the House, however: the fund is approaching full exhaustion for this particular program, so I ask all members of the House to let their constituents know that the energy-efficient appliance rebate will only apply to products purchased and installed by 4 December. That is Monday. I am asking all members to advise their constituents that there are still six days to save up to \$1,000. So far, 74,000 Queensland households have applied. We have already approved: 14,000 energy-efficient refrigerators; over 4,500 air conditioners; 16,000 energy-efficient washing machines; 3,000 electricity-bill-reducing energy-efficient dryers; and over 1,000 solar and heat pump hot-water systems.


Whilst I am on my feet, I also want to advise the House that our program that supports small businesses with energy efficiency is up and running now too. The Queensland Business Energy Saving and Transformation Program has approved its first 29 small businesses for up to \$12,500 to invest in their energy efficiency. I again ask all members of the House to ensure that small businesses in the communities we all represent take advantage of these rebates. The Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan is powering ahead, supporting Queensland homes and businesses when it matters most.

## ABSENCE OF MINISTER

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.15 am): I advise the House that the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure will be absent from the House at question time today as the Deputy Premier is leading an important 'Team Queensland' delegation to Canberra to fight for Queensland's fair share of federal funding. As such, the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment will take questions on the Deputy Premier's behalf today while the Deputy Premier is undertaking this important mission for Queensland.

## NOTICE OF MOTION

### Sunshine Coast

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

That this House notes:


- (a) crime rates on the Sunshine Coast in the last year have increased, including a 29 per cent increase in the unlawful use of motor vehicles, a 27 per cent increase in other thefts and a 19 per cent increase in unlawful entry;
- (b) rents have increased on the Sunshine Coast by 62 per cent;
- (c) the Palaszczuk Labor government's secrecy around the site of a future desalination plant;
- (d) the decision by the federal Labor government to cut funding for the Mooloolah River Interchange;
- (e) the decision by the federal Labor government to delay funding for upgrades to Bribie Island Road;
- (f) the inaction by the Palaszczuk Labor government in delivering the Sunshine Coast heavy rail from Beerwah to Caloundra to Kawana to Maroochydore; and
- (g) the government's failure to protect the Pumicestone Passage.

and calls on the members for Caloundra, Nicklin and Pumicestone to explain to the people of their electorates why the Labor government has failed to ease the cost-of-living, health, housing, infrastructure and crime crises facing Queenslanders.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.17 am.

### Gold Coast Faster Rail Project

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.17 am): My question is to the Premier. Can the Premier advise when she became aware that the Gold Coast Faster Rail project had blown out by \$3.1 billion, and why did she fail to tell Queenslanders?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is obvious that the Leader of the Opposition and none of them over there are fit for government, because they do not understand how government operates. We know—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, they do not, Mr Speaker. It is embarrassing that they have no basic understanding that departments go through processes—

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Buderim!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Departments go through processes. Ministers then write to—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No. Ministers then write to their federal counterparts, and then their federal counterparts write back confirming whether or not the money is approved. They are the basic processes—

**Mr Powell** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Glass House!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** We know there is a choice here about whether to go ahead and build Faster Rail or not. We will be building Faster Rail because Logan deserves Faster Rail. The opposition might not be aware, but Logan is one of the fastest growing areas in Queensland with a population—this is a year out—of 363,000 people. The growth in Logan is 3.53 per cent. Mr Speaker, let me talk to you about—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I answered the question. The departments work it out—

**Mr Powell** interjected.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—and then the minister writes to the federal minister. The Logan and Gold Coast Faster Rail project will double the number of tracks between Kuraby and Beenleigh. It doubles the—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They do not want to hear about the infrastructure project. Well, I am going to tell you. This doubles the capacity of the line, meaning more frequent and reliable train services.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left, I am having difficulty—

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** Apologies for interrupting, Premier. I am having difficulty hearing the Premier. I would ask that the interjections cease. What is your point of order?

**Mr POWELL:** Relevance, 118(b). The question was: when did the Premier find out—

**Mr SPEAKER:** You can sit down at the moment, member for Glass House.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The station upgrades between Kuraby and Beenleigh include full accessibility upgrades, new pedestrian bridges and lifts, additional park-and-ride spaces, level crossing removals at Kuraby, Woodridge, Bethania, Holmview and Beenleigh, and a new dedicated active transport connection, and they will also assist with the Olympics.

**Mr Crisafulli:** Was it the same time you found out about the fire ants?

**Mr SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will direct his comments through the chair or he will cease interjecting.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** All that the Leader of the Opposition is proving in this House is that he is not fit to govern. He is absolutely unfit.

**Mr LANGBROEK:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(a) about debating the subject to which the question refers.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am giving facts.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, member for Surfers Paradise. The Premier, as I hear her, has gone in and out of that particular space. Premier, you have 13 seconds remaining.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Then the process is that the Australian government release the outcome of their infrastructure review, we await formal confirmation and then, as the minister said, it goes into the MYFER process. It is called a budget—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr BROWN:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition was on his feet with three seconds to go in the Premier's answer, asking for the call.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you for your point of order, member for Capalaba. I will actually remind all members on all sides of the House that members should not be rising to their feet ahead of a member finishing their contribution.

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

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** My question is to the Premier. The Minister for Transport and Main Roads said that he was not aware the new cost of the Gold Coast Faster Rail project was on the federal government's website. After a detailed answer, he then said he misspoke and he did know. Does the Premier accept this version of events?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The minister has made a statement to the parliament and I accept what the minister has said to the parliament.

### Cost of Living, Relief

**Mr POWER:** My question is to the Premier. Will the Premier please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is helping Queenslanders deal with the national cost-of-living pressures, and is the Premier aware of any alternative ways to deal with this issue?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Logan, who is representing a very fast growing area of our state. Cost-of-living pressures are real, they are happening out there in our community and we need to do everything we possibly can to help. That is why we are giving the largest cost-of-living relief. If the member for Maroochydore does not think we are clear enough on that cost-of-living relief, I am prepared to write to every single member of the public on the Sunshine Coast and let them know what our cost-of-living relief is—if they do not think the message is clear enough about all of our rebates.

I am happy to talk here about what we are doing in Logan. Since 2015 our government has helped over 6,700 families in the Logan region get their foot in the door of their very first home through our First Home Owner Grant, and now we are doubling it. That is absolutely helping with cost-of-living pressures. That is \$30,000. The new cost-of-living measure is estimated to help 12,000 buyers unlock their first home by 2025. Of course, we know there are impacts on petrol, groceries, rent and mortgage repayments, and that is why our cost-of-living package is \$8.2 billion this financial year.

We heard the Minister for Energy speak in this House about the energy rebates. In the Logan local government area, there have already been 2,419 families applying for that appliances rebate. Can I use this opportunity to again urge the public to apply for that scheme. It is ending on 4 December and the appliance must be installed. Time is running out. Please apply for that cost-of-living measure with our energy-efficient appliance rebate. I know that it is helping many communities and many families with the cost of living. What are people talking about out there? They are talking about cost-of-living relief. They are talking about the federal cuts to infrastructure—

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Buderim!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** They are not talking about your rubbish.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** So rude. So rude.

**Mr Bleijie:** So arrogant, out of touch.

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

**A government member** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I take the minister's interjection on the member for Kawana. What I say very clearly is that our free kindy will help families right across our state. Free kindy is another very key example of cost-of-living relief whereby families can save up to \$4,600 a year. We are acting and we are listening to Queenslanders about the issues that—

*(Time expired)*

### Gold Coast Faster Rail Project

**Mr MINNIKIN:** My question is to the Premier. When did the Queensland government advise the federal government that the Gold Coast Faster Rail project had blown out to \$5.75 billion, and why did the government not tell Queenslanders?

**Mr Power** interjected.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** As the member knows, as I said previously—

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Sorry to interrupt you, Premier. Member for Maryborough, you are warned under the standing orders.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** These are subject to state-federal negotiations, which is the normal process of government. They remain confidential until the negotiations have concluded.



### Training and Skills

**Mr SKELTON:** My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Will the Premier please update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is helping to skill Queenslanders for a rewarding career, and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I thank the member for Nicklin, because the member for Nicklin knows how important a good education is to get a job. We know that as our year 12s finish—and I was very pleased to attend the Forest Lake State High School graduation—not everyone is going to go to university, so we need to make sure they have the skills to get a job. What our government has been able to do is offer free TAFE, and there will be more free TAFE next year because of our agreement, which happens with negotiations between the state and the federal government. Who would have thought, member for Nanango—that the state government sits down with the federal government and signs a partnership and then we announce thousands of free TAFE places? It is called government business.

**Mr Krause** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Scenic Rim!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** With our free TAFE, last year we offered over 58,000 courses. There are courses—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** There are courses in early childhood education and care, electrotechnology, and accounting and bookkeeping. We have the very popular Diploma of Nursing, which is filling up very quickly. We need to get skilled workforce—

**Mr Krause** interjected.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—because we know that our health system is growing and we want to attract more people into the healthcare system, so free nursing is one of those areas. Then there is carpentry and project management.

**Opposition members** interjected.

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

**Mr Minnikin** interjected.

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is a pity Queenslanders are not seeing the way this mob actually behaves. When the students come in here, they are aghast at the behaviour, the rudeness, the interjections and the bullying that continues in this House by those opposite. It will never end. Good government is about getting on with the job: getting people into jobs, giving them free TAFE, making sure they get free kindy, making sure they have a job and making sure they have cost-of-living relief—not having no plans, like those opposite. They have absolutely no direction, no plans and no understanding of how government works, but they do understand one thing: cuts. They clearly understand cuts. I know what they will do with the Logan Faster Rail: they will cut.

### Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services

**Mr JANETZKI:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Will the minister apologise to Queenslanders for failing to reveal yet another multibillion dollar cost blowout on his watch?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the member for the question. On this side you will get 'Bailey the Builder'; on the LNP side you will get 'Crisafulli the Cutter'—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members' correct titles will be used.

**Mr BAILEY:** With the Leader of the Opposition, you will get the cutting. That is what they did with Cross River Rail. That is what they are looking to do with this again. It is this government that builds heavy rail, that builds light rail, that upgrades the M1, that upgrades the Bruce Highway and that keeps our ports in public hands and expands them. We do not sit there puerilely interjecting, whining and whingeing every question time, in preference to standing for actual policy and things that are actually concrete. The Leader of the Opposition squibbed at the Media Club. He had his opportunity to show some substance, to show some depth, and he absolutely failed. In front of the media gallery, he failed in a defensive effort.

You know with this government that we will build this double track duplication. It is necessary for the population growth in Logan and the northern Gold Coast, and it is necessary for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is a crucial project and we are doing everything to get it going. We will go through the normal processes with the federal government. It happens under every government. These processes happened under the Newman government and the Abbott government. They are the normal processes, and I will keep doing everything I can to get more projects going for Queensland because that is what we do. This government builds. We do not cut.

**Mr Lister** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Southern Downs, you are warned under the standing orders. That is over the top.

**Mr BAILEY:** We will not cut like those opposite have already outlined. Let me quote the member for Chatsworth earlier this year: 'We have areas where we have 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.' That is what the member for Chatsworth said. Under the Leader of the Opposition's leadership, we know they stand for cuts. We know they will cut this project. We know from their whingeing and their whining that it is just code for cuts. They do not change. They are hiding their cuts. That is their agenda and they will cut again.

### **Cost of Living, Relief**

**Mr TANTARI:** My question is of the Treasurer and the Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is delivering cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders in my electorate of Hervey Bay, and is the Treasurer aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for Hervey Bay for his question. I am pleased to report to the House again, to restate to the House, that our government has delivered the biggest and most effective cost-of-living relief of any state or territory in Australia. We are doing that through electricity rebates. There are two reasons we can do that: the first is progressive coal royalties—the wealth of Queenslanders going back to Queenslanders.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** No wonder they interject. They are the party that will cut progressive coal royalties. We got an immediate interjection from, of all people, the member for Burdekin. We are using progressive coal royalties to build his community a new hospital in Moranbah and he is the first person to complain. The member for Burdekin voted against saving Glenden. The member for Burdekin voted against progressive coal royalties; he opposed progressive coal royalties. We are building a new hospital in his community. But I tell you what: we will have a Labor candidate in Burdekin who will fight for progressive coal royalties and will fight for a new hospital. I look forward to going up there and campaigning in your electorate, member for Burdekin.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Direct your comments through the chair, Treasurer.

**Mr DICK:** We have a plan for Queenslanders, not some ill-defined structural cost-of-living we got from the Leader of the Opposition. I had a look at 'Right-wing priorities for Queensland'. It was a short read. It did not take long. There is absolutely nothing—nothing—to support Queenslanders in that document.

**Mr Janetzki** interjected.

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

**Mr DICK:** Not one dollar from the Leader of the Opposition. When he is pressed for details, he runs like lightning to get away from talking about details. The fact of the matter is when you cut progressive coal royalties, you have to cut projects. Not only will he cut, he must cut. He must cut to fill that black hole. That is what he will have to do for Queensland. Every single time the LNP talks about infrastructure cost blowouts, it is code for cuts. That is exactly what it is about. That is exactly what their strategy is today. Every time they talk about cost blowouts in infrastructure it is code for cuts, because they must cut to fill the budget black hole.

**Dr Rowan** interjected.

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

**Mr DICK:** That is the choice: a government that gets on with delivering Rookwood Weir; a government that gets on with delivering faster rail for the people of Logan. I tell you what, Speaker: I know that project, and the people of Woodridge and the people of Logan deserve it. We will fund that. We will not cut like the LNP. That is the commitment we give to Queensland.

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

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question is to the Premier. When confronted about multibillion dollar blowouts, the transport minister said that Queenslanders do not really care about that sort of element of it. At a time when the cost of living is hurting Queenslanders, does the Premier support the minister's statement?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, I feel like that is asking for somewhat of an opinion, but I will allow the Premier to answer the question whichever way she sees fit.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Even the Auditor-General commented that increases in projects are happening now for a whole range of reasons right across the country, including the cost of supplies, which are increasing. That was very clearly articulated in a recent report that the Auditor-General handed down. I know one thing: governments have to make a decision on whether you build things or you don't.

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** On time and on budget.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** No, no.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Oh! What about—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Premier, you will direct your comments through the chair. The Leader of the Opposition will cease his interjections or he will be warned under the standing orders.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** When they were in office they did not build anything, but they did cut. They cut TAFE, they cut schools, they cut biosecurity, they cut offices, they cut public servants and they cut housing. They know about cuts. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition has released his own cuts list, the LNP infrastructure hit list. It is all there. When you say 'increase', it means 'cut'. That is the reality. The question for the Leader of the Opposition when he goes out there today to confront the media is: do you support—

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

**Ms PALASZCZUK:**—the Logan Faster Rail project? Yes or no? Will the Leader of the Opposition support the Logan Faster Rail project—yes or no—or will he cut it? The member for Logan wants to know, the member for Waterford wants to know and the member for Woodridge wants to know. Guess what: the 360,000 people who live in Logan want to know if they will cut the project. They do not support the coal royalties, so that means \$7 billion in cuts. There goes CopperString. There goes the Townsville to Mount Isa line.

**Mr Dick:** The Fitzroy to Gladstone water pipeline.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The Fitzroy to Gladstone pipeline, needed for the hydrogen industry. That will go. There goes the extra schools that the minister is planning for.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr Hart** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana! Member for Burleigh!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Because the desalination will be at Kawana. That is where the desalination is likely to be.

**Mr Bleijie:** The minister said there were no locations!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** It is likely to be in Kawana.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Kawana!

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** On this side of the House, we will plan for the future. We will plan the infrastructure—

*(Time expired)*

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

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

### Rural and Remote Queensland, Cost-of-Living Relief

**Ms LAUGA:** My question is of the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister update the House on how the Palaszczuk government is helping rural families with cost-of-living relief, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms GRACE:** I thank the member for the question. I know that she is well aware that our electricity rebates and our home appliance rebates are really delivering in electorates right across Queensland. I urge anyone who wants to take advantage of those savings to do so before 4 December. We recognise on this side of the House, more than anyone, that we are delivering for families right across the state with our nation-leading cost-of-living relief. It starts with free kindy next year, saving families up to \$4,600.

We know that nobody is immune to cost-of-living pressures. I do not know what rock those opposite are under when they do not realise the cost-of-living increases that are happening in building projects right across the state. It is everywhere. I do not know of anyone in my electorate who is renovating or building who is not talking about the increased cost of building and renovating. You have people like Kevin Seymour saying that in his 55 years experience he has never seen the construction industry in the state it is at the moment. He is someone who understands this industry.

Those opposite do not seem to get it, but we get it on this side of the House. We are providing relief—no more so than for our regional and remote families. I am so proud that we are increasing the Living Away From Home Allowances Scheme by \$4,000 for regional and remote families. For primary school students this increases from \$4,360 to \$8,360. This is a \$4,000 saving for those regional and remote families. For secondary school students there is an increase from \$6,276 to \$10,276. We are increasing all of our school allowances by 6.3 per cent. The remote allowance goes to \$2,913; the remote area travel allowance to \$2,138; the remote area disability supplement to \$9,478; and our textbook and resource allowance to \$337. These are real cost-of-living savings.

I was asked what other approaches I am aware of. I do not know of many, because I have not seen anything from those opposite about cost-of-living relief. I am aware of right-wing priorities, like cutting coal royalties, cutting infrastructure projects, cutting entitlements and cutting Public Service nurses and teachers. Obviously they are not cutting the grass, but I can suggest that they not cut some other things. That is what we get from those opposite—

*(Time expired)*

### Gabba Redevelopment

**Mr MANDER:** My question is to the Premier. Given the huge list of multibillion dollar blowouts on her government's watch, what evidence can the Premier provide that the \$2.7 billion figure for the Gabba rebuild will not face the same budget blowouts?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** A lot of work has gone into the Gabba—it is not only the Gabba; it is the whole precinct—which will transform the whole landscape of the eastern part of Brisbane, including affordable housing, accessibility and a world-class stadium that millions of people will be able to enjoy over the years. It will be a proud legacy of this government—one that all levels of government supported in the bid for the Olympics.

In relation to cost increases generally, the Queensland Auditor-General has said that global supply chain impacts and labour availability are issues happening around the world. According to Infrastructure Australia, the cost increases in just one year have been over 40 per cent for reinforcing steel and structural timber. Infrastructure Australia states that construction costs have surged over the last 12 months, with steep price rises for globally produced commodities—steel, timber and oil products—heightened global transport and logistics costs, plus supply chain disruption caused by the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

Those opposite can talk to the Lord Mayor, because there has been a 40 per cent cost increase in the Metro.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Can you assure that? Obviously not.

Whilst I am on my feet in response to the member for Everton, can I correct something I said in the House previously. In relation to community housing I said that they had sold off 95 per cent of community housing. I stand corrected. It was not 10 per cent, 20 per cent, 50 per cent or 70 per cent; it was 90 per cent. I want to correct the record in that respect.

### Schoolies Week

**Mrs MULLEN:** My question of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services. Will the minister update the House on this year's schoolies celebrations, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr RYAN:** I thank the member for Jordan for her question. I have to say that this member for Jordan is the best member for Jordan the Queensland parliament has ever seen, and long may that continue.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Tedious repetition, member!

**Mr RYAN:** There are many good people on this side of the House. There are many good people participating in this year's schoolies event. I take the opportunity to commend school leavers not only on their good behaviour but also on their positive celebrations at this year's schoolies event. The Queensland Police Service obviously takes schoolies very seriously. They work closely with key partner agencies like the Gold Coast City council, charities including Red Frogs and Rosies and other government agencies to ensure schoolies are safe and can have a positive celebration of what is a big milestone for young people in our state and around the nation. Police have reported publicly that they think the behaviour of this year's schoolies is A-plus, that it is one of the best schoolies weeks on record. Arrests are right down and positive behaviour is right up. What a great indicator that is of the young people of our state—the future of our state is in good hands.

These are young people who have learned the lessons around being diligent and focused; they are planning for the future and not leaving things to the last minute. Perhaps when we are talking about alternative approaches those opposite, including the Leader of the Opposition, can take a leaf out of this year's schoolies' book. What is the plan when it comes to the Leader of the Opposition's commitment, or lack thereof, to the Public Service? What are the cuts that the Leader of the Opposition will inflict on Queensland Health, the Police Service and other government agencies? What is the crime plan that the member for Burdekin promised over a thousand days ago? He has had over a thousand days to do it. The schoolies would have been in grade 9 when those opposite made that commitment. This year's schoolies are great role models for those opposite and those opposite can take a leaf out of their book.

Those opposite have failed to plan for what they are getting very excited about, which is the next election. What the people of Queensland will use against them and judge them on is their lack of planning and their lack of commitment to the people of Queensland. They cannot continue, as the Leader of the Opposition continues to do, to front the media and not explain what they are going to do. They should be up-front, plan and have a commitment. The people of Queensland will find them out.

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

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

### Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the Premier. The transport minister, when apologising for the mangocube email scandal nearly seven years ago, said it was a 'rookie error'. Since then he has apologised for a failure to reveal a \$2.4 billion train blowout, the botched rollout of the digital licences and incorrect fines issued through the Camera Detected Offence Program. Now a \$3.1 billion Faster Rail blowout has been revealed. What will it take for the Premier to sack this minister?

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** I am really glad that the member for Kawana asked me that question. This was the former attorney-general who hand selected and appointed the Supreme Court's Chief Justice. This is the same member for Kawana who deleted emails and other RTI documentation.

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Premier, resume your seat. What is your point of order?

**Mr POWELL:** It relates to 118(a), debating the question—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right, a helicopter to boot camps.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Glass House. The Premier, as I understand it, is providing an alternative view of some of the elements of the question, which is allowable, and is not debating the question.

**Mr POWELL:** I refer to 118(a); there was no part of the question that referred to an alternative.

**Mr SPEAKER:** No, there was no part of the question that referred to an alternative, but there were elements of the question which may warrant an alternative in terms of the response.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** There was a damning Auditor-General's report about the boot camps introduced by the then attorney-general.

**Ms Fentiman:** Leaking conversations of judges.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** That is right, private conversations of judges were being leaked.

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. What is your point of order? Premier—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** And—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier! Premier, please resume your seat. What is your point of order?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I rise with respect to two points of order regarding standing orders 118(a) and 118(b). Standing order 118(b) states 'an answer shall be relevant to the question'. When asking questions, government members add the words 'or is the Premier or minister aware of any alternative approaches' but the opposition does not. I am sure there have been rulings in this place previously that ministers are not able to debate the point.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Kawana. Member for Kawana, the subject matter of the question has been the relevant element of the Premier's response. The relevant element relates to emails. The Premier was responding to that particular point. I will not be told what the question was by any member of the House. I am listening to the Premier's response and I will correct the Premier or ask her to come back to the question if I believe that she is straying in terms of relevance.

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** The point is that the member who has been chosen to ask this question was the worst attorney-general in the state's history. He was the worst, not No. 2, not No. 3. He was the worst attorney-general. He fought with the judiciary, deleted emails, lost the confidence of the judiciary and there was the damning Auditor-General's report. My point is the member who asked the question is the worst member who could possibly ask the question.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members of the House, the House will come to order. I will wait for silence.

### Home Ownership

**Mr HEALY:** My question is to the Minister for Housing. Can the minister update the House on what the Palaszczuk government is doing to help Queenslanders secure home ownership, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms SCANLON:** I thank the member for Cairns for the question. It was great to be in his electorate recently to see our big social housing build. Of course, we have recently announced that we are doubling the First Home Owner Grant to help young people get a foot in the door and to incentivise the construction of new houses, units and townhouses right across Queensland. This is one of many programs the Queensland government has to help people keep or buy their home. In fact, we have the First Home Owner Grant program, concessions, mortgage relief loan, Queensland state housing loan, the Remote Home Ownership Program, the Sales to Tenants program, the Queensland housing finance loan and the Pathways Shared Equity Loan.

Given all of those programs, it was very interesting to read in the *Cairns Post* recently that manifesto from Warren Entsch about his vision for public housing tenants to be able to purchase homes from the government. I am always open to ideas from the LNP because we do not hear very many from those opposite. I have good news for Warren Entsch, and that is that we already have a program for social housing tenants to buy their homes from the government. In fact, it has existed for nearly the entire time that Warren Entsch has been elected, which is a very long time. Perhaps it will be another 30 years until we hear an idea from the Leader of the Opposition based on the track record of Warren Entsch. I give him credit: at least he stuck to his home town.

Naturally, I was waiting with bated breath to see if we heard anything more than empty slogans at the Media Club, particularly about his so-called vision of home ownership. All we heard were things the Queensland government is already doing. We heard him talk about how he was going to examine and look at a shared equity scheme. I have a newsflash for the Leader of the Opposition: just this week the Albanese Labor government introduced the Help to Buy scheme, a shared equity scheme, into the parliament. The Queensland government will also legislate that to allow it to provide those loans to Queenslanders in need.

Instead of the Leader of the Opposition just thinking; it is about time he actually stood tall and took action. He could condemn the member for Oodgeroo, who came out and described a shared equity scheme not once, not twice, but three times as dangerous. He could admit that the LNP got it wrong.

He could also call Peter Dutton and tell him to vote for this legislation because, of course, he said nothing when his colleagues blocked investment in social housing for months and months. In fact, Bert van Manen described it as making the situation worse. That is their position; they think building social housing will make it worse in this country.

Unlike the member for Broadwater, who may have a family trust, there are many young Queenslanders out there who do not have a family trust and these programs are incredibly important. We will back young Queenslanders, we will back vulnerable people getting into home ownership while those opposite just—

*(Time expired)*

### Speed Cameras

**Mr KNUTH:** My question without notice is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. As previously raised, my office has received over 400 complaints, many with multiple fines, from what we truly believe is a faulty unmanned speed camera device on the Malanda Atherton Road in September. Will the minister commit to an official inquiry into this device and reform the process so no Queenslanders receive seven, eight or nine fines in the mail from the same device up to a month after its deployment?

**Mr BAILEY:** I thank the member for his question and acknowledge his very recent letter to me, and he will certainly get a full and thorough response to all of the issues that he raised in that letter. The accuracy of speed cameras is paramount for us in ensuring that infringements are trustworthy and maximise deterrence from speeding in Queensland. I am advised that the transport and main roads department has investigated all inquiries and claims about the transportable road safety cameras made by members of the public and also by members of parliament. Reviews by the department and the service provider confirm that all calibration, validation and resultant accuracy have been achieved across all deployments, ensuring only valid infringement notices have been generated and issued. I am advised that each transportable road safety camera is set up onsite following site layout and instructions that meet legislative requirements and manufacturer specifications, ensuring consistency and reliability. TMR has advised that mobile speed camera sites are based on strict criteria which include crash history being the primary reason. The mobile speed camera program is operated by the Queensland Police Service—

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, member for Hinchinbrook.

**Mr BAILEY:**—which includes vehicles operated by police officers and speed trailers used in South-East Queensland. The mobile program operates 140,000 hours of enforcement per annum and TMR, through a managed service, operates 10 transportable speed cameras in regional Queensland. They were introduced especially for enforcement in regional and rural areas because statistics and research demonstrate that people in these areas are disproportionately affected by crashes and speed related fatalities. The previous available methods of speed enforcement primarily relied on uniformed police officers.

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

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

**Mr BAILEY:** In regional and rural areas these officers have many demands on their time to properly service the community in addition to road safety, so any solution that enables safety to be prioritised and frees up uniformed officers to serve the community is a benefit to everybody. Almost 50 per cent of all serious crashes in Queensland from 2017 to 2022 occurred in regional and rural areas, so trailer enforcement devices are not new. These cameras extend existing enforcement approaches which have been used by the QPS for decades. I say to the member that I understand that there is some concern by some of his constituents. Over 90 per cent of people are capable of doing the speed limit or less in these circumstances. It depends on the site where the final percentage is—

**Ms Leahy** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Warrego.

**Mr BAILEY:**—but the vast majority of people who go past these cameras are doing the right thing.

**Ms Leahy** interjected.

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

**Mr BAILEY:** Those people who are speeding are driving dangerously and they ought to check their speed and they will not get a fine.

### Women's Community Sport

**Ms PEASE:** My question is of the Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement. Will the minister please update the House on the government's commitment to female community sport, and is the minister aware of any alternatives?

**Mr HINCHLIFFE:** I want to thank the member for Lytton for the question. I know that she has been engaged in and supporting female community sport for many years and I want to acknowledge the work that she has done, not only because of strong family connections but for her great support in the community, particularly on the bayside. As she knows, the Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting the growth of community sport and active recreation and helping with the cost of living wherever Queenslanders live in the state. That is why I am so pleased to advise the House that the \$15 million Active Women and Girls grants are now open. I encourage all members to make sure that the community organisations in their electorates understand the opportunities that these grants represent to back in Queensland's not-for-profit clubs, our councils and state level sporting organisations to break down barriers to female participation in community sport and active recreation. They are part of our \$37 million commitment to female sport and infrastructure.

10 News social media followers might have noticed the recent interview with the Leader of the Opposition and member for Broadwater. They might have been interested to see what the great revelation was in that piece. There was no commitment—the Treasurer will be interested in this—to maintaining coal royalties on superprofits. There was no commitment to cost-of-living programs like SwimStart; nor was there any detail on what would be cut under the LNP promised budget pruning. What we did learn was that, in the opposition leader's own words, he is a 'mad sport head', so clearly this is a passion. However, what does that mean in manifest? What does it mean? There is no mention of female facilities in the right wing priorities document. That pamphlet has no mention whatsoever, so we see that it does not extend to community grassroots sport, particularly the importance of sporting women and girls in community sport.

There has not been one question around sport to me from the opposition during the whole of this term. Those opposite are clearly not passionate and interested in what is going on there. However, we do know what the shadow minister thinks as he referred to female facilities in parliament as 'absolutely ridiculous'. That is his one reference in parliament to female facilities. Let us get that attitude on record so we can understand what those opposite are doing. We know that we are doing good things in community sport right across the state. It is an absolute shame that those will all be cut by those opposite because they have no commitment to supporting communities.

### Speed Cameras

**Mr ANDREW:** My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Motorists are receiving speeding infringement notices containing multiple fines—up to 10—that occurred several weeks prior to notices being received. Effective behavioural road safety should be addressed after the first infringement to prevent issues becoming fatal, and police officers reinforce this in person. Without genuine early intervention, how can these multiple speeding infringements be considered for safety and not just for blatant revenue raising?

**Mr BAILEY:** I did cover this topic at length in the previous question that I was asked, but people need to drive safely in Queensland. Last year was the worst year on our roads in over a decade. It is better this year—we are minus 17—but that is still a lot of fatalities and a lot of injuries to people who will never be the same again. Everybody in this House knows that I am pretty hardline when it comes to road safety. When people get fined for speeding and driving dangerously, there is no doubt that it is a deterrent for them when they then drive in future to not do the same thing.

**Mr Andrew** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Mirani.

**Mr BAILEY:** I have a statistic here that is relevant to the member, because it is an area that is within his electorate, Sarina. Some 98 per cent of passing vehicles complied with the speed limit, but 351 were detected at 20 kilometres above the speed limit, and the highest detected person caught committing an offence at Sarina was in a 70-kilometre-an-hour zone doing 156 kilometres an hour. That is outrageous and those people need to be sent a message. That is a tragedy waiting to happen.



I am happy to talk a bit about the site selection. We use a risk-based assessment methodology based on speed related Police Service road crash data. Each site is assessed for suitability using strict criteria and is approved by a registered professional engineer of Queensland. The department advises that a site layout plan is developed for each site which must be adhered to by the service provider to ensure safety for all road users. Sites are also chosen in consultation with the RACQ.

There have been some issues raised by the member and one or two other members about calibration certificates, so let me inform the House that I have been advised that photographic detection devices used in speed camera deployments are set up in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and guidelines. The equipment is tested and operated in compliance with section 122A of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 and section 210F of the Traffic Regulation 1962.

**Mr Andrew** interjected.

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

**Mr BAILEY:** To ensure accuracy, several validation checks are undertaken prior to a camera system being deployed. No-one likes getting a speeding fine—there is no doubt about that—but we should all be sending a clear message that, given the number of fatalities and serious crashes that are disproportionately higher per capita in rural and regional areas, people should not speed. They are not leaving themselves enough buffer if something happens, and that is why we see too many tragedies on our roads. Let us all be part of road safety and be clear about the messaging about—

*(Time expired)*

### Seniors, Cost of Living

**Mr SULLIVAN:** My question is to Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services. Can the minister update the House on the Seniors Card and the Seniors Business Discount Card and the discounts available with both those cards?

**Mr CRAWFORD:** The member for Stafford knows, like all members of this House, that cost of living is affecting everyone in our community, especially Queensland seniors. Christmas can be a very expensive time of the year, particularly for older Queenslanders who are spending extra money on gifts for family and grandkids. They also need to be very savvy and aware of fake scams, emails and discount deals that are too good to be true.

December, of course, is a great time for Queensland seniors to take full advantage of the discounts available with either a Queensland Seniors Card or a Seniors Business Discount Card. There are stores all across Queensland that are available for them to participate in. The Palaszczuk government maintains a website for the Seniors Card. There are up to 18 concessions and rebates available for things like electricity, gas, rates, water, motor vehicle registration, spectacles, dental services, medical aids and other activities. The website not only details eligibility but also maintains a directory of businesses that people can go to.

More than one million Queenslanders currently hold a Seniors Card or a Seniors Business Discount Card, accounting for about 88 per cent of all eligible older Queenslanders. That means there are thousands of Queensland seniors who have not yet applied and, of course, we want to know why. Maybe they have not heard about it yet. Maybe they do not understand the process. Maybe they are still working. The Palaszczuk government wants to put money back into their pocket, but we do not know who they are.

However, I do know three potential clients for us coming up next year. We have at least three seniors in our ranks here right now. I will not name them, but you can go on Wikipedia and work it out. We have a member in this House who is already in their seventies. Congratulations to them. We have a member of this House who has a 70th birthday coming up in two weeks time. There is clearly something about the Gold Coast. We also have a member of this House who is over 65 already. There are a number of other members in this House who are already in their sixties—there is a big date coming up next year in October—so some people might need to think about applying.

Here are the simple rules: you have to be a Queensland resident. You have to prove you are a Queensland resident and you have to prove you have been here for six months. I think they can tick that. You have to be over 65 or, if you are on a Commonwealth concession card that is eligible you have to be over 60, and you have to be working fewer than 35 hours a week. Irrespective of what side of the House you are on, the Palaszczuk government will look after you as a senior.

*(Time expired)*

### Desalination Plant

**Mr POWELL:** My question is to the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water. I refer to statements made by the minister and the Deputy Premier as recently as last sitting week that a final site for the SEQ desalination plant had not been selected and a business case was being prepared. The Premier just stated in this House that the desalination plant will be located in Kawana—

**Ms PALASZCZUK:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I said 'likely'.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Premier. I will hear the question then I will provide a ruling. Continue with your question.

**Mr POWELL:** When did the government make that decision?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I heard the Premier's contribution earlier. I do not believe the question is accurate in terms of what I heard the Premier say. Can you validate it in another way?

**Mr POWELL:** I am happy to refer to *Hansard* and the contribution that the Premier made.

**Government members** interjected.

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

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I heard the Premier's contribution earlier. I am happy to be corrected, but I heard it as a 'could', not 'would' or 'should' or 'will'. The question is ruled out of order.

### Youth Justice

**Mr SAUNDERS:** My question is to 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 the success of the youth justice early intervention programs and are there any other alternative approaches.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Waterford and the member for McConnel will cease their interjections.

**Ms FARMER:** I thank the member for his question. I know how pleased he and the member for Hervey Bay were in June this year when we launched the youth co-responder team on the Fraser Coast. It is a great program: youth workers and police working 24/7 to stop young people before they offend. Just in those five months the teams have engaged with almost 900 young people. That is just one of the early intervention and prevention programs we have in place to address youth crime.

I spoke earlier about some of the programs, like intensive case management, intensive bail support, Townsville Street University, we have Transition 2 Success, Early Action Group, restorative justice conferencing and so much more. We are seeing good early results on those. We know that addressing youth crime is a complex issue. I think the breadth and diversity of opinion on that was highlighted last week by the witnesses appearing before the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee. You had some people who said we should have zero tolerance on youth crime. Other people said we absolutely should not. Some people said everyone should go to detention and other people said no-one should go to detention. I was pleased that one of the members asked a question about something that a lot of people want to know the answer to and that is what is rolled gold early intervention. A lot of the members on this side of the House will be aware of that. That is one of the three slogans in the LNP's broad ranging—that is, 13-word—youth justice policy. With 13 words they are going to solve the whole issue of youth crime. We just have to do these three things and then it is going to be all fixed. It is just like magic. When the opposition leader does media interviews he is getting asked what is rolled gold early intervention and it does not matter how many times he gets asked he cannot answer that question.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Lockyer, member for Ninderry, member for Burleigh, member for Everton, you are all warned under the standing orders.

**Ms FARMER:** Last week one of the members thought, 'Well, someone must know the answer', so they started asking the witnesses, 'Do you know what rolled gold early intervention is?' Our stakeholders are so good; they do their best. There was actually an answer to it. I will tell members what that answer was. Katherine Hayes, the CEO of the Youth Advocacy Centre, summed it up best.

She said, 'It would be something that is delivering excellent outcomes, which would be things that are already in place like the intensive bail support, intensive family partnerships and on-country programs that already exist'. I want to say to the opposition leader, when they ask him next I will give him our list of things and he can tell them about our programs.

*(Time expired)*

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

## SUMMARY OFFENCES (PREVENTION OF KNIFE CRIME) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction



**Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (11.18 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 and the Summary Offences Act 2005 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights and I nominate the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 [\[2021\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes [\[2022\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[2023\]](#).

As a community, it is imperative we all have a clear understanding of what is acceptable and what is not. As a community, we need to send clear messages about what is acceptable and what is not. The legislation I introduce to this parliament today sends a very clear message: we will not tolerate a knife culture taking root. We have seen knife cultures develop in other jurisdictions around the world. We have seen the terrible consequences for those communities. We will not go down that path in Queensland. Thanks to the support of Jack Beasley's parents, Brett and Belinda, Queensland is leading the nation when it comes to combating knife crime. We have Jack's Law, giving police wandering powers to disrupt and prevent crime and save lives. The laws I introduce today are the next step: banning the sale of knives and other items to juveniles.

These are commonsense reforms. These are reforms that will support safer retail environments and a safer community. We will always put our community, our people, first. Queensland is not the only jurisdiction in Australia that must confront this issue. There is a global trend towards young people carrying dangerous items such as knives, axes and machetes. The reasons underlying this dangerous trend are multifaceted. However, there is clearly a perceived notoriety that is associated with possessing knives that is held by some young offenders. This is exacerbated by some commercial sellers who profit from this mindlessness by selling knives and other weapons that are designed or advertised in a way that encourages or glamorises these items being used for violence.

This government is leading the nation with new initiatives that address the scourge of knife crime including, as I mentioned, the introduction of Jack's Law and its expansion earlier this year. The Palaszczuk government has empowered police officers to use handheld metal-detecting wands in all safe night precincts, on public transport and at transportation hubs across Queensland to detect weapons, deter offending and protect the community. Within the first seven months of the expansion of Jack's Law, more than 3,200 handheld scanner operations have been conducted across the state, resulting in more than 36,800 people being scanned and over 380 weapons being seized. That means there are 380 fewer weapons on our streets. Every weapon off the streets represents a tragedy being avoided and a potential life saved. When a knife is used in an offence, it takes only one moment for lives to be changed or tragically lost. Everyone loses with knife crime. Victims may be horribly injured or killed, witnesses may be forever psychologically impacted and the offender may face lifelong repercussions. A single thoughtless act or moment of criminal behaviour can destroy countless lives.

I believe that any injury or loss of life caused by young people offending with knives or other dangerous weapons is simply intolerable and it is unacceptable. This government will take every available measure to bring it to a halt. The new laws introduced by this bill will complement and build upon our existing initiatives designed to tackle knife crime. The bill will introduce essential legislative reform that strengthens regulations regarding the sale, possession and storage of knives and other

dangerous items. This is achieved by amending the Summary Offences Act 2005 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 1999 to introduce new offences, including prohibiting the sale of controlled items to anyone under the age of 18.

A controlled item will include knives, swords, machetes, axes, sickles or scythes, spears, spear guns and replica firearms including gel blasters that are replica firearms. By prohibiting the sale of knives and other dangerous items to minors, we are taking another step forward in enhancing how police can stop knife crime and get items like knives and machetes out of the hands of young people and off our streets. However, this prohibition will exclude items such as plastic or wooden knives designed to be used for eating, knives with rounded or dull edges such as butter knives and small knives designed to be used as cheese knives. It will also be an offence for anyone to falsely represent themselves as being over the age of 18 for the purposes of being sold a controlled item.

This initiative will work hand in hand with retailers to ensure the success of these measures by requiring commercial sellers to display signage at retail outlets advertising the prohibition against the sale of knives to minors. Sellers will also be required to take preventive measures to ensure compliance with this prohibition. This includes instructing all employees on their obligations under these new laws, including to sight acceptable evidence of age for anyone seeking to purchase a controlled item who may be under the age of 18. This prohibition will apply to any sale involving a controlled item. It will make no difference if the item is sold at a retail store, in a market, at a temporary stall, in a private sale or online. All sales involving knives, swords, machetes and other controlled items to minors will be prohibited.

Commercial sellers of particular controlled items will also be required to securely store these dangerous items in retail outlets. Items captured by this new secure storage requirement will include: a dagger that is a double-edged blade; a knife with a blade at each end; a sword, machete or axe, which includes tomahawks; a sickle or scythe; and a spear gun and a spear. To comply with these new storage requirements, retailers will need to ensure the item is either stored in a locked room, cage, cabinet or container or securely tethered. In acknowledgement of how dangerous these items can be when misappropriated, many retailers already provide safe and secure storage in their retail outlets and I commend those retailers for doing so. However, this amendment will ensure that good practice is implemented universally across the state and will further minimise the risk of these dangerous items falling into the hands of young offenders.

Additionally, this bill prohibits controlled weapons from being sold or marketed in a way that suggests the item is suitable for combat, is intended to be used for violence or is likely to stimulate or encourage violent or criminal behaviour. This offence targets the sale of knives and other weapons specifically designed to glamorise their use as deadly weapons. There is a growing trend internationally of knives, machetes and other items being sold that possess words, images or markings either on the item itself or its packaging, on a related accessory or in an associated advertisement that encourage its use for violence. Commonly known as 'zombie knives', these items are deliberately designed to look menacing and replicate elaborate weaponry often seen in horror films. This kind of weapon serves no practical purpose and exists purely to inflate criminal egos or excite puerile minds. Machetes depicted with blood dripping from the edge of the blade or marked with words such as 'head splitter', 'killer' or 'slayer' serve no practical purpose and have no place in our society. These dangerous items can end lives and the Palaszczuk government takes the threat of knife crime and violent offences involving these kinds of weapons very seriously.

This bill sends a clear message to any business seeking to profit by selling or marketing certain items in a way that deliberately fuels the notoriety of possessing weapons by young people that this must stop. The amendments in this bill will commence on proclamation, following a 12-month implementation period that will include a public education campaign. I am proud to introduce this bill and take another step forward in cracking down on knife crime.

I would like to thank the Jack Beasley Foundation and Brett and Belinda Beasley. I spoke to Brett this morning. He is very excited that this legislation is being introduced. I acknowledge the Beasleys' tireless campaign to help strengthen Queensland's laws and their ongoing efforts to educate the community regarding the dangers and repercussions of knife possession and how a single act of violence can change the course of so many lives.

I thank the retail industry leaders and representatives who have already shown their support for this initiative and for prioritising the safety of their customers, staff and community. I also acknowledge the advocacy of Ian Leavers from the Queensland Police Union and Chris Gazenbeek from the Shop,

Distributive and Allied Employees Association. Everyone has a part to play in making Queensland a safer place. By working together to implement these measures we can achieve greater success and greater safety and save lives. I take this opportunity to commend all of those who have contributed to the development of this bill. I encourage all members to support it. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (11.28 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 Legal Affairs and Safety Committee

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

## FORENSIC SCIENCE QUEENSLAND BILL

### Message from Governor

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (11.28 am): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): The message from Her Excellency recommends the Forensic Science Queensland Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

FORENSIC SCIENCE QUEENSLAND BILL 2023

*Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68*

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


A Bill for an Act to establish the Director of Forensic Science Queensland and for related purposes, and to amend this Act, the Evidence Act 1977, the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 29 November 2023

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 29 November 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Forensic Science Queensland Bill 2023 [\[2024\]](#).

### Introduction

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (11.29 am): I present a bill for an act to establish the Director of Forensic Science Queensland and for related purposes, and to amend this act, the Evidence Act 1977, the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Health and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Forensic Science Queensland Bill 2023 [\[2025\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Forensic Science Queensland Bill 2023, explanatory notes [\[2026\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Forensic Science Queensland Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[2027\]](#).

The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring we have a strong forensic service that Queenslanders can rely on—a service that incorporates everything we have learned from the commissions of inquiry and a service that victims, their families and the broader community can rely on. The uncovering of the breakdowns at the Queensland forensic laboratory is due to the ongoing resilience and advocacy of Ms Vicki Blackburn. I echo the sentiments of Walter Sofronoff in the first Commission of Inquiry into Forensic DNA Testing in Queensland: the work being done to resolve these

failings is dedicated to the memory of Shandee Blackburn. I thank Vicki for all she has done to bring these issues to light, along with those scientific experts who pursued truth and transparency. Particularly I want to acknowledge Dr Kirsty Wright.

The Forensic Science Queensland Bill 2023 will establish the legislative framework for the provision of forensic services in Queensland. The bill is one more step towards restoring public confidence in Queensland's forensic services. We know how challenging this time has been for victims and their families as they follow the commissions of inquiry and hear the evidence about the unacceptable conditions operating in our forensic lab. The inquiry's recommendations require review and retesting of a large number of samples dating as far back as 2007. This is understandably of great concern for many Queenslanders. For victims and their families, this concern is personal. Knowing that a perpetrator might have escaped identification or being brought to justice has caused them immense stress and uncertainty. Everybody needs to have faith that testing standards are high and support perpetrators being identified and brought to justice.

I want to reassure victims and their loved ones that the Palaszczuk government is committed to restoring their confidence in forensic services in Queensland. That is why the interim advisory board includes a victim advocate, to ensure the voices and experiences of victims and their families are front and centre in building a world-class forensic service in Queensland. I appreciate that they will not be able to move on until the failings of the past are resolved. Implementing the findings of the commissions of inquiry is a priority for our government. Over 80 per cent of the 123 recommendations from the 2022 inquiry either have been implemented or are partially implemented. Our focus on finalising implementation of all recommendations will now include addressing the issues with Project 13.

The bill implements recommendation 121 of the 2022 inquiry, which recommended a statutory framework for forensic services similar to that of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The bill will help to ensure we never lose sight of the role, purpose and impact of forensic services in Queensland. It sets out the key components of the forensic services system and includes various protections for the integrity of the system.

The bill ensures key features of Queensland's forensic science system are enshrined in legislation. The main purpose of the bill is to ensure high-quality, reliable, independent and impartial forensic services for the administration of criminal justice in Queensland. The bill also requires research, development, innovation and collaboration activities be undertaken to ensure Forensic Science Queensland remains relevant well into the future, even as forensic science knowledge and the criminal justice landscape evolve.

The bill establishes the Director of Forensic Science Queensland. The director will lead the provision of forensic services to the Queensland Police Service, the Director of Public Prosecutions, coroners and other criminal justice entities. The director will be appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Attorney-General. The director will need to have a tertiary qualification in a relevant scientific discipline and at least 10 years of practical experience in forensics. The bill provides that the director cannot have a conviction for an indictable offence or be an insolvent under administration. This is appropriate given the director's important role in overseeing a critical part of the criminal justice system.

The bill establishes Forensic Science Queensland as a government office that supports the director. Forensic Science Queensland will consist of the DNA laboratory, scientists and a range of staff to support research, innovation and administrative activities. Forensic Science Queensland will be located within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, as recommended by the Sofronoff inquiry. An interim Forensic Science Queensland is currently operating within Queensland Health and will be moved to the justice portfolio through administrative processes after the bill has passed.

Forensic Science Queensland staff are essential to the success of our forensic services system. To provide certainty for staff, the bill applies Queensland Health terms and conditions of employment until a certified agreement covering Forensic Science Queensland staff is negotiated. Forensic Science Queensland will be focused on testing and analysis to assist the investigation or prevention of crime. It will provide expert evidence that informs the administration of criminal justice such as evidence in courts and coronial proceedings. Forensic Science Queensland will also be able to share its expertise outside of Queensland or outside of the criminal justice space where appropriate. For example, the bill allows the director to direct Forensic Science Queensland to conduct DNA analysis to support an interstate criminal investigation or to identify victims of natural disasters.

Finally, the bill establishes the Forensic Science Queensland Advisory Council. The council will monitor and review the policies and procedures of Forensic Science Queensland that relate to the administration of criminal justice. It will provide advice and recommendations to the Attorney-General

on these policies and procedures, including on the Attorney-General's request. The advisory council will also be able to give advice and recommendations to the director on its own initiative. The advisory council will draw from a wide range of criminal justice perspectives. The bill sets out mandatory council members to ensure there is police, prosecution, defence, victim support, independent forensic science and private legal profession representation on the advisory council.

The Attorney-General must appoint these mandatory members. Any other members that the Attorney-General appoints must have qualifications or experience in forensic services, policing, law, support for victims of crime or another field necessary or relevant to support the council's functions. Candidates for the advisory council will go through a suitability assessment before they are appointed. This process will ensure there is strong and diverse experience on the advisory council. If the council has advice or a recommendation that is not unanimously supported by council members, it will be required to provide a fair summary of the views of any members who did not agree with the decision. This requirement acknowledges that forensic science is complex and there may be different views that are relevant for the Attorney-General and director to understand.

DNA testing and analysis is a fundamental part of our criminal justice system. The Forensic Science Queensland Bill is an important step in rebuilding forensic services and establishing a world-class system for Queenslanders. We know that reforming forensic services is an enormous task. The significance of this work and the ongoing efforts it will require in a number of areas, from recruitment to cultural change to researching best practice, cannot be emphasised enough. Work is well underway to strengthen staffing and leadership of the laboratory, improve workplace culture and, of course, champion scientific excellence. The work undertaken to date has been described by internationally renowned scientific experts as 'herculean', 'spot-on' and 'an enormous task'. Importantly, the Bennett inquiry found no evidence that would undermine public confidence in the current work of Forensic Science Queensland. However, this work will be continuous. To rebuild and maintain trust, a strong workforce and commitment to high-calibre analysis will always be important. The bill provides the framework in which these ongoing improvements can occur.

The principles of quality, reliability, impartiality and independence will be relevant to all of Forensic Science Queensland's work—from delivering existing forensic services and scientifically reviewing cases as recommended by the commissions of inquiry to developing and adopting innovative and reliable forensic analysis techniques in the decades to come. I would like to take a moment to thank the stakeholders who have contributed to development of this bill. The bill has been informed by consultation with a range of individuals and organisations across fields such as forensics, law and victim support. The bill, and in particular the membership of the advisory council, ensures their voices will continue to be heard as Forensic Science Queensland matures. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (11.39 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 Health and Environment Committee

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

## CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (DOUBLE JEOPARDY EXCEPTION AND SUBSEQUENT APPEALS) AMENDMENT BILL

### Message from Governor



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.39 am): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): The message from Her Excellency the Governor recommends the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (DOUBLE JEOPARDY EXCEPTION AND SUBSEQUENT APPEALS)  
AMENDMENT BILL 2023

*Constitution of Queensland 2001*, section 68

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

A Bill for an Act to amend the Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973, the Criminal Code Act 1899 and the Criminal Code for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 29 November 2023

*Tabled paper:* Message, dated 29 November 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill 2023 [\[2028\]](#).

## Introduction



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.39 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Appeal Costs Fund Act 1973, the Criminal Code Act 1899 and the Criminal Code for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill 2023 [\[2029\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes [\[2030\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[2031\]](#).

I am pleased today to introduce the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill 2023. The bill amends the Criminal Code and makes consequential amendments to other acts to enhance Queensland's criminal justice system.

The principle of finality—that decisions made by the court should not be reopened—and the principle of justice—the conviction of the guilty and acquittal of the innocent—are pillars of our criminal justice system. However, a dynamic tension can exist between the competing demands of these two principles. The principle of finality is an essential element of the way the criminal justice system operates, creating certainty and consistency. However, there are circumstances where the principle of finality must be set aside to allow justice to be served.

The reforms in the bill enhance the operation of the criminal justice system through mechanisms to correct possible erroneous outcomes and maintain balance in the criminal justice system, helping to ensure the guilty are convicted and the innocent are set free. Firstly, the bill enhances the criminal justice system in relation to possible unjust acquittals by expanding the application of the fresh and compelling evidence double jeopardy exception to additional offences.

The rule against double jeopardy is a fundamental tenet of the criminal justice system. In essence, it provides that a person may not be tried or punished more than once for the same offence. The purpose of the rule is to ensure criminal proceedings can be brought to a conclusion and the outcome of a trial can be regarded as final. The rule protects individuals against repeated, oppressive prosecutions and encourages police and prosecutors to be diligent and careful in their investigation, to gather as much evidence as possible and to put forward the best case. In this sense, the rule against double jeopardy promotes fairness to accused persons and the proper administration of justice for victims and the community. However, rigid adherence to the rule would prevent an acquitted person from being retried even where significant fresh evidence is later discovered which may undermine the legitimacy of the acquittal and public confidence in the criminal justice system.

To address this the Criminal Code currently has two exceptions to the rule against double jeopardy. These exceptions allow a person to be retried in two circumstances: firstly, if the original acquittal was 'tainted'—for example, by the accused person committing an offence such as perjury or bribing a witness; or, secondly, for the offence of murder, if fresh and compelling evidence later emerges that indicates the person did commit the offence.



The bill expands the application of the fresh and compelling evidence double jeopardy exception, which is currently restricted to murder, to 10 additional prescribed offences. Under the double jeopardy exception framework, the Director of Public Prosecutions will be able to apply for a court order that a person be retried for a prescribed offence for which they have previously been acquitted if there is fresh and compelling evidence against the person and it is in the interests of justice. While sometimes considered necessary, the retrial of an acquitted person is an extraordinary proceeding, and it is for this reason that the bill expands the fresh and compelling evidence double jeopardy exception only to the prescribed offences.

The prescribed offences to which the fresh and compelling evidence double jeopardy exception will apply are all serious offences punishable by life imprisonment and involving direct interference with another person's life or sexual bodily integrity. Four offences relate to unlawful killing and six are sex offences. The offences include manslaughter, attempted murder, unlawful striking causing death, rape, incest and penile intercourse with a child under the age of 12. These are offences where rigid adherence to the double jeopardy rule risks perpetrating an injustice by allowing an offender to walk free even when there is compelling evidence of their guilt. Such circumstances can bring the criminal justice system into disrepute and be contrary to the interests of the community.

The bill recognises that there may sometimes be cases where, despite the diligence of police and prosecutors, not all of the evidence was available at the time the accused person was tried for the prescribed offence. It could be that advances in science or technology subsequently reveal new evidence or permit new conclusions to be drawn from the evidence or that evidence was deliberately concealed at the time of the investigation and trial. In such cases, there may be grounds to allow an acquitted person to be retried for the offence.

The expansion of the fresh and compelling evidence double jeopardy exception ensures there is a mechanism for persons who have been acquitted of a prescribed offence to be brought to justice if it later emerges that there is compelling evidence of their guilt. All of the existing procedural safeguards in the double jeopardy exception framework will apply to the prescribed offences including that a retrial must be in the interests of justice, only one application for a retrial may be made and the police may only reinvestigate an offence in relation to a possible retrial if authorised by the Director of Public Prosecutions. The bill protects the integrity of an acquittal for a prescribed offence unless and until it becomes necessary in the interest of justice for the double jeopardy rule to be overridden.

The bill also makes an important clarification in relation to the definition of 'fresh' in the context of the fresh and compelling evidence double jeopardy exception. Currently, the code defines evidence as 'fresh' if it was not adduced at trial and could not have been adduced with the exercise of reasonable diligence. The bill will make it clear that the requirement for 'reasonable diligence' applies to the investigating police and the prosecution. This will ensure evidence is not precluded from being 'fresh' solely because another person failed to exercise reasonable diligence in relation to the trial. For example, in situations where evidence was not adduced due to a failure by an expert witness, it will be open to a court to order a retrial if that evidence is otherwise compelling and in all the circumstances it is in the interests of justice for the acquitted person to be retried. The amendments in the bill strengthen the integrity of the criminal justice system by striking the right balance between preserving the principles of the double jeopardy rule and ensuring the validity of criminal trials and that justice can be done in our courts.

Secondly, the bill enhances the ability of the criminal justice system to respond to possible wrongful convictions by introducing a right of subsequent appeal. Currently a person convicted of an indictable offence, or a summary offence in certain limited circumstances, may appeal their conviction to the Court of Appeal. However, a convicted person may only appeal their conviction once. After the appeal is determined, the matter is closed and there is no further right to make another appeal even if evidence later emerges that has the potential to exonerate the convicted person. While wrongful convictions are rare, the criminal justice system is not infallible and there is a risk that an innocent person may be convicted.

The bill introduces a subsequent right of appeal for convicted persons who have exhausted their original right of appeal. Under the new framework a convicted person may make a subsequent appeal against their conviction if there is fresh and compelling evidence or new and compelling evidence relating to the offence. There are two categories of fresh evidence under the bill in the context of subsequent appeals. First, evidence is fresh if it was not adduced in the trial and could not have been adduced with the exercise of reasonable diligence by the defence. This is evidence that did not exist or could not reasonably have been discovered at the time of the trial. Second, evidence is fresh if it was

not adduced in the trial and could with the exercise of reasonable diligence by the defence have been adduced but it was not because of the incompetence or negligence of a lawyer acting for the convicted person in the trial.

Fresh evidence could include forensic evidence that has become available because of advances in science or technology, an admission such as a 'deathbed confession', material discrediting an expert witness relied on in the trial, information about the convicted person's capacity to engage and understand criminal proceedings, or evidence that undermines a circumstantial case and strongly suggests the convicted person could not have committed the offence. The bill provides that evidence is new if it was not adduced in the trial but could have been adduced with the exercise of reasonable diligence by the defence. For either ground, fresh or new, the evidence must be compelling. The bill provides that fresh or new evidence will be compelling if it is reliable, substantial and either is highly probative in the context of the issues in dispute in the trial or would have substantially weakened the case for the prosecution.

Under the new framework, the court must allow a subsequent appeal if satisfied that it meets the threshold for a successful appeal. There are different thresholds depending on whether the evidence is fresh or new. For fresh and compelling evidence, the court must allow the subsequent appeal if it is satisfied there was a miscarriage of justice. However, the court may dismiss the subsequent appeal if it considers no substantial miscarriage of justice has occurred. The intent of this proviso is to ensure technical errors do not unnecessarily result in appellate intervention, which may cause undue distress to victims and their families, while allowing intervention for significant miscarriages of justice. For new and compelling evidence the court must allow the subsequent appeal if, on the balance of probabilities, it is of the opinion that, considering all of the evidence, the appellant was not guilty of the offence.

The threshold for new and compelling evidence is higher to acknowledge that the evidence could have been adduced in the trial and to avoid rewarding unprepared defendants for their lack of diligence. If a subsequent appeal is successful, the bill provides that the court must quash the conviction and direct that the convicted person be acquitted. However, for a subsequent appeal on fresh and compelling evidence the court may order a new trial if it considers the miscarriage of justice can be more adequately remedied by an order for a new trial.

The bill also provides that if a subsequent appeal is successful and a new trial is ordered the appellant is entitled to be paid, from the Appeal Costs Fund, costs that are considered to have been thrown away or partly thrown away, including costs that were reasonably incurred but were wasted when the conviction is quashed, such as legal fees incurred during the trial and previous appeal.

There is no limit on the number of subsequent appeals allowed under the new framework. Evidence may emerge in a piecemeal fashion over months or years following a conviction, and the framework provides an opportunity for the convicted person to seek leave to make a subsequent appeal on the basis of that evidence without an arbitrary limit on the number of subsequent appeals that may be made. Balancing this, the bill includes significant safeguards to protect against the flooding of unmeritorious or repeated subsequent appeals. This includes the requirement for an application for leave to make a subsequent appeal, which acts as a filter for frivolous, vexatious or spurious subsequent appeals.

An application that does not show any substantial ground of subsequent appeal may be referred by the registrar to the court for summary determination, and the Court of Appeal may dismiss a subsequent appeal that it considers is frivolous or vexatious without calling any person to attend a hearing. The subsequent appeal framework established by the bill will operate retrospectively, in that it will apply to convicted persons who exhausted their original right of appeal prior to the commencement of the new framework. This acknowledges that fresh evidence may be discovered many years after a conviction.

It is difficult to estimate the proportion of convictions that may be wrongful convictions. In other Australian states and territories where a subsequent appeal right has been introduced there have been few successful subsequent appeals. However, it is important that where a wrongful conviction has occurred there is a transparent and impartial mechanism to correct the miscarriage of justice. The new subsequent appeal framework introduced by the bill ensures that persons who may have been wrongfully convicted have a mechanism to seek leave for the court to consider fresh and compelling evidence or new and compelling evidence that may indicate a miscarriage of justice has occurred.

This bill delivers important reforms for Queensland. The bill reflects this government's ongoing and unwavering commitment to ensure Queensland's criminal justice system remains contemporary and efficient and delivers fair and just outcomes for the community. I commend the bill to the House.

### First Reading

**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.53 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 Legal Affairs and Safety Committee

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

### PRIVILEGE

#### Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.53 am): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order suddenly arising on privilege. I have reviewed footage from question time, and I can advise that the Premier said, 'Because, Mr Speaker, the desalination plant will be at Kawana.' She then qualified it a short time later by saying, 'Mr Speaker, that is where the desalination is likely to be'—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Member for Kawana, what is the point of order?

**Mr BLEIJIE**: I am getting to that. It is a matter of privilege suddenly arising.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: I just need you to get to the point, member for Kawana. It is not a debate at this point. There is a process for this.

**Mr BLEIJIE**: Correct, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Premier then—

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

**Mr BLEIJIE**: I would ask if I could finish my point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mr BAILEY**: It is in relation to this alleged point of order. I do not believe this is a matter suddenly arising—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Member for Miller, I will ask you to take a seat. Member for Kawana, I will ask you to get to your point of order.

**Mr BLEIJIE**: The Premier then took a point of order and said, 'I said "likely".' I believe the Premier has clearly misled parliament, and I will be writing to the Speaker about this matter.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Before I call the Clerk to read the next order of the day, I want to acknowledge that we have with us in the gallery Mayor Tony Rayner from the Longreach Regional Council. Welcome to the Queensland parliament.

### INFORMATION PRIVACY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### PUBLIC RECORDS BILL

#### Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill resumed from 28 November (see p. 3754), on motion of Mrs D'Ath, and Public Records Bill resumed from 28 November (see p. 3754), on motion of Ms Enoch—

That the bills be now read a second time.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time limit for this stage of the bill having expired, I call the Attorney-General to reply to the second reading debate.



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (11.55 am), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As I mentioned in my second reading speech, I propose to move a number of amendments to the bill to address issues raised in the committee process and to make a number of minor and technical amendments. Additionally, there is a minor amendment to the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999, updating the definition of 'union'.

Turning to the matters raised by honourable members during the course of this debate, I note the member for Nanango's comments in relation to the passage of time between the 2017 review and the introduction of this bill. As the member noted, the reforms in the bill are based on a number of reports such as the review report, the CCC Impala report, the Windage report and the strategic review report. Given that these reforms impact so many Queensland agencies, it was important that we consult properly with all agencies and the public to understand any impacts and ensure the reforms are practicable and workable while improving safeguards and, importantly, that the 2017 review recommendations were then updated as a consequence of those later reports.

The reforms, including the review of the RTI Act and IP Act tabled in 2017, were informed by a process of consultation. Most recently, the government released a consultation paper on 24 June 2022 titled *Proposed changes to Queensland's information privacy and right to information framework*, which sought feedback from the general public and key stakeholders on key privacy reforms and a number of reforms to enhance and clarify the operation of the IP Act and the RTI Act.

Consultation has also been undertaken with agencies in developing the bill. As members can imagine, working through the feedback from this many agencies takes time and it is important we get it right. The development of the reforms has also quite properly needed to have regard to the Commonwealth's Privacy Act Review. Even though that is not completed, the review has certainly been taken into account, as well as developments in case law. On that point, I also note the member for Nanango's comments regarding this bill's interaction with the Commonwealth Privacy Act Review.

I would like to make it clear that the reforms in the bill will provide a stepping stone for further reform following any legislation arising out of the Commonwealth government's review, which is what I stated in my second reading speech. The Commonwealth government's response to the review was released on 28 September 2023. Of the 116 proposals, the Commonwealth government response agrees to 38 proposals, agrees in principle to 68 proposals and notes 10 proposals. I understand the Commonwealth Attorney-General's department will lead the next stage of implementation, which will involve several steps, including engagement with entities on proposals which are agreed in principle to explore whether and how they could be implemented, in advance of progressing further advice to the Commonwealth government in 2024, including outcomes of further consultation on legislative proposals.

I understand that the Commonwealth government currently plans to introduce legislation sometime in 2024. Proceeding with Queensland's privacy reforms now ahead of any changes to the Commonwealth Privacy Act will provide an uplift of privacy protections for Queenslanders, moving towards the Commonwealth framework. Government will consider whether any further changes are required once the Commonwealth government response to the Privacy Act Review report is legislated.

An issue raised by several members is the application of the mandatory data breach notification scheme to local government. Importantly, Queenslanders expect that all levels of government appropriately handle and protect their personal information, regardless of whether it is held by the Commonwealth, state or local government. The government values the Local Government Association's contribution and acknowledges that the reforms in the bill will have an impact on all agencies, particularly on smaller agencies such as regional and remote local governments. That is why the government has funded the OIC to support all agencies, including local governments, to help agencies get business ready for these reforms.

The OIC will have a statutory responsibility to prepare guidelines, education and training to assist agencies and local governments. This will be particularly beneficial for smaller local councils. Further, the delayed commencement of the mandatory data breach notification scheme for local government will provide a longer period for local governments to transition to the new scheme and mitigate the resourcing impact of implementing the MDBN scheme at the same time as other reforms.


The member for Nanango noted that no legislation is required to implement proactive release of cabinet documents but also suggested that because no complex legislation is required to implement proactive release the government has been dragging its feet. The members for Maroochydore and

Buderim supported this suggestion. First, Professor Coaldrake has already noted in his Irene Longman Oration that proactive release is not something to be entered into lightly—that the New Zealand scheme, implemented in 2019, was the product of a series of steps taken over 40 years.

Second, the member seems to conflate lack of complex legislation with a lack of effort. Once implemented, proactive release will be a nation-leading reform. We will be the first in the country to do this. Cabinet confidentiality and collective responsibility are cornerstones of the Westminster system. Working through these issues takes time. I would be happy to hear that the opposition, if they were to form government sometime in the future, would retain that transparency around cabinet documents.

Lastly, the member asked me to confirm when the handbook will be changed and when the first release of documents would occur. Proactive release will commence in the first quarter of 2024 and the publication of the updated Cabinet Handbook will occur before at the discretion of the Premier. The member would know that if she had listened to my second reading speech. We make no excuse on this side of the House for taking the time to get things right. We are committed to getting it right and we are proud that Queensland will be nation leading in implementing proactive release

I would like to again thank the Education, Employment and Training Committee for its consideration of the bill and acknowledge the valuable contribution of all those who made submissions and participated in the public hearing. I once again thank all honourable members for their contributions during the debate.

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (12.01 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their participation in the debate on the Public Records Bill 2023. It is encouraging to see so much interest in the making, managing and accessing of Queensland's public records. I am heartened by the keen interest shown by members who spoke about how they had learnt about the great work of the State Archives and how essential public records are for the community and government through this legislative process. The support for the inclusion of First Nations perspectives in the bill is also heartening, particularly given the role public records have played in capturing Queensland's history. Again, I would like to thank the members of the Community Support and Services Committee for their consideration of this reform. I would also like to thank all those who have engaged in the consultation leading up to this bill and all those who provided submissions.

I would like to take a moment to respond to some of the comments made during the debate. Members of the opposition commented on the reasons for the review of the act and this new legislation. Let me be clear. It has been more than two decades since the original Public Records Act was introduced. In that time, we have seen phenomenal technological advancements. To put it into perspective for the members opposite, when the current act was first put in place, the iPhone was still almost five years away, the World Wide Web had been part of the public domain for less than 10 years and Facebook, YouTube, X formerly known as Twitter and other social media platforms were still a few years away from becoming a normal part of everyone's lives. As the *Report of review of the Public Records Act 2002* by the independent panel noted—

Digital information was not new in 2002 when the Act was passed. However, the scope, volume and complexity of digital information that is now created and received by government could not have been anticipated.

The review of the Public Records Act was initiated by the Palaszczuk government in recognition of the need for contemporary records management legislation. As with many jurisdictions, Queensland's Public Records Act had not undergone a complete review since commencement. During the last two years we have seen revised public records legislation implemented in New South Wales, and the National Archives of Australia undertook the Tune review of our Commonwealth records legislation. While many other states retain legislation that is almost a decade old, Queensland will have a contemporary Public Records Act.

This new bill sets a precedence for modern records management and is needed to address the changes that have occurred during the last two decades. We have seen a dramatic increase in the volume and types of information, data and records created by government. Our 20-year-old public records legislation needed review to enable efficient record keeping for digital channels. There has also been a continued growth of both digital and physical records, with implications on the effective delivery of government services and cost impacts from the significant costs for storing information. As we have already heard, retaining information and records longer than required may also increase the risk of data breaches.

A comprehensive review of the act was required to ensure the legislative framework enables contemporary information and record keeping practices that support good governance and decision-making by government. Undertaking the review has also provided the potential to enable the realisation of savings and efficiency gains, with further work to be undertaken by the State Archivist to develop a plan for reducing the legacy physical records of government that are not of permanent value.

The bill takes on the recommendations made by the independent panel in their *Report of review of the Public Records Act 2002* about the independence of the State Archivist, which was a point of many contributions. As I mentioned in my second reading speech, I noted the contribution at the public hearing from the Australian Society of Archivists, where they acknowledged this as ‘world leading work’ and highlighted the improved clarity within the legislation and the positive way the bill strengthens the autonomy and independence of the State Archivist, and better enables the archivist to monitor and report on record keeping maturity across Queensland public authorities.

The bill provides for this independence by requiring any direction from the minister to be in writing and that any direction must not be inconsistent with the act. Any direction must also be published in the annual report for the Queensland State Archives. The level of independence proposed under the Public Records Bill is consistent with public records legislation across all other Australian jurisdictions and in many aspects affords the State Archivist greater independence than in several other jurisdictions. For those opposite who were calling for further independence, I can say that no other Australian jurisdiction has a State Archivist who is completely independent from ministerial oversight. The bill also includes provision that the director-general or senior public servants cannot direct the State Archivist in relation to any function under the bill; they can only provide administrative support to the archives.

Given the many thousands of records held by Queensland State Archives about First Nations peoples and the importance of the upcoming Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry, the creation of the First Nations Advisory Group is a critical step towards embedding the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in decisions about these records—not, as the member for Surfers Paradise implied in his contribution, that it was being established to simply avoid offence. It is pretty clear in the recommendation and we are following that.

The Queensland State Archives’ First Nations Archives Adviser, Dr Barrowcliffe, undertook further workshops with First Nations stakeholders in July 2023, who also strongly supported this recommendation, along with public authorities which provided feedback during the consultation period. As stated by Mick Gooda, co-chair of the Interim Truth and Treaty Body—

A cultural lens must also be applied to the collective use and management of information held, taking into account the interests of First Nation peoples.

The bill’s provisions, particularly the establishment of the First Nations Advisory Group, will better support QSA’s ability to appropriately manage permanent records of value to reconciliation and healing. As many government members noted in their contributions, including my colleagues the member for Bundamba and the member for Cook, the bill acknowledges the significance of public records relating to First Nations peoples, particularly as it relates to language revitalisation and reconnecting community and families.

In terms of the bill’s treatment of the topics of pro-disclosure and access, which was raised by a number of members, including the member for Maiwar, the bill improves the accessibility of public records in the custody of Queensland State Archives in a number of ways. When public records are transferred to the archives, a pro-disclosure approach must be adopted by the transferring public authority. There are limited triggers for restricting access to the records, including if the record contains personal information, culturally sensitive information or national or state security information. Any person can apply for access to a restricted record and the responsible public authority must decide within 35 days, or longer if agreed by the State Archivist, about access including whether to apply any conditions to access. The requirement for a decision to be made in a specified period of time is a new requirement to ensure decisions are made in a timely way. This has not always happened in the past.

If access is refused, the public authority must tell the State Archivist why. If the State Archivist and the public authority do not agree about the access decision or applied conditions, either party can refer the matter to the Public Records Review Committee for resolution. The State Archivist may also refuse access or set restricted access periods for public records in QSA’s custody in prescribed circumstances, set by regulation. These circumstances may include where the State Archivist is satisfied access would not, on balance, be in the public interest and would inappropriately reveal culturally sensitive information or personal information.

In conclusion, this bill implements the recommendations from the report of the independent panel led by Justice Byrne and provides a legislative framework for making, managing and accessing public records in a way that benefits present and future generations. The bill modernises our public records legislation.

Again, I would like to thank the members who have contributed to the debate of the bill. I do want to just reflect on a quote from the member for Surfers Paradise that I have found quite interesting. He said at one point, 'It is important that we do the things we say we are going to do,' and that is a direct quote. This is from the member for Surfers Paradise, who has supported the Leader of the Opposition in reversing their support of the Path to Treaty legislation in this House. I find that quite ironic.

Again, I would like to thank the many public servants who have worked hard to deliver this important reform, including the Queensland State Archivist, who has throughout this process conducted herself with the highest level of professionalism. I thank her and her State Archives team for their continued expert advice to government.

As I foreshadowed in my second reading speech, the government plans to move three very minor, technical amendments including to change clause 106 by amending the reference to 'Office of State Archives' to 'Office of the Queensland State Archives' and a minor change to the consequential amendments to remove two references to the term 'repealed' when referencing the Libraries Act 1988 because that act, of course, has not been repealed.

I also want to acknowledge my team from my office who have worked hard to get this bill to where it is. I commend the bill to the House.

Question put—That the Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Question put—That the Public Records Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

#### Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.12 pm): I move the following amendment—

1

**Clause 2 (Commencement)**

Page 14, line 7, 'part 6'—

*omit, insert—*

parts 1A and 6

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

*Tabled paper:* Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [\[2032\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [\[2033\]](#).

I do not intend to speak at length to these individual amendments. As I have said already in my second reading speech, a number of these are technical amendments but also clarifying amendments that go to the committee's reports. Some of those include amendments in relation to implementing recommendation 2 and amendments that more comprehensively exclude the AAPP entity that is subject to the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988. As I explained, there is also the amendment in relation to the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.13 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title.

Leave granted.

**Mrs D'ATH:** I move the following amendment—

2

**After clause 2**

Page 14, after line 10—

*insert—*

**Part 1A          Amendment of Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999**

**2A          Act amended**

This part amends the *Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999*.

**2B          Insertion of new pt 20, div 11**

Part 20—

*insert—*

**Division 11      Transitional provision for Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023**

**327      Application of sch 3, definition *union***

(1) Schedule 3, definition *union*, as in force from the commencement, is taken to have applied from 1 December 2023 for all purposes.

(2) To remove any doubt, it is declared that the amendment of schedule 3, definition *union* by the *Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023*, section 2C—

(a) has effect only to reflect a change of the union's name; and

(b) does not affect the appointment or funding of industry safety and health representatives under part 8 before the commencement.

**2C          Amendment of sch 3 (Dictionary)**

Schedule 3, definition *union*—

*omit, insert—*

***union*** means the Mining and Energy Union, Queensland District Branch.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.14 pm): I move the following amendment—

3

**Clause 4 (Amendment of s 408E (Computer hacking and misuse))**

Page 15, line 1, 'Section 408(1)'—

*omit, insert—*

Section 408E(1)

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.15 pm): I move the following amendment—

4

**Clause 14 (Replacement of s 16 (Meaning of document to which the privacy principles do not apply))**

Page 18, line 22, '*principles*'—

*omit, insert—*

***principle***

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 14, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 15, as read, agreed to.



Clause 16—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.16 pm): I move the following amendments—

**5 Clause 16 (Amendment of s 18 (Meaning of *agency* otherwise))**

Page 19, lines 9 to 11, 'an entity to which the privacy principle requirements do not apply'  
*omit, insert—*

an excluded entity

**6 Clause 16 (Amendment of s 18 (Meaning of *agency* otherwise))**

Page 19, lines 15 and 16, '*entity to which the privacy principle requirements do not apply*'—  
*omit, insert—*

***excluded entity***

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 17 and 18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 19—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.16 pm): I move the following amendments—

**7 Clause 19 (Amendment of s 21 (Meaning of *public authority*))**

Page 20, line 15—  
*omit, insert—*

subsection (4)

**8 Clause 19 (Amendment of s 21 (Meaning of *public authority*))**

Page 20, lines 18 and 19—  
*omit.*

**9 Clause 19 (Amendment of s 21 (Meaning of *public authority*))**

Page 20, line 23, 'Section 21(1A)'—  
*omit, insert—*

Section 21(1B)

**10 Clause 19 (Amendment of s 21 (Meaning of *public authority*))**

Page 20, line 24, 'to (6)'—  
*omit, insert—*

to (5)

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 19, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 22, as read, agreed to.

Clause 23—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.16 pm): I move the following amendments—

**11 Clause 23 (Amendment of s 27 (Agencies to comply with IPPs))**

Page 22, line 5, ', other than an APP entity,'—  
*omit.*

**12 Clause 23 (Amendment of s 27 (Agencies to comply with IPPs))**

Page 22, lines 14 to 18—  
*omit.*

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 23, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 24 to 32, as read, agreed to.

Clause 33—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.17 pm): I move the following amendments—

**13 Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**

Page 29, line 25, '(1)'—  
*omit.*

- 14 Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 30, lines 1 to 3—  
*omit.*
- 15 Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 31, lines 28 and 29—  
*omit, insert—*
- (a) immediately, and continue to, take all reasonable steps to—
    - (i) contain the data breach; and
    - (ii) mitigate the harm caused by the data breach; and
- 16 Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 32, lines 12 to 28—  
*omit, insert—*
- (4) If, at any time, the agency becomes aware the data breach may affect another agency, the agency must give a written notice to the other agency of the data breach that includes—
    - (a) a description of the data breach; and
    - (b) a description of the kind of personal information the subject of the data breach, without including any personal information in the description.
- 17 Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 33, line 11, 'completed.'—  
*omit, insert—*
- completed by no longer than the period reasonably required for the agency to complete the assessment.
- 18 Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 35, lines 7 and 8—  
*omit, insert—*
- (i) the individuals whose personal information has been accessed, disclosed or lost;
- 19 Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 46, line 15, 'presence,'—  
*omit, insert—*
- presence or by audio visual link,
- 20 Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 46, lines 26 to 29—  
*omit.*
- 21 Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 47, line 10, '(1)'—  
*omit.*
- 22 Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 47, lines 12 to 24—  
*omit, insert—*
- agency, if either of the following apply—
- (a) the agency has consented to the commissioner's request for entry made under section 68;
  - (b) the agency has failed to consent to the commissioner's request for entry made under section 68, and the entry is made in compliance with the notice given for the entry under section 68(2).
- 23 Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 47, line 28, 'section 67(1)(a)'—  
*omit, insert—*
- section 67

- 24 **Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 48, line 1, 'under section 67(1)'—  
*omit.*
- 25 **Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 48, lines 14 and 15, ', under section 67(1)(b),'—  
*omit.*
- 26 **Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 48, line 17—  
*omit, insert—*  
time when the place—  
(a) is open for carrying on the business; or  
(b) is otherwise open for entry.
- 27 **Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 48, after line 22—  
*insert—*  
(4) For subsection (2)(d), an agency's **place of business** does not include a part of the place where a person resides.
- 28 **Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 48, lines 24 and 25, 'after entering places'—  
*omit.*
- 29 **Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 48, line 27, before 'If'—  
*Insert—*  
(1)
- 30 **Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 48, line 28, 'section 67(1)'—  
*omit, insert—*  
section 67
- 31 **Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 49, after line 9—  
*insert—*  
(2) Also, if the agency agrees, an authorised officer may exercise a power mentioned in subsection (1)(a) or (b) by audio visual link provided by the agency.  
(3) In this section—  
**audio visual link** means facilities that enable reasonably contemporaneous and continuous audio and visual communication between persons at different places and includes videoconferencing.
- 32 **Clause 33 (Replacement of ch 3 (Disclosure and amendment by application under this Act))**  
Page 51, lines 31 and 32, 'section 69(1)'—  
*omit, insert—*  
section 69

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 33, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 34, as read, agreed to.

Clause 35—



**Mrs D'ATH (12.18 pm):** I move the following amendments—

- 33 **Clause 35 (Amendment of s 135 (Performance monitoring and support functions))**  
Page 52, line 26, '135(1)(a)(ii)'—  
*omit, insert—*  
135(1)(a)(i) and (ii)

**34 Clause 35 (Amendment of s 135 (Performance monitoring and support functions))**

Page 52, after line 27—

*insert—*

- (i) conducting—
  - (A) reviews of personal information handling practices of relevant entities, including technologies, programs, policies and procedures, to identify privacy related issues of a systemic nature generally or to identify particular grounds for the issue of compliance notices; or
  - (B) reviews of acts or practices of agencies in relation to compliance with chapter 3A, including data handling systems and practices, to identify data breach related issues of a systemic nature generally or to identify particular grounds for the issue of compliance notices; and

**35 Clause 35 (Amendment of s 135 (Performance monitoring and support functions))**

Page 53, lines 6 to 8—

*omit, insert—*

- (3) Section 135(1)(b)(i), 'the privacy principles'—

*omit, insert—*

this Act

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 35, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 36—

**Mrs D'ATH (12.18 pm):** I move the following amendment—**36 Clause 36 (Amendment of s 136 (Decision-making functions))**

Page 54, line 15, 'an agency'—

*omit, insert—*

a relevant entity

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 36, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 37 to 40, as read, agreed to.

Clause 41—

**Mrs D'ATH (12.19 pm):** I move the following amendment—**37 Clause 41 (Amendment of s 158 (Compliance notice))**

Page 57, line 22, '(a)'—

*omit, insert—*

(b)

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 41, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 42 to 73, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

**Mrs D'ATH (12.19 pm):** I move the following amendment—**38 After clause 73**

Page 80, after line 16—

*insert—***73A Amendment of sch 2 (Entities to which the privacy principles do not apply)**

- (1) Schedule 2, heading, 'Entities to which the privacy principles do not apply'—

*omit, insert—***Excluded entities**

- (2) Schedule 2, part 1, heading, 'Entities to which the privacy principles do not apply'—

*omit, insert—***Excluded entities**

- (3) Schedule 2, part 1—

*insert—*

7 an APP entity under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cwlth)

- (4) Schedule 2, part 2, heading, 'to which the privacy principles do not apply'—

*omit, insert—*

**that are excluded entities**

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 74, as read, agreed to.

Clause 75—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.20 pm): I move the following amendment—

**39 Clause 75 (Amendment of sch 5 (Dictionary))**

Page 105, after line 8—

*insert—*

**excluded entity** see section 18(4).

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 75, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 76 to 83, as read, agreed to.

Clause 84—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.21 pm): I move the following amendments—

**40 Clause 84 (Amendment of s 16 (Meaning of public authority))**

Page 112, lines 20 to 26—

*omit.*

**41 Clause 84 (Amendment of s 16 (Meaning of public authority))**

Page 113, lines 2 and 3—

*omit.*

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 84, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 85 to 116, as read, agreed to.

Clause 117—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.21 pm): I move the following amendments—

**42 Clause 117 (Replacement of s 102 (Requiring a search))**

Page 156, lines 5 and 6, 'relevant reviewable decision'—

*omit, insert—*

decision relating to an access application

**43 Clause 117 (Replacement of s 102 (Requiring a search))**

Page 156, lines 13 to 15—

*omit.*

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 117, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 118, as read, agreed to.

Clause 119—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.22 pm): I move the following amendment—

**44 Clause 119 (Insertion of new s 105A)**

Page 157, line 29, 'satisfactory to the access applicant'—

*omit, insert—*

consistent with the primary object of this Act

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 119, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 120 and 121, as read, agreed to.

Clause 122—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.23 pm): I move the following amendment—

**45 Clause 122 (Amendment of s 110 (Decision on external review))**

Page 160, line 19, after 'section 110A'—

*insert—*

or 110B

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 122, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 123—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.23 pm): I move the following amendments—

**46 Clause 123 (Insertion of new s 110A)**

Page 160, line 20, 's 110A'—

*omit, insert—*

**ss 110A and 110B**

**47 Clause 123 (Insertion of new s 110A)**

Page 161, line 15, 'satisfactory to the access applicant'—

*omit, insert—*

consistent with the primary object of this Act

**48 Clause 123 (Insertion of new s 110A)**

Page 163, after line 3—

*insert—*

**110B Direction to decide whether documents to be amended**

- (1) This section applies in relation to an external review of a relevant decision made by an agency or Minister in relation to an amendment application (the **original amendment application**) if—
  - (a) the information commissioner would, other than for this section, have decided to set aside the relevant decision and make a decision in substitution for the relevant decision under section 110(1)(c); and
  - (b) the commissioner believes it would be more efficient and effective for the agency or Minister to consider whether amendment of the subject documents is to be permitted or refused than for the commissioner to make a decision in substitution for the relevant decision under section 110(1)(c); and
  - (c) the commissioner believes that if the agency or Minister were to consider whether amendment of the subject documents is to be permitted or refused, it is reasonably likely the agency or Minister would be able to make a decision that is consistent with the primary object of this Act.
- (2) The commissioner may, after consulting with the agency or Minister about the matters mentioned in subsection (1), set aside the relevant decision and give a notice to the agency or Minister—
  - (a) stating that the relevant decision is set aside; and
  - (b) directing the agency or Minister to decide whether amendment of the subject documents is to be permitted or refused as if the ground for making the relevant decision did not apply in relation to the documents.
- (3) If an agency or Minister is given a notice under subsection (2), a new amendment application is taken to have been made by the amendment applicant under section 78E in relation to the subject documents.
- (4) For subsection (3)—
  - (a) the new amendment application is taken to have been made on the day that is 21 business days after the information commissioner gives the notice to the agency or Minister under subsection (2); and
  - (b) despite section 78E(4)(d)(i), the new amendment application need not be accompanied by evidence of identity for the amendment applicant; and
  - (c) despite section 78E(4)(d)(ii), if an agent is acting for the amendment applicant and the agent is the same agent who acted on the original amendment application, the new amendment application need not be accompanied by evidence of the agent's authorisation; and

(d) for section 78P, the original amendment application is taken never to have been made in relation to the subject documents.

(5) In this section—

**amendment applicant** means the applicant for the original amendment application.

**relevant decision**, in relation to an amendment application, means a decision—

(a) that the application or a part of the application is outside the scope of this Act under section 78J(1)(b); or

(b) that the application does not comply with all relevant application requirements under section 78K(6); or

(c) to refuse to deal with the application under chapter 3A, part 4.

**subject documents** means documents the subject of the original amendment application amendment of which was neither permitted nor refused because of the relevant decision.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 123, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 124 to 138, as read, agreed to.

Clause 139—



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.24 pm): I move the following amendments—

**49 Clause 139 (Insertion of new sch 4A)**

Page 175, lines 28 and 29, from 'giving access to' to 'give access to'—

*omit, insert—*

about whether access is to be given to documents that purports to, but may not, be a decision on

**50 Clause 139 (Insertion of new sch 4A)**

Page 175, line 31, 'access may not have been given to'—

*omit, insert—*

decision may not be on

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 139, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 140 and 141, as read, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

## Public Records Bill



**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House, the time allocated for this stage of the bill has now expired. I will now put all remaining questions. In accordance with sessional order 4, the House must now consider clauses or remaining clauses, schedules and any amendments circulated by the minister in charge of the bill, in this case the Public Records Bill. I call the Attorney-General to table the explanatory notes to her amendments to the Public Records Bill and statement of compatibility with human rights.



**Mrs D'ATH** (12.26 pm): I table the explanatory notes and statement of compatibility with human rights to the minister's amendments.

*Tabled paper:* Public Records Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Leeanne Enoch's amendments [\[2034\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Public Records Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Leeanne Enoch's amendments [\[2035\]](#).

Question put—That the minister's amendments Nos 1 to 3, as circulated, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Amendments as circulated—

**1 Clause 106 (Amendment of long title)**

Page 54, lines 2 and 3—

*omit, insert—*

Long title, from 'Office of'—

*omit, insert—*

office of the Queensland State Archives

**2 Schedule 5 (Other amendments)**

Page 71, line 16, 'repealed'—

*omit.*

**3 Schedule 5 (Other amendments)**

Page 77, line 21, 'repealed'—

*omit.*

Question put—That clauses 1 to 107 and schedules 1 to 5, as amended, stand part of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 107 and schedules 1 to 5, as amended, agreed to.

**Third Reading (Cognate Debate)**

Question put—That the Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Question put—That the Public Records Bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

**Long Title (Cognate Debate)**

Question put—That the Attorney-General's amendment No. 51 be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment as circulated—

**51 Long title**

Long title, before 'the Criminal Code'—

*insert—*

the *Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999*,

Question put—That the long title of the Information Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the Public Records Bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

**VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT  
BILL**

Resumed from 10 October (see p. 2814).

**Second Reading**

**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (12.29 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

On 10 October 2023 the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 was introduced and subsequently referred to the Community Support and Services Committee for its consideration. I thank the committee members for their thorough consideration of the bill. A total of 14 submissions were received by the committee in the course of its inquiry. I extend my thanks to those



stakeholders, organisations and individuals who made submissions to the committee and participated in the public hearing. I am pleased to inform the House that on 24 November 2023 the committee tabled its report and made three recommendations. I wish to table the government response to the report.

*Tabled paper:* Community Support and Services Committee: Report No. 37, 57th Parliament—Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, government response [\[2036\]](#).

Recommendation 1 is that the bill be passed. I thank the committee for its support of the bill. Recommendation 2 is that the committee encourage the Department of Justice and Attorney-General to explore alternative models of delivery of financial assistance and the provision of counselling so that vulnerable victims of crime, including young people, may be appropriately supported in the receipt of financial assistance. The government response notes that, without pre-empting the outcomes of the review, the broad remit of the KPMG review does not preclude consideration of these matters. Once the KPMG review is complete, the Queensland government will further consider the outcomes of the report.

Recommendation 3 is to clarify whether the KPMG review will consider the legislative framework for the financial assistance scheme including establishing by regulation an annual adjustment of financial assistance limits to reflect inflation and current cost-of-living expenses. The Queensland government notes that, while not a legislative review, the scope of the KPMG review is broad and includes consideration of existing frameworks. Once the KPMG report is finalised, the Queensland government will consider any recommendations, findings or outcomes and determine if further legislative amendments are required.

The bill before the House amends the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 to provide greater financial assistance to victims of crime and the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to increase representation of the views of victims on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. The Queensland government recognises the devastating impact crime can have on members of our community and their families. Impacts of crime victimisation can be long-lasting and diverse. The consequences of crime can involve financial loss, psychological injury, physical injury and death. That is why this government is currently undertaking a broad range of work to provide greater care and assistance to victims of crime and their families to ensure they are heard and supported.

The amendments in this bill will provide immediate support to victims by increasing financial assistance available to victims through the financial assistance scheme, which is administered by Victim Assist Queensland and established under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act. The Queensland government recognises the current financial pressures that are affecting all Queenslanders and we know this pressure can be exacerbated for victims of a crime recovering from acts of violence committed against them. The bill will amend the Victims of Crime Assistance Act to increase the maximum amounts of financial assistance available to victims and their families. Under the scheme, victims of crime can apply for financial assistance to cover expenses incurred as a result of recovering from an act of violence including counselling, medical and legal expenses, travel expenses, loss of earnings, and expenses for other exceptional circumstances.

Primary victims of crime are also eligible to receive a special assistance payment as part of the financial assistance available to them under the scheme. This payment is intended to represent the community's recognition of the injuries suffered by them. Under the bill, the financial assistance available to primary victims of crime will be increased from up to \$75,000 to up to \$120,000. In addition, financial assistance for parent secondary victims, witness secondary victims for more serious acts of violence and related victims will be increased from up to \$50,000 to up to \$75,000. For witness secondary victims of less serious acts of violence, financial assistance will be increased from up to \$10,000 to up to \$20,000. Distress payments for related victims will be increased from up to \$10,000 to up to \$15,000 and assistance available for funeral expenses will be increased from up to \$8,000 to up to \$15,000. The bill also increases each category of special assistance payment for primary victims as follows: for category A payments, from \$10,000 to \$15,000; for category B payments, from \$3½ thousand to \$9,000; for category C payments, from \$2,000 to \$6,000; and for category D payments, from \$1,000 to \$3,000.

The bill will also recategorise domestic violence from category D to category B act of violence under the scheme. This will allow victim-survivors of domestic and family violence to access a \$9,000 special assistance payment, up from the \$1,000 currently available. Recategorising domestic violence better reflects the serious and detrimental effect of domestic violence on victim-survivors. This is consistent with the work the government is doing to strengthen responses to victim-survivors and to hold perpetrators of domestic and family violence to account. We have been developing a trauma informed whole-of-government training, education and change management framework with our

partners and stakeholders to support greater consistency of domestic and family violence training. We are also implementing a range of integrated service responses to better support victim-survivors and keep them safe as well as developing a comprehensive primary prevention program. This plan will extend and build on current efforts to address the drivers of violence and improve awareness and recognition of the signs of domestic and family violence.

In addition to the amendments to the Victims of Crime Assistance Act, the bill also amends the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to ensure victim representation on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. The amendments will increase the membership of the council from 12 to 14 members and will require that at least one member of the council has lived experience as a victim of crime. This representation is intended to ensure that the views of victims of crime during important deliberations on sentencing matters are heard. I will acknowledge, however, we have had victim advocates on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council since it was established, but we recognise the importance of having people with lived experience, not just advocates, on that council.

I would like to foreshadow amendments to the bill that I will move during consideration in detail. These amendments modify the operation of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 in relation to the retention and use of DNA samples and the results of DNA analysis. The amendments to be moved during consideration in detail address matters that have been recently identified and that require urgent legislative amendment to support implementation of recommendations from the two commissions of inquiry into DNA testing processes.

As members are aware, the two recent commissions of inquiry highlighted deficient forensic DNA testing procedures, dating back to 2007, which now require the review and retesting of a large number of DNA samples. The current legislative framework requires samples taken from persons suspected of committing indictable offences to be destroyed after one year if proceedings for the offence have not started within that time. Placing restrictions on the retention and use of DNA material is an important safeguard in the criminal justice system. However, the unique situation arising from the practices identified from the commissions of inquiry necessitates some amendments to the safeguards.

Forensic and Scientific Services Queensland is experiencing a substantial backlog in crime scene sample processing and analysis, and the time for processing and analysis of those samples is expected to exceed one year. The amendments to be moved during consideration in detail of the bill will extend the time that DNA material may be retained to ensure the investigation and prosecution of indictable offences can occur as the testing backlog is worked through.

For DNA samples taken between 13 June 2022 and 13 June 2025, the samples and the results of DNA analysis must be destroyed after three years from when the sample was taken if proceedings for the offence have not started within that time. The extended retention period aims to ensure there is sufficient time for crime scene samples to be analysed and compared against suspect profiles to identify or eliminate suspects in the course of the investigation of offences.

For DNA samples taken between 1 January 2007 and 12 June 2022 the amendments provide that the samples and the results of DNA analysis must be destroyed after three years after commencement of the amendments if proceedings for the offence have not started within that time. This will ensure the investigation and prosecution of indictable offences is not compromised by deficient DNA testing procedures in previous cases that were identified by the commissions of inquiry.

The amendments to be moved during consideration in detail of the bill will also validate the use of DNA material for evidence or relating to a proceeding for an indictable offence as if the modified powers and destruction requirements introduced by the amendments were in force when the destruction of the DNA material was required under the current framework. The Palaszczuk government is committed to rebuilding DNA and forensic services to the highest standard and restoring public confidence in Forensic and Scientific Services Queensland and its role in the criminal justice system. The amendments are an important component of the work to implement the recommendations of the commissions of inquiry.

I now want to address issues raised through the committee inquiry in relation to victims of crime. I again want to thank the stakeholders for providing submissions on the bill and acknowledge that all submitters were supportive of the bill. Several submitters noted that Victim Assist Queensland must be adequately resourced to ensure applications for financial assistance are processed within an appropriate time frame and non-government organisations should be resourced to provide support to victims of crime. Since 2019 the government has committed additional resources to Victim Assist Queensland. In 2019-20, the government provided additional resources of \$1 million per annum which is now ongoing and funds an additional 10 positions. In 2022-23, the government funded an additional

six positions for Victim Assist Queensland to support existing high-risk teams and a further three positions for new high-risk teams as they are established. Over \$4 million was provided in 2022-23 for the additional roles, increasing to over \$7.4 million in 2025-26. A further \$432,000 was committed for five temporary positions from September 2022 to 30 June 2023 to reduce backlogs.

We know that as the awareness of Victim Assist Queensland and the financial assistance available to victims increases so will the lodgement of applications for financial assistance. As part of the 2023-24 budget, the Queensland government provided an additional \$11 million over four years for victim services, including \$3 million to be distributed amongst non-government victim support services, and I want to acknowledge the work of those non-government victim support services. It is absolutely crucial to supporting victims across the state. Through the victim services funding program administered by Victim Assist Queensland, the government is investing a total of \$17 million over five years from 2022 to fund specialist victim support services to provide statewide trauma informed support to victims of crime. In addition, in September 2023 the government committed more than \$200 million in funding over the next five years to boost victim support services and financial assistance to victims of crime. This includes additional staff for Victim Assist Queensland. These resources are intended to ensure Victim Assist Queensland can assess applications efficiently and victims receive the necessary help and assistance to access financial assistance and support.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring that victims are aware of the financial assistance available to assist them to recover from crimes committed against them. I want to acknowledge the important work of police officers, prosecutors and organisations that provide support to victims in ensuring victims access the financial assistance that is available to them. Victim Assist Queensland will also continue to raise the awareness of its work and the financial assistance scheme.


In September 2023 former detective inspector Jon Rouse APM was appointed as the Interim Victims' Commissioner. The Interim Victims' Commissioner is supporting greater engagement with victims of crime and their families and raising awareness of the rights of victims and the services available to them. The permanent Victims' Commissioner, once established, will also have a role in providing information about the criminal justice process to victims, including what supports are available to them.

Some submitters raised issues with the structure and operation of the financial assistance scheme generally. In response to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's inquiry into support provided to victims of crime, the Queensland government committed to an independent review of the financial assistance scheme. This review is currently underway. The purpose of this review is to investigate whether the scheme is operating in accordance with its original intent and objectives and the effectiveness of the current scheme for victims of crime. The review is considering barriers and alternative models of financial assistance and identifying opportunities for greater collaboration with the broader victim sector to provide better access to services and financial assistance. Outcomes of this broader review will identify opportunities to enhance the financial assistance scheme to ensure the scheme continues to effectively support victims of crime.

The amendments in the bill represent one part of the government's broader reform program to support victims of crime and their families. This work is guided by recommendations made by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, the independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence, the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's inquiry into support provided to victims of crime and the new Youth Justice Reform Select Committee and the establishment of an independent ministerial advisory council.

In conclusion, I want to acknowledge and express my appreciation to all stakeholders and submitters during the committee inquiry for this valuable input into the bill. This bill will provide immediate support for victims while broader reforms are underway. These important changes to the legislation will enable victims of crime, including survivors of domestic and family violence, to receive financial assistance that better supports them on their journey and to assist in their recovery. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Before I call the member for Nanango, I remind the House of members who are on a warning: the members for Callide, Glass House, Buderim, Logan, Maryborough, Nanango, Scenic Rim, Chatsworth, Southern Downs, Toowoomba South, Moggill, Kawana, Coomera, Hinchinbrook, Warrego, Mirani, Ninderry, Burleigh, Everton and Lockyer.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (12.44 pm): I rise to speak to the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Under this Palaszczuk government unfortunately there are more victims than ever. The 2021-22 crime report released in April found that there was a

49.2 per cent increase in recorded victims on the previous year. We know that victim numbers are going up because crime is going up, yet all we hear from this government is talking down the issue. When it comes to youth crime in particular, all the government does is deny, deny, deny. The member for Capalaba called the youth crime crisis a 'media beat-up' and yet the member for Cairns calls that 'rubbish'. The member for Thuringowa said that victims were just a 'rent-a-crowd'. Last week in the youth justice select committee the member for Cooper put forward that the youth crime issue is more perception than anything.

There is a reason why we have Queenslanders rallying in the streets. They have felt dismissed and they have felt unheard. They have felt this government does not take seriously their experience of crime. I am well aware that this bill covers more than victims of youth crime. However, the treatment of victims of youth crime is a clear example of where this government has simply lost its way. It has stopped listening and it has stopped caring. There is an impression that the age of the offender should therefore lessen the impact upon the victim. However, when we have cases of young offenders brandishing weapons and cases I will not go into for sub judice—

**Ms Lauga** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will take that interjection—

**Ms Lauga** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will take that interjection that we are making things up. Tell that to the victims. Tell that to the victims of Rocky. Tell that to the victims of Keppel. Tell that to the people who have lost their loved ones. Where is the government? That is exactly what they are saying. When people have allegedly been killed in their homes—in their own homes—it fundamentally has changed the way people feel about living in their own homes. It is the fear, not just the violation of when your personal property is broken into. It is clear that the member for Keppel is so out of touch—

**Ms Lauga** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:**—constantly interjecting and dismissing the victims of crime in this great state. It is simply not good enough. It is shameful that there is someone in this House who—

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Pause the clock, please. Member for Nanango, resume your seat for the moment. Member for Keppel, what is your point of order?

**Ms LAUGA:** I take personal offence and I ask the member to withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Nanango, the member for Keppel has taken personal offence at your comments. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I withdraw. It is the fear—not just the violation of when your personal property is broken into but the fear that a young person will not just leave if they are found, the fear of what might happen to your children and of how this could impact them. There have been numerous cases of assaults and worse where the lack of fear has led to violence against those victims, yet from the government it is all made to sound like there is nothing really wrong, nothing to see here. It is the LNP that has stood up for those victims. Whether it be the victims of youth crime or the victims of domestic and family violence, of sexual violence, of assault or of theft, far too many victims have been created under this government's watch.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members on my left and right. The member for Whitsunday and the member for Keppel will cease their quarrelling across the chamber.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** It is clear we have hit a nerve. We know that crime has gone up in the Rockhampton and Keppel regions. The LNP will be supporting the increase of payments to victims. It has been a long time since that top figure of \$75,000 has been increased. I acknowledge that the proposed amount for the primary victim of an act of violence is going up to \$120,000. It is the least the state can do when someone has gone through the trauma at the hands of crime. While it can never replace what they have lost, particularly if it is a loved one, if it can provide support and acknowledgement of what they have gone through then it is worth applying for.

Victims need more proactive support to get these payments. It should not be up to them to have to go through the multiple forms and the months of waiting for what they are owed. The opposition has had to step in to give victims of serious crime the information needed on Victim Assist for them to access payments. I will at this point note that there are comments on the Victim Assist Facebook page by the member for Cooper—I would urge everyone to go on it. There is the statement—

Jonty

Matt, Kate and Miles were taken from us on Australia Day 2021. Yes, nearly 3 years ago. ... have not heard boo from anyone. Including your Premier. ... we continue to be ignored.

It goes on to talk about the Victim Assist payments. While we are happy to step in to help victims to have every support possible, it should not be up to us. It does, however, highlight the failure in the system that they have felt forgotten by this government when the worst has happened to their family.

In terms of the impact of delays, the relative of one victim recently described their experience of victim assistance not being there when her loved one needed it in the early days. It was too late for the counselling costs needed, and the number of forms was simply overwhelming when she herself was struggling. We know that these delays exist. For this financial year, applications were still taking an average of 5.9 months, or 178 days. That is an extraordinary length of time for a victim to have to wait. There may be an increase in applications as awareness grows about the increase in the payments. The government must ensure these are dealt with quickly and easily to give the best support to victims. We support victims and we support the increase in the payments.

I note the introduction of a victims representative on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. I heard the Attorney-General talk about the fact that there has always been a victims representative on that Sentencing Advisory Council. The introduction of a victims representative to the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council is just another example of the LNP leading from opposition. The opposition leader introduced this commitment in his June budget reply. He was derided by the members opposite, just as they are doing again right now.

**Mr Last:** They don't like it.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** No, they do not like it. I take that interjection. Months later, once again we see the government take on an opposition policy. It is right that this council, which has as one of its roles to advise the Attorney-General on matters relating to sentencing when requested, has as a member a victim with lived experience. Community expectations must be reflected, and without the people impacted most by crime in the room this cannot be adequately reflected. We welcome this change. Too often we see that this is not the case. Our hope is that, with this representation, the victim experience will be better taken into account when looking at sentencing policy.

The amendments circulated to be passed with this bill are important, and it is important that I spend some considerable time speaking in relation to them. The Palaszczuk government should hang its head in shame for the way it has handled the DNA inquiry. From the very beginning we have seen the Palaszczuk government deny that this is an issue or seemingly misunderstand it. Let us start with the objectives of these amendments. The explanatory notes state—

The Queensland Government has committed to implementing the recommendations from the Commission of Inquiry into Forensic DNA Testing in Queensland ... and Commission of Inquiry to examine DNA Project 13 concerns ... to ensure transparency and restore public confidence in Queensland's forensic service framework.

It is not just about confidence and it is not just about the Queensland public thinking the government is doing a decent job; this is about the perpetrators of crimes who have not been brought to justice because of the failings of the Palaszczuk government through the failings of the forensic lab. This is an issue that we have raised time and time again. This is serious. We are talking about crimes of the most serious nature—murder and rape. We are talking about the victims of heinous crimes who may never see justice because of the lab's failings. That is what matters. This is not about the image of the Palaszczuk government. This is a government that is more interested in how things look than in how things are. This is about getting justice for victims and about keeping our communities safe.

The LNP started asking questions of the lab at the beginning of December 2021. Hedley Thomas and Dr Kirsty Wright had found some deeply concerning failings in the lab. I thank them publicly once again. Hedley Thomas, Dr Kirsty Wright and lawyer Kristy Bell all deserve thanks for the work they have done in this space. It was clear that there were broader issues than just the handling of the Shandee Blackburn case. There had been multiple reviews with issues found. From the beginning, we in the opposition were rebuffed by the Palaszczuk government.

**Ms Camm:** Accused of politicking.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Accused of politicking. I will take that interjection from the member for Whitsunday. On 1 December 2021 the Leader of the Opposition asked the Premier—

I refer to the overwhelming evidence from leading forensic experts about the dire consequences of the mismanagement of evidence by the state forensic lab. If the government is serious about protecting women and holding predators to account, when will it launch an independent investigation into the systematic failures which are allowing rapists and murderers to walk free?

The answer the Premier gave was so arrogant and so naive to the issues that it was offensive to every victim. The Premier stated—

I am advised that this matter occurred in 2013. We were not in government at that stage, so perhaps those opposite would like to look at any cuts they made to the lab at the time.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** She went on to say—

I am also advised that there was a full coronial investigation into this matter.


**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will take that interjection. We now know through the inquiry that these issues dated right back to the Beattie and Bligh years. The Attorney-General can sit there and blame the LNP all she likes. This is about standing up for the victims, about bringing murderers and rapists to account in this state. This is a government that has sat on its hands time and time again. There has been review after review. It was ignored until the noise got too much. That was the beginning of a recurring theme. We made speeches, we asked more questions over the month to come, we went to the media and the government continued to deny and talk down the issues. In February the Attorney, the then health minister, said—

There has been no evidence of systemic failings in our forensic pathology unit.

That comment has not aged well. This was all against the backdrop of publicly available information. Dr Wright had begun to expose widespread issues in the lab. There was the 2020 report by the QPS scientist that analysed 20 months worth of samples of the lab. It found in over 50 per cent of sexual assault or rape cases no DNA could be found on the swab of the male's penis, yet the government was not listening.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Before I recommence my speech on the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Bill, I want to correct the record. Whilst I was speaking earlier, I referred to the Victim Assist Facebook group when I meant to say the Voice for Victims Facebook group, in which Victim Assist was discussed. I have not been asked to clarify that but I thought I had better get ahead of the game.

Before we adjourned, I was speaking about how Dr Wright began to expose these widespread issues. In March 2022, in this House I asked a question of the then minister for health and ambulance services. I asked—

Experienced forensic biologist Dr Kirsty Wright has found that in over half of all cases the government forensic lab has failed to get complete DNA profiles, even when swabs are directly taken from the male sexual offender or murderer. Will the minister intervene to ensure that offenders are held to account and that victims get the justice they deserve?

The answer was quite telling. Mrs D'Ath replied—

There certainly has been a lot of interest in the matters that have been the subject of the Shandee Blackburn matter. As members should be aware, I wrote to the Attorney-General asking the Coroner to reopen that investigation ...

Once again, she completely missed the point about a major failing within the lab.

By late March, finally, the Palaszczuk government were dragged, kicking and screaming, to agree to a review. It was not until May that the terms of reference were released and it became clear that it was merely going to be a review for show. When asked whether Queensland Health would be appointing the reviewers, the minister replied—

If the department is not identifying and appointing the reviewer, who do they suggest should?

Zero consideration was given to a truly independent review. As I have said, it was only after continuing calls from members on this side as well as Hedley Thomas, Dr Kirsty Wright and others in the media and then the revelation that the QPS was calling for samples to be retested, because at least they seemed to be looking at the information and data coming through, that the government finally caved. A commission of inquiry was announced in June.

I should note that, for all of that time, all we heard from the then attorney-general and minister for justice, minister for women and minister for the prevention of domestic and family violence was silence. We had silence on an issue that will be the central focus of our justice system for years, if not decades, to come. We had silence on an issue that impacts rape victims. We had silence on an issue that has left at least one family completely broken because of the lack of justice for their daughter's murderer.

By September, an interim report was released and the government finally got there: they said it was an extremely serious issue and that it could lead to a potential miscarriage of justice, which was something that we had been saying for months if not years. The interim report issued the first of many recommendations to come, which was that court statements would have to be changed to say that they were not true. Even that was a massive declaration of the measure of the issue. We know that over 1,000 of those statements have had to be changed. Those are official legal documents and the government has had to correct them to say that they are not true. The gravity of this cannot be overstated. What we have witnessed is one of the greatest failures, if not the greatest failure, in a justice system ever seen in not just Australia but the world.

In December 2022, the inquiry released its final report. With 123 recommendations and serious findings, it painted a picture of the mountain we would have to climb to get out of this mess. This year a subsequent inquiry was announced—after the Palaszczuk government rebuffed the need for it—to look at the failings of Project 13. Our greatest concern around this inquiry is the time and scope given. The inquiry was announced in early October and its report due on 17 November. The inquiry had just over 40 days to look at a project that was never validated and that no-one took accountability for. The commission noted—

Given that the scope of this COI has not enabled a full examination of the roles of any of the officials within the hierarchy of the QHFSS Laboratory, I do not consider that there is sufficient evidence before me to determine the question, fairly and within the allowed timeframe, of where the accountability for that particular decision and its consequences lies.

That is not a simple or a light statement. Throughout the inquiry, we heard about the short time frame. Parties were instructed that they would need to highlight the documents that they wanted read as there was no way that the commissioner would get through them all. A total of 13,775 documents were submitted. How on earth did the Palaszczuk government expect the commissioner to get through nearly 14,000 documents within a 40-day period? In the end, we found the problems of the project but no accountability and, once again, the minister took no accountability either. There have been catastrophic failures and a complete lack of accountability.

We cannot underestimate the extent of the damage done to the Queensland justice system because of the abject failure of the government to act when a problem was highlighted not just by the media but also by opposition members who are here to hold the government to account. It was an abject failure of the Palaszczuk cabinet not to sit up and listen to an issue that now leads us to one of the biggest failings of the justice system that Queensland will ever see. Worse than that, victims will never see offenders brought to account because of the failings of the Palaszczuk government.

That has led us to the amendments that are before us today. These amendments will allow for DNA material to be kept for up to three years, rather than one year, to allow for retesting as required. It is unclear why the government took so long to bring forward these amendments when, for months and months, it has been clear that mountains of cases will need to be retested and the time that will take needs to be taken into account. This should not be rushed through as amendments to another bill. If the government were on the front foot and had their head around how important the issue of retesting actually is then there would have been ample time to pass this through the usual parliamentary processes.

I have several questions for the Attorney-General on the amendments. When the government has given four years of funding for the implementation of the recommendations, including retesting, why has this extension only been made for three years? The explanatory notes state that Queensland Health has identified identical historical DNA material that was retained in contravention of the PPRA destruction requirements. How many samples have been identified? For years the QPS raised issues with the lab but without any significant response. I ask: was this a way of keeping those samples for future retesting given that they knew the issues arising? Very seriously, how many samples have been destroyed for relevant cases and how will the government ensure those victims receive justice?

There are approximately 103,187 casework samples extracted by the automated process. Each case could have hundreds of samples, according to the second report as quoted by Minister Fentiman. I ask: how many of these will actually have to be retested? Is the first amendment simply to increase

the time limit because of this backlog as it only applies to the samples taken from suspects after June 2022? Importantly for the victims of Queensland, how long will these cases take to reach trial? We know that there is a huge backlog. We do not know how many victims will never see their perpetrators end up in the right place because of this debacle.

We note that the second amendment applies to samples taken from 2007. How many of these samples are anticipated to need retesting? What happens if suspects have left Queensland or if they have died? Will Queenslanders see justice? Will the victims ever see justice? Will families ever be able to see justice for their family members? Has the DNA from suspects of many cases that we know are subject to media inquiry been destroyed? We thank the family of Shandee Blackburn—may she rest in peace—as well as those who have highlighted her story, which brings us here today, but there are so many other unnamed victims who will be suffering in silence because of the ineptitude of the Palaszczuk government. We must get this right.

In 2005 there was a ministerial review. Two years later, due to the massive backlog, shortcuts were taken in retesting. We must ensure victims get justice. That is why we are calling for a standing commission of inquiry. We need some oversight of the retesting and we need an avenue for victims to have their concerns heard. We need to find some accountability for the decisions that are made because, as we stand in this chamber today, no-one has been held accountable for the abject failures of the DNA lab in Queensland. That is why we are calling for a standing commission of inquiry. Most of all, we need a government that gets it. When it comes to the management and operation of one of the most crucial elements of our judicial and justice system, this Palaszczuk government just simply does not get it.

This is a serious issue—an issue on which I am proud to stand here as the acting shadow Attorney-General in lieu of shadow Attorney-General Tim Nicholls, who cannot be in the chamber today. I thank the member for Clayfield for the work he has done not only in relation to the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill but also in relation to the abject failures of the Queensland DNA system and the forensic unit. As I said, we will not stand in the way of increased compensation for victims of crime in this state. It is something that we have spoken about. It is something that we know is right. It is the LNP that will stand up for victims. It is only the LNP that has listened to victims through this debacle of the government's own making. There is only one way that we can ensure victims get a voice in Queensland—that is, by showing Labor the door in '24.



**Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (2.15 pm): I rise to contribute to the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. At the outset, I thank those individuals and organisations who made written submissions on the bill. The committee acknowledges the work of Victim Assist Queensland, the Queensland Police Service and the many community organisations that provide vital support, advice and assistance to vulnerable Queenslanders and their families who are victims of violent crime in Queensland. I also thank the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and our Parliamentary Service staff for their assistance. I would like to thank acting chair Chris Whiting MP and all members of the committee for their hard work and valuable contribution to the examination of this bill.

The bill proposes to amend Queensland's financial assistance scheme, established by the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009, to increase the maximum amount of financial assistance payable to victims of crime. It also proposes to increase the number of council members of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. This is intended to enhance the representation of victims and their interests.

The committee considered the views expressed in submissions and by witnesses at the committee's public hearing as well as briefing material from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. The committee is satisfied that sufficient regard has been given to fundamental legislative principles, to the rights and liberties of individuals and to the institution of parliament, and that any limitations of human rights as set out in the Human Rights Act 2019 are reasonable and justifiable. The committee makes two additional recommendations in relation to enhancing support available for victims of crime and ensuring financial assistance for victims reflects inflation and current cost-of-living expenses.

In May 2023 the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee conducted an inquiry into support provided to victims of crime. In preparing its report, the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee held hearings in Brisbane, Cairns, the Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, Rockhampton and Townsville. The LASC report recommendations focused on: improving the coordination of services; reviewing the charter of victims'



rights; facilitating easy access to information; developing a trauma informed training framework across government agencies; investing in support services for victims as well as developing a long-term plan for restorative justice; and providing youth justice conferencing. Relevant to this bill, recommendation 14 of the LASC report states—

That the Queensland Government urgently review the financial assistance scheme including whether the original intent and objective of the scheme are being met as defined in the Victims of Crime Act 2009.

In response to the findings and recommendations arising from these separate inquiries, the Queensland government is currently considering wider reforms to the FAS. Due to inflation and increased financial pressures, the bill aims to ensure victims are supported in the immediate future while broader reviews are undertaken. This is consistent with recommendation 14 of the LASC report which called for an urgent review of the FAS. I thank the chair, the member for Toohey, and all members of the LASC for their comprehensive and detailed work on the inquiry. This inquiry underpinned our work as a committee and underpins much of the content of this bill. The committee should be congratulated for their work.

In recent years, separate inquiries have also called for significant reform within Queensland's justice system. These inquiries have produced the following reports: in December 2021, the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce report *Hear her voice—report 1: Addressing coercive control and domestic and family violence in Queensland*; in July 2022, the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce report *Hear her voice—report 2: Women and girls' experiences of the criminal justice system*; and in November 2022, the Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service Responses to Domestic and Family Violence report *A call for change*, an inquiry into QPS responses.

It is accurate to say that the Palaszczuk government has been diligently working on evidence-based legislative reform for some years. This is what good governments do. This bill will make a significant contribution to the lives of Queenslanders who are victims of crime. I commend this bill to the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): I call the member for Burnett.



**Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (2.19 pm): You caught me off guard, Deputy Speaker. I was not ready for you.

**Ms Boyd**: You should always be ready.

**Mr BENNETT**: Yes, indeed. Thank you very much for the guidance from the other side. I rise to make a contribution to this legislation. I thank everyone on the committee for the work they have done in closing this out. As has been acknowledged, a lot of other work was done previously in getting us to where we are today.

The bill proposes to: increase the upper limits for financial assistance payments and special assistance payments available to victims; increase the upper limits for payable funeral expenses and distress payments; and recategorise crimes of domestic violence as a category B act of violence for the purpose of special assistance payments. The committee received considered submissions from community services, legal services and the Office of the Interim Victims' Commissioner. They were all very welcome and we thank them for their participation.

The committee requested, and was provided with, key statistics from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General in relation to reported crime rates and the scale of financial assistance provided to victims of crime. Of particular concern is the rising number of instances of reported crime in the community and the consequential number of victims of crime seeking assistance. The committee heard from many submitters welcoming the amendments contained in the bill, noting that, except for the funeral assistance, nothing much had moved in this space since 2009. There are a lot of people welcoming the new amendments.

Issues about the increase in applications for financial assistance was prosecuted and lodged with Victim Assist Queensland, with the already, in some cases, lengthy delays in providing assistance. There was a case—and it was raised with the committee—about staffing and resources for Victim Assist. I am sure that the Attorney and others will look at that in due course and provide the opportunity for victims to get assistance in a timely manner.

During the public briefing with the department committee members were provided with some sobering statistics in terms of the number of victims. Again, when you do not absorb yourself in these sorts of bills you do not really grasp the magnitude of some of the issues happening in our state. The department advised—

In the 2021-22 Crime Report published by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office, there were 64,540 victims (52,202 unique victims) of offences against the person recorded by the Queensland Police Service (QPS), noting a 49.2% increase in total recorded victims (41.2% increase in total unique victims) reported in 2020-21 (43,260 total victims and 36,962 unique victims recorded).

There are a lot of numbers. The magnitude of the percentage increases was something that the committee, particularly my colleague the member for Oodgeroo when he was asking these questions about the numbers, was quite surprised about. We were looking forward to the transcripts to make sure that we could validate some of these issues. When compared to 2021-22, there was a 54 per cent increase in financial assistance applications, and for the number of financial assistance applications relating to domestic and family violence there was an 87 per cent on the year before. There is significant work going on.

Of the 7,621 applications for assistance received by Victim Assist Queensland in 2022-23, the department paid nearly \$40 million to support nearly 7,000 victims recover from crime in Queensland. That figure includes: payments totalling \$29 million in special assistance; \$800,000 for counselling; payments totalling \$6.5 million for damaged clothing, distress, funeral expenses, incidental travel expenses and so on. In terms of the rising number of applications to Victim Assist Queensland from victims of crime, the department stated—

In 2017, legislative amendments were made to the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 which extended eligibility for financial assistance to all victims of DFV. Since these amendments were introduced, VAQ has seen a 195% increase in applications for financial assistance. Further, in 2022-23, 56% of all financial assistance applications came from DFV victims.

When questioned at the public briefing about whether there had been any financial modelling done on the anticipated costs of this bill, the government disclosed the fact that \$185 million had been modelled for this particular bill over five years and another \$40 million per annum ongoing from 2028-29.

There remain questions about the actual funding allocations to allow the reported increases of financial assistance to victims. We asked that question because the explanatory notes did not provide any estimates of costs but talked about budgetary processes. It stated—


The anticipated costs of the increased maximum amounts of financial assistance will be met through normal budget processes.

The costs associated with increasing the number of members on QSAC will be met through existing departmental allocations.

I questioned the sincerity of putting budget processes in the explanatory notes when we are talking about nearly \$220 million. The remuneration of newly created positions should be disclosed in the interests of transparency and integrity of the process.

The committee has heard the support for the recommended changes to the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, with the proposed amendments providing for increased support for victims of crime. The bill addresses recommendations from several reviews, including the independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence, the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, and the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee inquiry that has been reported.

Overall, I thank the committee, the secretariat and my fellow committee members for getting this bill inquiry done so quickly. It was a bit rushed but, as has been said, the work had been done pretty much over the previous year. We are not opposing the bill. We look forward to making sure that those people who unfortunately become victims of crime do get support. It is great to see this bill moving in the right direction.

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.25 pm): I rise today to speak on the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I want to acknowledge the prior work carried out by the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee before the bill was transferred to the Community Support and Services Committee. I thank the committee chair, Peter Russo, members of the committee, the committee secretariat and Hansard.

The committee consulted far and wide on this bill, giving communities in rural and regional parts of Queensland an opportunity to also have a say. Hearings were held in Brisbane, Cairns, the Gold Coast, Ipswich, Logan, Rockhampton and Townsville, where the committee got to hear directly from witnesses about how these reforms would further support victims of crime deal with the trauma of crime.

The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee report recommendations focused on improving the coordination of services, reviewing the Charter of Victims' Rights, facilitating easy access to information, developing a trauma informed training framework across government agencies, investing in support services for victims, developing a long-term plan for restorative justice and providing youth justice conferencing.

It would be a much better world if crime did not exist. Unfortunately, that is not the world we live in. Crime occurs every day and it does not discriminate. Crime could happen to anyone, at any one time and often a single act of violence can change the course of someone's life forever. The remnant of crime is often felt long after the crime has occurred, with individuals and also families carrying the ongoing burden of coming to terms with their trauma. Crime victims often suffer a broad range of psychological, social and financial issues. The impact of crime often manifests intense feelings of anger, fear, isolation, low self-esteem, helplessness and depression. They are common reactions and it is clear to see why when referring to types of crime described in the bill.

Category A covers attempted murder or rape. Category B includes attempted offences of category A, sexual offences and grievous bodily harm. Category C includes attempted offences of category B, serious assault and robbery. Category D includes attempted offences of category C, assault and unlawful stalking. Again, crime does not discriminate and it comes in all different forms. No-one is truly safe from an act of crime, but it is important that we have the right measures in place to assist and support people impacted by an act of crime.

The Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 proposes to amend Queensland's financial assistance scheme and increase the maximum amount of financial assistance payable to victims of crime. It also changes the composition of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. The financial assistance scheme is established under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 to: help victims of acts of violence recover from the acts by giving them financial assistance; give primary victims amounts representing a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the injuries suffered by them; and give related victims who have suffered distress amounts representing a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the distress suffered by them.

The bill also proposes to amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to: increase the representation of victims of crime by increasing the number of members on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council from 12 to 14; enable the appointment of a person with lived experience as a victim of crime and another additional member. I am pleased that the reforms in this bill will include victims who have been impacted by domestic and family violence. Including victims of domestic and family violence will certainly increase the profile of domestic and family violence in our communities. I think that will be a positive step towards ensuring victims are captured by service systems so they have access to the appropriate support that is available to them.

It is worth noting that reported instances of crime and the number of victims of crime have markedly increased in Queensland in recent years. If we look at the stats for victims of domestic and family violence, the number of applications has significantly increased by 87.8 per cent—from 2,309 applications in 2021-22 to 4,337 applications. Following amendments to the Victims of Crime Assistance Act in 2017 which extended the eligibility for financial assistance to all victims of domestic and family violence, the number of financial assistance applications relating to this crime increased.


As someone who has worked with families of domestic and family violence, I am proud of the work we are doing in Queensland to strengthen our laws around domestic and family violence. I am pleased to know there is greater support for people impacted by domestic and family violence. The department advised that in respect to the 7,621 applications for financial assistance received in 2022-23, Victim Assist Queensland paid \$39.6 million to support 6,987 victims recovering from crime in Queensland. In addition to reimbursement for expenses, the financial scheme set out in the Victims of Crime Assistance Act provides a primary victim of crime with a special assistance payment. The special assistance payment is intended to represent a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the injuries suffered by the victim as the result of an act of violence.

I want to acknowledge some of the challenges being faced by older people, people with disability and young people who have been impacted by crime. It starts with access to information for services that are available to them, where to go and whom to see. Technology is a good example of the types of barriers that exist, because while technology is there to enhance access to information, as we have heard in the hearings this can also be a barrier for older people and people with disability. There are similar challenges for young people. One of the witnesses who presented at the public hearing in

Brisbane spoke about the negative way young people are portrayed in the media and how it deters or delays a young person from accessing much needed support. The Brisbane Youth Service submission considered the plight of young people in the justice system and described two challenges specific to providing assistance to young victims of crime: the timing of emergency accommodation reimbursement requires an application process that cuts into the time available to assess the young person and devise a safety plan; and the \$10,000 recognition payment that accompanies an emergency accommodation reimbursement can reach the young person before assistance is provided to the young person to appropriately budget and manage the payment, resulting in poor outcomes including increased drug use, misguided purchases, coercion or theft. Brisbane Youth Service suggested that additional payments be delayed or paid in instalments.

The bill's primary function is to support victims of crime and their families via amendments to the Victims of Crime Assistance Act to increase the maximum limit of financial assistance. There are also special considerations for payments to children. Payments are provided to the Public Trustee to be held in trust under the Public Trustee Act until the child or victim of crime under the age of 18 turns 18.

I fully support the amendments in this bill. There is so much in this bill that reaches out to people who are vulnerable to crime, people who have been affected by crime, and people who suffer ongoing challenges in dealing with their trauma. In conclusion, this is a good bill. It is much needed and it will make a huge difference to the lives of those people who need it most. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (2.34 pm): I rise to make my contribution on the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I can make it clear at the outset that we support this bill. It is uncontentious and sensible legislation that the Greens can get behind without hesitation. In simple terms, increasing the amount of financial assistance that is available to victims of crime is a simple, straightforward and, I would suggest, much needed change.

There were some interesting questions raised in the review around the possibility of the indexation of these payments rather than relying on legislative change at each point. In response to these queries, the Community Support and Services Committee heard that the KPMG review which is underway was likely, at least to some extent, to consider these issues. It is good to know they are at least being contemplated. It does make sense for a less onerous process such as regulation-making to deal with increases in payments or for there even to be a simple process of indexation that allows them to keep up with inflation over time so that victims of crime can meet the expense of the supports they might need in the aftermath of a relevant crime.

It did raise questions for me about why exactly it is necessary to get a consultancy like KPMG to look into these issues. This is not the kind of issue that I would have thought necessarily requires external expertise. You would hope that, rather than continuing down this path of overreliance on external consultants like the KPMGs and PwCs of the world, we might see the government instead investing in the Public Service and building capacity to work on providing this kind of advice and supporting the government internally rather than just forking out to consultants. Nonetheless, I suppose I look forward to seeing the outcomes of that review.

Another change proposed in the bill is the recategorisation of domestic violence offences from category D to category B. I think that is particularly warranted given what we know, especially at the moment, around the number of DV offences and instances that police are having to deal with and the number of victims who obviously need special assistance payments to deal with the most immediate consequences of incidents of domestic violence.

The expansion of the Queensland Sentencing and Advisory Council to increase the number of members and additionally to allow for the inclusion of a person with lived experience as a victim of crime just seems sensible, so again we have no qualms in supporting that. Indeed, I would argue that that should sit alongside a much broader move towards involving people with lived experience in all manner of government decision-making—whether that is lived experience of crime, disability or any number of other features of disadvantage that people might deal with in the community.

I did want to take a moment to touch on the committee's recommendation 2. This was raised by some submitters and the member for Cook touched on this a moment ago. People who are experiencing particular vulnerability and receive large one-off payments under this scheme might find themselves in need of additional support. That is especially the case for young people, who need some additional guidance or financial assistance in terms of how they might deal with those payments and set themselves up better in the long term, especially in the context of whatever trauma and consequences they are dealing with in the fallout of the incident of crime.

It goes without saying that none of us want to see crime in our communities, especially violent crime. Anyone who has experienced violent crime has a good reason to demand more from the government in this space and to see that our communities are kept safer. However, at the core of this conversation we need to remember that exposing people, especially young people, to policing and punitive responses does nothing to prevent crime. Policing is a response after the fact of crime. We know that exposure to cops, courts and especially detention and prisons only makes young people more likely to offend, creates more victims of crime in the future and makes our community ultimately less safe.

In any conversation around victims of crime, we need to remember the importance of avoiding the kind of criminogenic policy that this government has leaned into so hard over the last few years and, I will say it again, which they have done so proudly. We consistently hear the rhetoric about how tough on crime they are. There is a contest between the government and the opposition in this state about who can be tougher on crime, when in fact the consequence is an increase in recidivism and an increase in the seriousness of offending that we see from young people. The mind boggles at how the message is not getting through. The experts and advocates have been telling governments for years—

**An honourable member:** Decades.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Decades, that is a fair observation. As long as there has been research on this topic, it has been clear that locking kids up—the punitive responses—only makes the community less safe and it is time the government just changed tack. We have got to be more sensible about this, otherwise we are only going to create more victims of crime and see our communities less safe.

In closing, I thank the secretariat as always for their support. They do an extraordinary job under very tight time frames—time frames that I would suggest this parliament needs to look very hard at. Applying the six-week minimum inquiry period to essentially every piece of legislation that comes before the House really does deprive us of the opportunity to scrutinise it properly and it is something that should not be the norm. Nonetheless, the committee secretariat do an extraordinary job in supporting us to conduct these inquiries in the time we have available. Thanks kindly to the secretary, the secretariat and my fellow committee members for all the work done on this inquiry.



**Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (2.41 pm): I rise to speak in support of the government's Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill amends the Victims of Crime Assistance Act and the Penalties and Sentences Act to provide victims of crime with better support and representation. The bill increases the maximum amount of financial assistance payable to victims of crime and establishes a permanent Victims' Commissioner to sit on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee for all their groundwork in preparing this bill, especially the notable chair, Mr Peter Russo, an esteemed lawyer himself. I would also like to say how much work is done by the chair of our committee, my friend the member for Mansfield, and the secretariat in providing us with all the information we need to scrutinise bills. I thank the member for Cook for her speech just before. She has been an advocate for victims of crime from all parts of society for many years. It was very interesting to hear her speech. Her contribution is always valuable.

The Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 provides financial assistance to certain victims of acts of violence. The VoCAA establishes the financial assistance scheme which seeks to: help victims of acts of violence to recover from the acts by giving them financial assistance; give primary victims amounts representing a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the injuries suffered by them; and give related victims who have suffered distress amounts representing a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the distress suffered by them.

Separate inquiries undertaken by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, the independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence and the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee have all recently made recommendations to increase the levels of support provided to victims of crime. Additionally, the inflationary pressures and increases in the cost of goods and services in our economy mean that it is absolutely essential that amendments are made to lift the maximum amount of expenses that can be claimed by victims of crime. This ensures that victims of crime are supported now and in the immediate future while broader reviews of the financial assistance scheme under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act are undertaken.

In addition to the increasing costs of services, it is also noted that the total maximum amount of assistance for victims, except funeral assistance, has not increased since the commencement of the VoCAA in 2009. Funeral expense assistance was increased from \$6,000 to \$8,000 when the VoCAA

was amended in 2017. In September this year, our government announced a series of reforms intended to increase support for victims of crime and their families, including amendments to the financial assistance scheme to increase the maximum assistance payable to victims of crime and related victims. This includes increasing the maximum amount of compensation for primary victims to \$120,000 and increasing the amount of compensation for both distress for related victims and funeral costs to \$15,000. It is also proposed to increase the maximum amount of financial assistance available to the following types of victims who are also eligible for assistance under the FAS: parent secondary victims, up to \$75,000; witness secondary victims of a more serious act of violence, up to \$75,000; witness secondary victims of a less serious act of violence, up to \$20,000; and related victims, up to \$75,000.


To provide greater support specific to victims of acts of domestic and family violence, the bill increases the categorisation of acts of domestic and family violence to increase the amount of special assistance payment that victim-survivors can receive. To achieve this objective, acts of domestic and family violence will be recategorised from a category D act of violence to a category B act of violence. This amendment contained in the bill would increase the special assistance payment for victims of acts of domestic and family violence from \$1,000 to \$9,000.

The bill also amends the Penalties and Sentences Act to add to the functions of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. QSAC was established under the Penalties and Sentences Act with various functions including: if asked by the Court of Appeal, to give the court the council's views, in writing, about the giving or reviewing of a guideline judgement; if asked by the Attorney-General, to advise the Attorney-General on matters relating to sentencing; to give information to the community to enhance knowledge and understanding of matters relating to sentencing; and to obtain the community's views on sentencing and matters about sentencing. QSAC comprises no more than 12 members appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Attorney-General, each with expertise or experience in various areas, including victims of crime, justice matters relating to Aboriginal people or Torres Strait Islanders, justice matters relating to domestic and family violence, law enforcement and vulnerable persons facing the criminal justice system.

On 2 September 2023, the Queensland government announced the appointment of Mr Jon Rouse APM as the Interim Victims' Commissioner while legislation was being developed to establish a permanent Victims' Commissioner. On 12 September 2023, the Attorney-General announced that the Queensland government was committed to ensuring there is a victims' representative on QSAC. To support the implementation of the government's commitment, the bill makes changes to the composition of QSAC's membership to increase representation of victims of crime. It is proposed to amend the PSA to: increase the number of members on QSAC from no more than 12 to no more than 14 members and enable the appointment of a person with lived experience as a victim of crime and an additional further member.

This bill represents another step taken by the Palaszczuk government to uphold the rights of victims of crime and make sure they are placed front and centre. These reforms have been very well received by various stakeholders, including the Australian Lawyers Alliance, the Justice Reform Initiative, the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, just to name a few.

Unlike the LNP and their the Right Priorities for Queensland's Future document which is chock-full of rolled gold statements, our government is getting on with the job of actually making policy and implementing it. This bill gives effect to calls from victim support organisations, including Voice for Victims, to better support victims of crime. It is just another way the Palaszczuk Labor government is making our community safer. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (2.49 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 as a member of the Community Support and Services Committee that scrutinised the bill. I first want to acknowledge committee members and the good work of the committee in scrutinising the legislation, the secretariat and all of the committee staff who also assisted with the bill. I thank them for their time and input.

The primary objectives of the Victims of Crime Assistance Bill are: to increase the upper limits for financial assistance payments and special assistance payments available to victims; to increase the upper limits for payable funeral expenses and distress payments; to recategorise domestic violence as a category B act of violence for the purpose of special assistance payments; to increase the membership of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council to no more than 14 members to enable the appointment of a person with lived experience as a victim of crime and another person; and to require that at least one member of QSAC must be a person with lived experience as a victim of crime.

At the outset I want to say that I support the bill, in particular the possibility of victims of crime receiving further assistance, including DV victims, to better access further support. In doing so, I want to commend the Voice for Victims campaign that has focused attention on the victims of crime and in particular on the failings of this government to adequately listen to victims and acknowledge that there is a crisis. Sadly, some Labor government MPs do not think there is a crisis, particularly in youth crime. They think it is a media beat-up, an exaggeration, or that victims have brought things on themselves. The Premier herself does not seem to accept that it is a crisis. How can the government fix the youth crime crisis while ever it ignores the level of crisis and chaos and ignores the LNP's solutions based on the community's views? The Voice for Victims movement, media, the LNP's hard work in this space and other forms of public pressure appear to have forced the Premier's hand with this bill. Increasing the assistance to victims in some areas has not been in the government's mind for a long time, but suddenly it is now.

The Palaszczuk government's experiment of relaxed youth justice laws in 2015 and fewer police has left communities in a state of chaos and crisis as youth crime has exploded across Queensland. The result, sadly, has been that many more Queenslanders have become victims of crime. Victims of crime themselves have felt silenced by this government. They have continually felt that their needs are put behind the needs of offenders. The government has largely ignored victims, and the data reveals that the number of victims sadly is increasing.

During the committee briefing and hearing, various questions were asked by members of the committee. Committee members requested government data from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General on the number of victims of crime and the financial assistance provided to victims of crime, among other areas. The government's own data corroborates what we already know: that crime rates are up, that there are more victims and that the cost to assist victims has gone up. The department advised, as reported in the committee report—I particularly reference the statement of reservation—

In the 2021-22 Crime Report published by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office, there were 64,540 victims ... recorded by the Queensland Police Service ...

This represents a 49.2 per cent increase in total recorded victims over the previous year. Further—

... there was a 54.4% increase in financial assistance applications received by VAQ in 2022-23 (7,621) when compared with 2021-22 ...

There was a 54 per cent increase. Crime is up. The number of victims is up. The number of financial assistance applications from victims is up.

It is important to understand priorities. The LNP has put out a priorities plan, a document which prioritises making our community safer. On Sunday, 22 October, with 12 months to go until the election, the Leader of the Opposition, David Crisafulli, launched the LNP's blueprint for the future of Queensland. The Right Priorities for Queensland's Future outlines the key priorities for an LNP government, focusing on the issues that matter most to Queenslanders. Making our communities safer is a right priority area and will guide further policy and decisions impacting on Queenslanders and, in my patch, particularly Redlanders.

Unlike the government, we have listened to victims of Labor's crime crisis. We have turned up to town hall crime forums and large gatherings outside of parliament, but the Premier has been missing in action. She cannot be found. She ducks and weaves from victims' groups. She picks and chooses selected victims and victims' groups purely on her own terms.


I want to acknowledge the victims of crime support groups across the state that work hard to support victims. I single out one group in the Redlands Coast particularly—Thornlands Concerned Residents. Adam and Natalie Cirone have suffered as victims of crime and are doing something about it. They formed the Thornlands Concerned Residents group to stand up against youth crime and support other victims of crime. They visited parliament, along with Capalaba resident Karen Oliver and several other local victims, to stand up on the youth crime crisis. The local group of seven residents told their stories of home invasions, acts of violence perpetrated against family members, drunken behaviour, car thefts and the torching of local playgrounds. The Cirones claim to have been subjected to ever-increasing attacks and home break-ins amidst growing crime fears in the area in which they live. Mr Cirone said, 'We don't feel safe in our homes. We can't take out kids to the park behind our house. The park is not safe—explosions, melted park equipment, you name it.'

As victims, they have suffered windscreens smashed in, had their garage door kicked in and their son terrorised. They have had to sell their caravan to fund additional security measures in their family home and they also bought a dog in a bid to stop the break-ins and damage. Mr Cirone said, 'We feel like the beautiful suburb we bought in 10 years ago is now a war zone.'

They recently attended a gathering of locals at a Thornlands park, and I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition, David Crisafulli, and the shadow minister for police, Dale Last, for caring enough to attend such events of victims and others coming together. Redlands Coast LNP candidates Amanda Stoker and Rebecca Young were also there to listen to local victims of crime and other concerned citizens tell their stories and to support them. Redlands LNP candidates believe there is a crisis. They turn up to hear victims' groups, they attend victims' public meetings and are doing something about the crisis. We heard terrible stories from victims of crime about violent machete attacks, terrifying home invasions, stolen cars, the ram raid of a local IGA supermarket, businesses broken into repeatedly—and the list of crimes against these victims goes on.

One victim, Brad, was bashed by a teen gang just walking home. He says, 'I noticed he had a machete. I was hit on the forearm. I was hospitalised. I had stitches in my arm, my eyebrow and a fractured cheekbone.' 7News reported on the crimes around Thornlands saying, 'Residents in the area say they're fed up with escalating crime as new figures show more Queenslanders are scared to walk their neighbourhood at night.' Who could ever forget the tragic deaths of Matt Field and Kate Leadbetter and their unborn baby, Miles, at the hands of a young criminal driving a stolen car?

The Palaszczuk government is in chaos and crisis when it comes to youth crime. While they have stopped listening, we will keep listening to Queenslanders about their concerns and drive the change needed to keep our communities safe. The increase in the number of victims of crime is yet another indicator that crime is out of control, that this government has failed to arrest the youth crime crisis gripping our state and that victims have not been receiving the support they deserve from this government for some time. While the bill goes some way towards assisting victims, the real solution is to change the government. To solve the youth crime crisis, show Labor the door in '24.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (3.00 pm): I rise to speak to the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and to support the passing of the bill. The Community Support and Services Committee, in its report No. 37 of the 57th Parliament tabled in this Assembly on 24 November 2023, has recommended to the Assembly that this bill be passed. I take this opportunity to thank the chair, the member for Mansfield, and her committee for the work that they have done on this bill. The policy objectives of the bill are to amend the Queensland Financial Assistance Scheme and increase the maximum amount of financial assistance payable to victims of crime. If time permits, I will outline some of those increases. It also changes the make-up of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council.

The Financial Assistance Scheme is established under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 to: help victims of violence to recover the acts by giving them financial assistance; give primary victims amounts representing a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the injuries suffered by them; and give related victims who have suffered distress amounts that represent a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the distress that has been suffered by them.

The bill proposes to amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to increase representation of the victims of crime by increasing the number of members of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council from 12 to 14, to enable the appointment of a person with lived experience as a victim of crime and another additional member. Anyone can be a victim of crime. By definition, a victim of crime is anyone who suffers physical or emotional harm or loss or damage to property as a result of a criminal offence. When someone experiences a crime, the community expects that they will be supported and that their needs will be met. Previously, on the whole, we may have assumed that these needs related only to the outcome of a prosecution process. Policy and public focus were directed largely at sentencing as a final result of dealing with the occurrence. However, more recently we have come to understand that victims' needs are varied and their experiences diverse.

As the rights of victims of crime have continued to be recognised, victim support services have become an increasingly important element of public policy and service responses. As mentioned by the member for Mansfield, in recent years separate inquiries have called for significant reform within Queensland's justice system, including one that was completed by the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee earlier this year. The Legal Affairs and Safety Committee undertook an extensive communication campaign to facilitate engagement with key stakeholders, including victim-survivors, advocates, sector service providers and organisations, to encourage submissions to the inquiry.

There were 18 recommendations arising from our inquiry, all of which focused on providing support to victims of crime. The recommendation included reviews of victims' rights, improved coordination of services, increased access to information, trauma informed training, investing in victim support services and improving access to restorative justice and youth justice conferencing.



Under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 there are four types of victims as defined under the act: the primary victim, the related victim, a parent secondary victim and a witness secondary victim. The department noted several motivations for amending the act and the bill responds to calls for reform recommended by recent inquiries, increased financial pressures owing to inflation, and no increases in payment amounts, except for funeral expenses, since the act commenced in 2009.

All stakeholders who provided submissions to the bill were supportive of the increased payment to victims of crime. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service submission noted that payments have not increased since 2009 when the Victims of Crime Assistance Act was enacted and stated: 'We anticipate that increasing these limits will be welcomed by those who seek to claim such assistance'. Some stakeholders proposed that amounts of financial assistance under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act be indexed for future years to ensure real value of financial assistance for victims and survivors is maintained.

The department advised that, while the maximum financial amounts that are prescribed in legislation are a matter for government, there is an independent review of the financial assistance scheme being undertaken by KPMG that commenced in August 2023. In addition to being reimbursed for expenses, the financial scheme set out by the Victims of Crime Assistance Act provides a primary victim of crime with a special assistance payment. The special assistance payment is intended to represent a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the injuries suffered by the victim from an act of violence.


Clause 13 of the bill proposes to recategorise acts of domestic violence from category D to the more serious category B. As stated by Minister Ryan in his contribution on the introduction of this legislation, these amendments are intended to better recognise the serious and detrimental effect of domestic and family violence on victim-survivors and to ensure they can receive increased financial assistance to support them in their recovery.

Stakeholders, as I have already said, were generally supportive of the bill's provision in relation to recategorising acts of domestic violence in the Victims of Crime Assistance Act to increase payments for victims of crime, and generally considered them to be commensurate with the impact of the seriousness of domestic and family violence.

The committee endorsed the bill's proposed amendments to provide greater support to victims of domestic and family violence in recognition of the significant impact and cost of domestic and family violence on individual victims, their families and the community. The committee was cognisant of the very serious and detrimental effects of sexual offences against children but were satisfied that the Victims of Crime Assistance Act in its current form allows for the special assistance category to be uplifted to a higher category in certain circumstances.

It has been acknowledged that there has been a marked increase in applications to Victim Assist Queensland for financial assistance, most notably after the amendment to extend assistance to all victims of domestic and family violence. The members for Burnett and Oodgeroo submitted a statement of reservation in respect of the committee's report. The members appear to raise several points regarding the cost required to meet not only the addition of two extra members to the Queensland sentencing board but also additional funding for supported victims. They then answered their own question by including the department's response, which states that the anticipated cost increases will be met either through normal budgetary processes or existing departmental allocations. It is not clear what reservations they actually had with the bill.

I stand by my comments made in the foreword of my report No. 48. The adversarial system of justice is not an easy system for victims of crime to navigate. I practised criminal defence law for close to 25 years, and it is hard for victims to understand concepts like the jury process or the fact that the prosecution represents the state and not the victim. It is harder still to understand when they are grieving, suffering or living the trauma as a victim of crime. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (3.09 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 for one simple reason: I, like all members on this side of the House, support victims. We understand the impact that crime has on victims and, more importantly, we need to bring the voice of victims to this chamber. There would be not a day that goes by when I am not contacted by a victim of crime in this state—victims whose homes or businesses have been broken into, victims whose vehicles have been stolen and victims who have been assaulted. It is a fact that since this government came to power the rate of assault has more than doubled, the rate of stalking has more than tripled and the rate of breach of domestic violence protection orders has more than doubled. The universal message from my conversations with these victims is: why will the

government not do something about crime in this state and why will they not listen to those victims? Today is a start. While this government and their mates in Canberra claim that crime is a media beat-up, the fact is we have more victims who not only need support but deserve support.

I note that this bill proposes amendments to the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 to: increase the upper limits for financial assistance payments, special assistance payments, distress payments and funeral expenses; and to recategorise domestic violence as a category B act. The bill will also amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to increase the membership of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council to facilitate the appointment of a victim of crime. All of the amendments proposed by this bill are important, and it is the amendments to the Penalties and Sentences Act that offer the biggest opportunity.

Like other members on this side of the House, I engaged with victims of crime long before I was elected. It is easy to talk about crime, but it is more important to understand the real effects that crime has on victims. It is not until you have seen the look on a victim's face and seen the real fear in their eyes that you gain an appreciation of the impact that crime has on victims. Understanding the real impact on victims is the reason the opposition has called for the inclusion of a victim on the Sentencing Advisory Council. Those of us on this side of the House know that Queenslanders want offenders held to account and we know that sentences must be used to deter crime and as a punishment. It is a basic concept that an offender is punished based on the harm done to a victim, and no-one understands the harm more than the victims themselves.

I want to move on to the amendments related to extending the time a DNA sample taken from a suspect is able to be kept. The fact that this amendment is needed confirms the failures of this government. DNA is essential evidence, often used to charge offenders with some of the most heinous crimes in our state. Despite that importance, minister after minister has denied there was even a problem. Even when problems were identified in the media, this government was more concerned about reputation than the victims of crime.

While the Minister for Health bears ultimate responsibility for Forensic and Scientific Services, it is a fact that the Queensland Police Service is its biggest client. Despite the importance of DNA in the investigation of offences, we know that the police minister took six months to ask for a briefing. Despite the fact that DNA is used to put murderers, rapists and serious sex offenders behind bars, the police minister did not assess these matters as serious. It is a fact that it was only the media and the opposition who dragged the truth into the light. It is a fact that up to 103,000 samples relating to 37,000 cases now need to be retested, and that is why this amendment is needed.


Despite all their rhetoric about supporting victims, it has now been almost a year since the findings of the first commission of inquiry were provided to this government. This amendment should have and could have been brought before the House months ago. The fact that we have violent offenders walking around our community today who should be behind bars is a blight on this government.

In contrast to a government that has fought against every review and inquiry, those on this side of the House have stood strong for victims. In contrast to a government that denied there was a problem, those on this side of the House will continue to stand strong for victims of crime in this state. Standing with victims is exactly why we have called—and still are calling—for a standing commission of inquiry which would offer the oversight and powers to ensure victims get the justice they deserve. If this government were serious about supporting victims they would agree to a standing commission of inquiry to ensure transparency and to ensure that clearing that backlog is prioritised to ensure justice is delivered.

A standing commission of inquiry would also ensure the same mistakes are not made again. It would ensure that victims are treated with respect—unlike the current situation, where victims have not been communicated with. Perhaps the reason this government will not support a standing commission of inquiry is that such an inquiry may well identify who should be held accountable for this failure. Here we are debating legislation focused on victims of crime and holding offenders to account, but at the same time we have a government that will not hold anyone to account for the failures at the state-run Forensic and Scientific Services.

The opposition recognise that it is victims who carry the lion's share of the effects of crime. Those victims deserve a system that is adequately resourced and acts in a timely manner and a system that has adequate oversight. Money does not bring back a loved one and money, in many cases, cannot wash away the pain, but it certainly helps. I would call on the minister to ensure that victim-of-crime payments are prioritised and processed in a timely manner, because we are hearing of time frames of up to three and four years and that is not good enough.

Those of us on this side of the House join with victims in calling for this government to step up to the plate. Along with victims, we call for this government to acknowledge the effect that crime has on victims and to ensure the failures within Forensic and Scientific Services are never repeated. I will be supporting this legislation and the amendments to ensure justice for victims, and I call on all members to do likewise.

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (3.16 pm): I rise to support the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In a number of contributions so far in this debate we have heard talk around statistics and the number of victims of crime that has been reported. I would say that what we have seen over the last decade in particular is a much greater spotlight on the scourge that is domestic and family violence in our communities. It has been through work that Minister Farmer, Minister Fentiman and Minister D'Ath have done over a number of years in the women's space in terms of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce—the two reports they have done—and all of those recommendations that have come through that we have been deploying. That is why we are seeing more victims come forward to seek the help that our government is providing.

I think we need to put into that conversation the importance of the work that we have been doing over the last 10 years to address domestic and family violence. I want to commend the work of organisations like Small Steps 4 Hannah and Sue and Lloyd Clarke, who have done an incredible job in advocating and raising awareness of domestic and family violence and the supports that are out there. I think that is a very important thing to recognise.

I also want to recognise the work of the new Interim Victims' Commissioner and his office. He is currently conducting a roadshow across Queensland. I know that he will be out in the Redlands in December talking to agencies that are in the game supporting victims. The roadshow of workshops across the state will look to: raise the awareness of the rights of victims of crime and the services available to assist them so we can keep delivering the help that people need; identify, develop and provide additional resources for victims of crime to understand their rights, the criminal justice process, which we know is extraordinarily complex, and how to access support and assistance; and also identify the training needs for government agencies to interact with victims in a trauma informed manner.


There is a whole heap of work that is happening in that space by the Interim Victims' Commissioner's office. I do not think we could have a better Interim Victims' Commissioner than Jon Rouse APM. We know of the great work that he did with Task Force Argos. He is a former Queensland Australian of the Year. He is extraordinarily well placed to connect with our communities and our agencies across Queensland to ensure that we can continue to provide the best supports for victims of crime.

I noted that in the member for Oodgeroo's contribution he did not mention any of the organisations that are doing fantastic work across the Redlands. I think about the work that the Redlands Centre for Women does in the domestic and family violence space providing support and assistance and the Centre Against Sexual Violence in Cleveland that is also doing fantastic work. As I said, the Redlands Centre for Women does incredible work. We have Crime Stoppers. I had the opportunity to host Crime Stoppers in forums at Victoria Point and across our southern Moreton Bay islands. It does a fantastic job in assisting victims of crime to do that reporting piece. It does great work in helping people put themselves into a better preventative space from seeing crime occur. In the e-scam space it does an amazing job as well, and we know how that has increased over the years. It does a great job.

We then have our Volunteers in Policing in the Redlands who do a fantastic job under the stewardship of Sergeant Chris Hebblethwaite and Sergeant Brendan Winslow. They do an absolutely amazing job. While I am on my feet, I want to give a shout-out to Sergeant Chris Hebblethwaite. Last week he was awarded Crime Stoppers Queensland Police Officer of the Year. That was a fantastic award for him—very well deserved. He works tirelessly across our communities in that community police liaison role working with victims of crime and providing support to Redlanders. Thank you to Chris, Brendon and to all of our Queensland police who are on the front line. The work that they do in providing support to victims cannot be underestimated, so I want to thank them for all of that work.

I had not seen comparative data with other jurisdictions, but this legislation will have Queensland in the position of providing the best compensation scheme in the nation. The closest at the moment is Victoria at \$60,000 for the primary individual. This bill will see an increase to \$120,000 for the primary individual. Chris Minns and the New South Wales Labor government are looking at their victims of crime legislation which is well below Victoria and even further behind us, as it is similarly in South Australia and Western Australia. This is gold standard legislation. It really is. It is rolled gold legislation to ensure that we continue to support victims of crime in Queensland.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those organisations that work on the front line, and the submissions to this inquiry validate the great work that is happening. I note that there is huge support for these increases and the reclassification of that domestic and family violence provision. Thank you to everybody who helps support victims. Nobody can ever put themselves in the position of a victim of crime, but we need to ensure that our Palaszczuk government continues the good, sound work that it has been doing over many years to increase that level of support. That is being done in that service delivery. As I said, Jon Rouse is very well placed to ensure that we continue to always improve our systems. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (3.23 pm): Victims and victim-survivors have often been described as the forgotten people in the criminal justice system, and they say themselves they often are. In every inquiry I have been previously involved with their voices have been clear on our failings within the legal and justice system and their support for a needed victims' portal or group to access assistance for those impacted by non-fatal crimes such as home invasions and car theft. We heard how difficult it is that if your car is stolen you then cannot access that car, sometimes for many months. Victims have often said that they would like something similar to what is offered by organisations such as the Homicide Victims' Support Group, which does an incredible job. This situation is changing, as we have seen with this bill, and significant moves are being made within justice and support frameworks, and the government needs to be commended on this. We especially welcome—and I met him the other day—the Interim Victims' Commissioner, Jon Rouse. He is quite an amazing person. This paradigm shift towards focusing on victims and victim-survivors is important for multiple reasons, including to reduce crime, as many offenders themselves have been victims previously. Data has shown that 53 per cent of juvenile offenders come from domestic violence households, having been through much trauma in their formative years. A focus on victims, therefore, represents an opportunity for early intervention and prevention.


As we heard at the recent Victims of Crime Day, there is a common assumption in our culture that domestic violence ends when the victim leaves, which is often not the case. There are serious contributing factors that impact on a victim's decision to leave domestic violence and to not return. It can be dangerous, isolating and financially impossible, with confusion around access to assistance as well as the complexities and frustrations. Financial abuse extends to lack of access to cash or bank accounts and lack of housing options continue to be highlighted, including much needed emergency accommodations. Importantly, this bill recategorises domestic violence as a category B act of violence for the purpose of special assistance payments. These amendments better recognise the rising costs and serious and detrimental effect of domestic and family violence on victim-survivors and ensures they can receive increased financial assistance to support them in their recovery. A great many submitters fully supported these recommended changes to the bill.

The Victims of Crime Assistance Act, VoCAA, 2009 established in Queensland the financial assistance scheme intended to assist survivors recovering from acts of violence by providing financial assistance. There have been a number of recent separate inquiries into support provided recommending an increase in the level of support, and we have heard what that has been and it is quite substantial. The Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will increase the assistance provided in the VoCAA in terms of the total amount of financial assistance as well as the total amounts for specific types of assistance such as distress payments, funeral expenses and special assistance payments, as I mentioned. The benefits of these increased payments go beyond their monetary value; they represent a recognition of the significant impact of crime on victims. In addition, the bill makes changes to the composition of Queensland's Sentencing Advisory Council to increase the number of members to 14 to enable the appointment of a person with lived experience as a victim of crime to sit on this body. This is very welcomed.

Future legislation must consider the many aspects of the criminal justice system; the complex social and economic inequalities and factors that contribute to crime; the rehabilitation supports and transitions, including accommodations, in efforts to reduce reoffending; as well as the mental health factors. In addition, it cannot be said loudly enough: we need earlier interventions. Having called now for four years to include in our curriculum a whole-of-school-life program commencing in preschool that incorporates wellbeing, respectful behaviours and self-management, this is needed more than ever to assess and monitor our young Queenslanders. This is to ensure the appropriate supports to both child and family are provided as part of that early intervention and prevention. We cannot keep doing the same expecting a different result. Increased financial assistance is an appreciated start to reduce trauma. However, a key focus must be to reduce the number of victims. As we continue untangling generational contributors to violent crimes, gaps in our justice system and the timing and resources for

preventions, interventions and detentions, we must keep front and foremost community safety as well as stating the facts. As we have heard in recent public hearings, efforts that are placed based and community led are essential. It takes a village.

In closing, I thank the minister and the department, the Community Support and Services Committee and its secretariat, all submitters and those who attended hearings. I give a special mention to all we meet with daily such as the incredibly brave victims and victim-survivors and their families, the fabulous support organisations such as the Homicide Victims' Support Group, our agencies and our police. I also thank those individual Queenslanders who volunteer their time to assist victims, whether driving to and from court or sitting through and supporting victims at hearings that often go over many months or providing a much needed shoulder through the many long years of trauma victims experience. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (3.29 pm): I rise in support of the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Queenslanders who have suffered due to acts of violence committed against them, their children or loved ones, or who have been harmed by witnessing an act of violence, need and deserve our support. Victim-survivors of domestic and family violence must not be forgotten in the often rancorous public discourse about crime. It is not often acknowledged just how much of the violent crime in our communities is, in fact, domestic and family violence. It is domestic and family violence where a perpetrator will inflict untold and escalating harm against their victim or victims, then go on to repeat the pattern in subsequent relationships, against their own children and even against their own pets. With domestic and family violence too often deliberately designed to systematically take apart every aspect of a victim's life—their job, their self-esteem, their family relationships and friendship networks, their financial security—improving the financial support that is available to those victims in the aftermath is crucial.

Currently, Victim Assist Queensland supports victims in their recovery by covering a range of expenses incurred because of the crime. These might include medical and counselling fees, legal costs, relocation expenses or funeral costs. Victims, as we have heard, can also apply for one-off special assistance payments, depending on the type of crime they have experienced. This bill proposes substantial increases in these special assistance payments across each of the various categories. Crucially, the bill reclassifies domestic and family violence from category D to category B, which will mean that the payments for victims of domestic and family violence will increase from \$1,000 to \$9,000.

As the minister stated in his introductory speech, these amendments are intended to better recognise the serious and detrimental effect of domestic and family violence on victim-survivors and ensure they can receive increased financial assistance to support them in their recovery. The amount of \$9,000 will make a huge difference to a victim-survivor of domestic and family violence who might be trying to rebuild her life. It will help secure accommodation, replace personal belongings and pay for professional support for the survivor and their children. The response from sector organisations like DVConnect has been positive. They stated—

This change would be a compassionate and respectful decision and will go a long way to ensuring that victims of serious crime, which include domestic and family violence, will have an opportunity to heal and recover with dignity, as they should expect.

Aged and Disability Australia described the proposed reform as 'a critical step in heralding in the institutional and community cultural changes which are required to recognise and address the prevalence and severity of domestic and family violence in Queensland'.

Importantly, these increased financial assistance measures also mean that victims of sexual offences will receive greater financial support. I am sure that we can all join in recognising the importance of that. As outlined in the committee's report, there has been a marked increase in applications to Victim Assist Queensland in recent years, most notably after the Victims of Crime Assistance Act was amended to extend assistance to victims of domestic and family violence. In fact, in 2022-23 the number of applications by victims of domestic and family violence crime rose 87.8 per cent, from 2,300 to 4,337 applications the following year. Our government welcomes that increase because, while any victim of domestic and family violence is one too many, if people have been harmed by those who are meant to love them they need support, and I am glad that they are reaching out for help. It has created pressures on Victim Assist Queensland. The proposed reforms contained in the bill form part of a wider range of reforms that the Palaszczuk government is implementing, including increased funding to engage more staff within Victim Assist Queensland so that applications for financial assistance can be processed faster. Since we committed that additional funding, the department advised that the time taken to process applications has reduced by approximately 65 per cent.

I note the LNP's statement of reservation in the committee's report where they voice concerns about the increased cost of supporting victims following the extension of victim support payments to domestic and family violence survivors. It may not suit the LNP's narrative, but domestic and family violence is by far the most common type of crime against the person that Queenslanders face. It is the type of crime that takes 70 to 80 per cent of police resources and it is the type of crime that often has the most extreme impacts on Queenslanders, attacking their mental health, their personal wellbeing, their housing, their financial security and even their lives.

Importantly, this bill also takes steps to better incorporate victims' perspectives into sentencing, specifically by expanding the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council's membership from 12 to 14 and requiring the inclusion of at least one member with lived experience as a victim of crime. The Queensland Family and Child Commission submitted to the committee—

Broadening the membership of the QSAC to include a representative for victims would be a crucial step in amplifying the voices of victims, particularly children and young individuals, and advocating for their needs when developing sentencing recommendations for the judiciary.


The Australian Lawyers Alliance stated—

... adequate government compensation for victims of crime is part of a wider social and legislative trend towards greater recognition of the importance of the interests of the victims of crime in the criminal process.

Our government recognises the long-lasting effects of crime on individuals, families and communities, and we are committed to putting the needs of victims at the forefront and making sure they are heard. The reforms contained in this bill provide immediate and targeted action to ensure victims of crime and their families have the support they need to recover and rebuild their lives. These changes are just one aspect of our government's bigger reforms to the way victims of crime experience the criminal justice system and the way they experience policing. We have seen multiple inquiries into those matters over the last few years. There is a lot of work that remains to be done to implement those learnings and take all of the steps that we can take to better tailor our systems to meet the needs of victims of crime.

Along with the committee, I acknowledge the work of Victim Assist Queensland, the Queensland Police Service and the many community organisations that provide vital support to Queenslanders and their families who are victims of violent crime. In my electorate I want to particularly acknowledge our domestic violence organisations, which all work enormously hard, show enormous commitment and are working every day to find every option they can to better assist Queenslanders at a time when they can feel that every system, every organisation, has been weaponised against them. That work is so important.

I think both sides of the parliament recognise that there is more to do to both improve our responses to victims and prevent domestic and family violence in the first place. It is a wicked problem, and all of us recognise the impacts it has on Queenslanders. I know that we all share a desire to see the best possible outcome for people who have experienced those terrible situations. This bill is a reflection of our collective responsibility to those affected by crime and our dedication to creating a more supportive and just Queensland. It acknowledges the hardships that victims endure and is our commitment to making sure they have the resources they need to rebuild and recover in the aftermath of experiencing violent crime. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.37 pm): I rise to address the debate on the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The primary objectives of the bill are detailed as making changes to the following: firstly, the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 to increase the upper limits for financial assistance payments and special assistance payments available to victims, increase the upper limits payable for funeral expenses and distress payments and also recategorise domestic violence as a category B act of violence for the purpose of special assistance payments; and, secondly, to amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to increase the membership of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council to no more than 14 members to enable the appointment of a person with lived experience as a victim of crime and another person and require that at least one member of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council must be a person with lived experience as a victim of crime.

The bill proposes to adjust the type and financial amount eligible for compensation for certain victim categories. To provide greater support specific to victims of acts of domestic and family violence, the bill increases the categorisation of acts of domestic and family violence to increase the amount of special assistance that victim-survivors can receive. To achieve this objective, acts of domestic and family violence will be recategorised from being a category D act of violence to a category B act of violence.

The proposed amendments contained in the bill will increase the special assistance payments for victims of acts of domestic and family violence from \$1,000 to \$9,000. The government has approved funding of \$185 million over five years from 2023-24 and \$40 million per annum ongoing from 2028-29 to enable increased payments of financial assistance to victims of crime under the Financial Assistance Scheme. This will need to be monitored to ensure that funding matches any increases in applications and that Victim Assist Queensland is adequately resourced so that payments are made in a timely manner. Whilst this compensation will be welcomed by many, it has become even more necessary because of Labor's crime crisis, which is burning right across Queensland.

There were 12 submissions made to the bill and all but one of those submissions supported the bill. The submitters included Bravehearts, the Mareeba Shire Council, the Justice Reform Initiative, knowmore, the Local Government Association of Queensland and the Interim Victims' Commissioner. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service supported the bill and took the opportunity to raise the ongoing delays in processing applications under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act and the impact that that has had on victims. The Local Government Association of Queensland also raised the need to consider support for small businesses impacted by violent crime.

The Liberal National Party has been calling on the government to add a victim to the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. The LNP was originally derided but, yet again, the Labor government has seen sense and adopted that, and it is important that they do so. It could be said that, once again, the Liberal National Party is leading from opposition and the government is following our lead.

Victims have felt silenced by the government over a long period. They feel that their needs have not been heard. That has been occurring in my electorate of Moggill and right across the western suburbs of Brisbane. There is no doubt that crime has been extremely problematic. Local residents regularly contact me to discuss their concerns about break and enter offences and car theft. Recently, on one particular night, multiple businesses across Kenmore and Chapel Hill were broken into. The business owners have told me not only about the violation of their premises and the fact that they feel unsafe but also about the disruption to their businesses and the flow-on effects as far as insurance costs are concerned. The government certainly needs to do more. They need to understand the impacts of crime in not only Brisbane and South-East Queensland but also right across Queensland.


I take this opportunity to talk about the issues related to the DNA debacle in Queensland. The widespread issues related to the DNA lab have been well covered by the acting shadow Attorney-General and member for Nanango, Deb Frecklington. I take this opportunity to acknowledge Dr Kirsty Wright for her courage in identifying and exposing the systemic governance issues related to DNA testing within Queensland Health's Forensic and Scientific Services laboratory. The abject failures under the Labor government have been extraordinary. The Liberal National Party had been raising the extensive issues related to the laboratory for a long period prior to the reviews being commenced by the government. As with most issues under this government, for a substantial period Labor deflected, denied, deferred and refused to act.

The issues that we have seen here in Queensland have really been quite extraordinary. It has to be said that the circumstances surrounding the Queensland Forensic and Scientific Services laboratory have led to one of the greatest failures of our state's judicial system. There are still thousands of victims who deserve justice and the government needs to ensure that they receive justice. Whilst the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services, the member for Waterford, might want people to move on, the victims of Labor's DNA crisis cannot simply move on. They need justice and they deserve justice. The Liberal National Party will continue to fight for justice for all of those victims because it is the right thing to do not only by them but by their families as well. They need to be supported. Many issues still need to be individually and collectively prosecuted on their behalf. The Liberal National Party will continue to do that now and well and truly into the future.

The fact that no-one has been held accountable for this episode is shameful. It casts a long, dark shadow over the Labor government. There has not been full accountability and ministerial accountability for this episode.

The Liberal National Party is broadly supportive of the government's amendments that have been circulated as part of this debate related to the issues that have been identified in relation to the laboratory. However, there are still many unanswered questions and concerns as to how far those amendments will go and whether they will achieve the substantial reforms and other changes that need to take place.

In conclusion, I acknowledge all members of the committee who scrutinised the legislation. They do important work here in Queensland in compiling their reports, and certainly the secretariat does as well. They need to be commended for all of the work that they do in relation to looking at legislation, compiling reports and preparing that for all members of parliament to refer to when they contribute to the debates on such legislation.

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (3.45 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which amends the Victims of Crime Assistance Act that established the Financial Assistance Scheme that seeks to help victims of acts of violence to recover by providing financial assistance and that includes both primary victims and related victims. The bill seeks to increase the maximum amount of assistance for victims, which has not increased since 2009 when the act commenced. In 2017, funeral assistance was boosted from \$6,000 to \$8,000.


Separate inquiries undertaken by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, the independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence and the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee made various recommendations to increase the levels of support provided to victims of crime, including financial support provided to victims of acts of violence. The bill seeks to provide support for victims in the immediate future by increasing payments to reflect increases in financial pressures and increases in the cost of services. It will also seek to address broader reviews such as of the Financial Assistance Scheme by KPMG.

Often in my electorate office I meet with victims of crime and particularly victims of violent crime. Victims come to talk to me about their experiences. Many are on different time lines in their journey after becoming a victim of crime. Many have had different experiences and have been victims of a wide variety of crimes. Some are children. Many are still going through the grief and trauma that comes with being a victim of violent crime. Some people are still going through a court process. There are all sorts of challenges associated with that for victims.

As the member for Toohey pointed out, trying to understand the world of the legal and court systems and processes can leave people feeling quite lost, especially if they are still grieving as a result of becoming a victim of crime. In my area, many victims struggle to access counselling. We have a shortage of psychologists. Accessing counselling for victims has been a challenge that victims have expressed to me. Victims can struggle with grief for many years.


I want to pay particular tribute to a couple of victims of crime who have done outstanding work in my community, in the face of the grief and trauma that they have experienced when they have lost a child. Three years ago, Cheryl O'Sullivan tragically lost her daughter, Karen Gilliland, who was murdered by her estranged husband. It was an awful situation. Cheryl misses Karen every day as do Karen's three young children. I think it is quite amazing that Cheryl has channelled her grief and trauma in such a positive way by supporting other victims of domestic and family violence. She really wants to create that change.

There is also Shane Yore, whose son was tragically killed in a car accident. The driver of the vehicle was subsequently charged and convicted, but Rhys Yore was only a teenager and he tragically lost his life as a result of the crime. Shane now has channelled his grief and trauma in such a positive way, being recognised this year with a Livingstone Shire Council Australian of the Year Award, because of the road safety campaign and the training program which he has now created and runs at our local schools. It is called You Choose Road Safety. It is just amazing that Shane, in the face of all of that grief, has been able to give young people lessons and teach them about the impacts of their choices, particularly on the roads. I really look forward to this bill rolling out. It is gold standard. When we look at how victims of crime are financially supported across the country, Queensland really is leading the way. I look forward to other jurisdictions following suit. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (3.50 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Mine will be confined to the situation facing victims of crime who want to access the assistance scheme provided for under the existing legislation and enhanced by this bill. A week or two ago, a very brave constituent of mine came to see me in my office. To her great credit, she wanted me to speak in the House and to identify her; however, I think to do so might impinge upon the sub judice rule for some trials which are still underway. I am sure she knows who she is. I would like to pay tribute to her and thank her for her bravery and fortitude in coming to me to explain what happened to her in the way of a very traumatic experience as a child—child sexual abuse and abuse at the hands of her relatives. I will leave it at that. She came with a number of concerns. The one which is most pertinent to this debate is the amount of time that victims face in obtaining the compensation and financial assistance provided for under this legislation.



I am advised that, once someone's status as an eligible victim is clear, it can still take years for an assessor to be allocated to that person's case to even look at their eligibility. I think waiting for years serves to reinforce the trauma and the disadvantage that victims have experienced. We all would see, in the broadest sense, this scheme as providing a bit of justice to victims. We all know that justice delayed is, in effect, justice denied. I say to the government: these enhancements are merited—and obviously the opposition and I will be supporting them—but please bear in mind that the scheme is only good as it is efficient. One which leaves victims of crime hanging for years without the vindication and the reassurance that the financial compensation they would get provides them with is not really worth the name.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (3.53 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I am very proud to speak in support of this bill, which recognises the ongoing harm that victims of violent crime suffer and the ongoing trauma they carry. We have a responsibility to care for those in the community who have suffered ongoing impacts of crime through no fault of their own. The bill reflects the Palaszczuk government's commitment to supporting victims of crime in Queensland as part of the \$185 million investment to improve support for victims of crime. The bill increases the maximum financial assistance for primary victims from \$75,000 to \$120,000.

The process of recovering from violent crime and trauma can be complex. That is why we are investing more in supporting victims to recognise current financial pressures and the costs of accessing services. The bill will help victims of violent crime to access the support services they need for their recovery, including medical, counselling and legal services and loss of earnings. To recognise the serious impacts of domestic and family violence on victim-survivors, the bill also includes an amendment to recategorise acts of domestic and family violence. This will significantly increase the special assistance payment for victims of domestic violence, from \$1,000 to \$9,000.

In my former role as minister for the prevention of domestic and family violence, I heard many stories of the critical need to increase special assistance for this category of crime. Not only can these payments be used for medical or counselling services but they can also be used for much needed emergency accommodation, relocation, security and the household items left behind. This all contributes to being and feeling safe, which is critical to recovery. The expanded scheme will assist victims of violence in their recovery and help them to get the support they need during this difficult time.

The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence has foreshadowed that she will be moving amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 during consideration in detail. These amendments will assist the important work of Forensic Science Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is committed to addressing the issues raised in the commissions of inquiry into forensic DNA testing in Queensland. While the findings of these inquiries are relevant to our whole community, I want to again acknowledge the enormous impact they have had on victims of crime and their families. During the commissions of inquiry we have seen the significant consequences of taking shortcuts. Scientific integrity was sacrificed for speed.

The amendments will give Forensic Science Queensland two extra years to keep DNA samples taken from suspects while the crime scene testing backlog is being worked through. These amendments will also ensure that the historical case reviews recommended by the commissions of inquiry are conducted in a robust and comprehensive manner. We cannot afford to have another situation where victims of crime are not guaranteed justice simply due to time pressures.

I have heard in this debate those opposite say over and over again that no-one has been held to account. I have to disagree. Perhaps those opposite should read all of the hundreds of recommendations from both commissions of inquiry and the many media reports about many people having their employment terminated, including then long-term manager Cathie Allen, about whom Walter Sofronoff said her leadership was the single biggest problem at the lab over many years. Cathie Allen's leadership and the problems at the lab had been going on for 16 years across multiple governments from both sides of politics. There have been people who have been held to account for this. I want to again thank Walter Sofronoff and Commissioner Bennett for their work and to remind all of those in this place that very significant consequences have been felt by those responsible for those failings.

Section 490 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 requires DNA samples and results to be destroyed in certain circumstances. Currently, suspect DNA material must be destroyed a year after the sample was taken if proceedings have not been brought against the suspect in that time.

We have been very up-front about the significant backlog in processing crime scene samples because of the huge amount of work that is being undertaken to retest historical samples. These are currently numerous. They have either reached the 12-month period or will soon reach that time frame and have not been tested. DNA material from suspects cannot be used for elimination or comparison purposes until the related crime scene samples are processed.

Forensic Science Queensland is working tirelessly to reduce the testing backlog as quickly as possible, but we all know that there is a lot of testing to be done and it is important that we get it right. Despite the significant efforts being undertaken to recruit more qualified scientific experts and outsource testing to other laboratories, it is taking longer than 12 months to analyse some samples, so without these amendments there is a risk that suspect profiles would need to be destroyed, because Forensic Science Queensland is simply not able to test related crime scene samples within the one-year period in which proceedings must be brought.

In line with existing legislative requirements, if there is an arrest or if a proceeding has commenced, the records will have to be destroyed if the arrest or proceeding is discontinued or there is a finding of not guilty. These amendments will ensure current criminal cases can be properly and thoroughly investigated.

Forensic Science Queensland has identified some historical records were retained. This is consistent with what the two commissions of inquiry heard about inappropriate or insufficient past practices. The records may be relevant to assessing the deficient DNA analyses we have committed to reviewing. For this reason it is proposed to amend the PPRA to allow these records to be retained for a further three years while they are reviewed. This will ensure the historical case reviews recommended by the two commission of inquiries benefited from all the information.

The amendments will authorise retention of some historical records dating back to 2007. If the records have not been re-analysed and proceedings brought against the suspect in three years, the records will then be destroyed. These amendments will provide assurance to victims of crime. Even though there may be delays, suspect profiles will not be destroyed simply because testing cannot be done in time with the huge workload currently before the lab. It is important to note Dr Bennett found no evidence that would undermine public confidence in the current work of Forensic Science Queensland.

These amendments demonstrate this government's commitment to identifying issues and being transparent and responsive to resolving them. We are doing everything possible to ensure a robust and trusted forensic service now and well into the future, and these amendments are a necessary part of this.

Debate, on motion of Ms Fentiman, adjourned.

## MOTIONS

### Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders



**Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (4.01 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders:

1. the Assistant Minister to the Premier for Veterans' Affairs and the Public Sector be permitted to immediately move a motion without notice regarding cuts and the public service;
2. the following time limits to apply: three minutes for all members with the question being put after 50 minutes of debate; and
3. the private member's motion commences at the conclusion of the debate of the assistant minister's motion.

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

**AYES, 50:**

**ALP, 50**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 38:**

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

**Grn, 2**—Berkman, MacMahon.

**KAP, 2**—Dametto, Katter.

**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

**Ind, 1**—Bolton.

Resolved in the affirmative.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the member for Aspley.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! We will allow the assistant minister to start his contribution in silence.

### Liberal National Party, Cuts



**Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (4.07 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. notes the LNP Brisbane Lord Mayor's decision to cut \$400 million from vital services, projects and jobs;
2. notes the LNP opposition's refusal to support the long-term implementation of progressive coal royalties and the \$7 billion budget black hole this would cause, resulting in more LNP cuts, including cost-of-living support; and
3. notes the Leader of the Opposition is 'committing to no forced redundancies' in the public sector, which is the same commitment Campbell Newman made which saw 14,000 public servants sacked.

This week we have sadly seen that the largest LNP administration in power in the country has had to cut 10 per cent of its budget due to financial management. These cuts will have consequences for people right across Brisbane. The LNP Lord Mayor is cutting \$400 million from the Brisbane City Council budget and those opposite think it is a joke. In his Christmas cuts, the Lord Mayor is cutting the Bracken Ridge SES depot—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left, if you are looking to interject, you are doing it with the wrong person. I am in the chair. I will not allow the level of interjections we are hearing. Expect the same situation as question time. Members on their feet will be heard.

**Mr MELLISH:** In his Christmas cuts, the Lord Mayor is cutting the Bracken Ridge SES depot, the Lindum Road level crossing, 25 per cent of paving and prep crews, and up to 400 casual bus drivers.


On the Bracken Ridge SES depot, this is an almost inconceivable decision given what happened in the February 2022 floods. On a Sunday afternoon in February as the rain kept coming down, we went to the Zillmere BCC depot to see if we could help out, as locals knew it was a location where they could get sandbags. What I saw there was pure chaos. As the only depot covering a large part of north Brisbane, demand was greatly outstripping supply. Cars were lined up a kilometre down the road and there was no traffic control from council at all. Local councillor Jared Cassidy, Anika Wells and I ended up having to direct traffic, prevent road rage and advising people in a nearly kilometre line that they would have to wait an hour for sandbags because there was no LNP councillor in sight and no council officer helping out.

Now the LNP has scrapped what would actually alleviate this massive pressure on the Zillmere depot come the next natural disaster to hit the north side. This is a terrible decision from the LNP. Other poor decisions include scrapping up to 400 casual bus drivers and a reduction of 25 per cent of their road crews in the lead-up to Christmas.

The LNP council has also decided it can afford to cut \$50 million from flood recovery but only \$1 million from its advertising budget. Remarkably in the last week we have seen just how bad the LNP council are going when they have erected at least three billboards across the north side, claiming that a wholly Palaszczuk government funded project—the Gympie Road bypass tunnel—is their project. I table a post from the Lord Mayor himself.

*Tabled paper:* Extract from the Facebook page of the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Cr Adrian Schrinner, titled 'Stuck in traffic?' [\[2037\]](#).


This is utterly shameless but not surprising that when they are going broke they are trying to claim others' projects. This is on top of council quietly scrapping other projects which they have not been up-front about at all. This is all an entree, a sneak peak, of what the LNP would do in power were they in government.

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.11 pm): And then there were four: first we had health minister Fentiman with a failure; secondly we had Deputy Premier Miles with an absolute failure; and then we had Treasurer Dick with a flop. What has now happened is the Premier said, 'Is there anyone else on the front bench ready to defend my honour? Is there anybody?' She looked around and all she could find was the poor lonely assistant minister, who has been quiet as a church mouse the entire term. All of a sudden he gets rolled out in a desperate bid to distract from the Deputy Premier's disastrous trip to Canberra.

Labor might be considering cuts to the Public Service: the LNP believes in an independent Public Service, an empowered Public Service, a Public Service that wants to go to work. When I read the Coaldrake review I see a Public Service living in entrenched fear—a culture where ministerial staff walk around like little generals barking orders, and a culture where a minister can hide cover-ups like massive blowouts without any consultation, without any accountability, without any remorse.

This motion is nothing more than a bid to attack the Brisbane City Council and the opposition on a day when the Deputy Premier's trip to Canberra ended in chaos. The trip to Canberra was supposed to be about bringing home the bacon—all it was was an appetite for a long lunch. That is all we got from the Deputy Premier, who was supposed to go down and defend the honour of this state.

Mr Deputy Speaker, let me tell you what the LNP's vision is for our Public Service. We believe in a Public Service where there will be an independent public service commissioner to break the nexus between the Premier's department and the Public Service Commission. We will set clear KPIs for directors-general and ministers to be held accountable. We believe in making sure the internal complaints process is improved. The graduates program will be the best in the nation. If we are to have the best Public Service, we need the best homegrown public servants. When contracts or consultancies are entered into there must be a capacity-building opportunity for our Public Service. We must have timeliness when it comes to ensuring that training and professional development are delivered to all public servants, and there will be no forced redundancies. The LNP believes there is a better way. Services are crumbling and the priorities of this government are wrong. The only way to fix it is to show Labor the door in '24!

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (4.14 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion this afternoon because it is vitally important that the people of Queensland know exactly what they are voting for when they vote for the LNP. They deserve to know what will happen if the member for Broadwater is allowed to unleash the savage cuts they have planned for Queensland if they ever get into government. On this side of the House, we support progressive coal royalties in Queensland. We support progressive coal royalties because we believe that all Queenslanders own those resources and they should be shared by Queenslanders. We believe that the superprofits of those coal companies should be invested into the infrastructure that is needed for Queensland. We believe in that.


The LNP needs to be up-front with Queenslanders, because when you do not support coal royalties being invested back into communities it means that there are no free kindies for your family and it means that cost-of-living support for Queenslanders is slashed. If the LNP had their way you could say goodbye to Building our Regions in regional Queensland. You could say goodbye to Works for Queensland for our councils in Queensland. You could say goodbye to manufacturing grants, because we know they would get rid of them tomorrow if they had the opportunity. Do you know why? Because that is what they did last time. They have a track record of scrapping great benefits for Queenslanders when they are in government.

When we talk about water and water resources for this community, we know the LNP's history when they were in government. Their history is that they scrapped a dam. They did not build any; they did not design any; they did not plan for any—they scrapped a dam in Queensland. That is their track record. Not only that, but how about the \$25 million repair to Paradise Dam? It was done on the back of a beer coaster somewhere out under a tree. They said they could fix it for \$25 million—what an absolute crock! That is what you expect from an LNP government that comes up with no plans. When the member for Nanango was on ABC Radio and they asked, 'What is your plan for water?' there was no plan. There is nothing. I was listening. I waited. There is no plan. There is no plan by the LNP here in Queensland other than—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Pause the clock. Members, the level of interjection is getting out of hand. Member for Callide, that was highly disorderly. I will start issuing warnings from now on.

**Mr BUTCHER:** Getting abused by the member for Callide is like getting hit with a wet lettuce leaf. I dare the LNP here in Queensland to run another candidate against me like they did in 2017. The candidate they put forward was working at the Gladstone Ports Corporation, and guess what his job was. His job was to prepare the Port of Gladstone for sale. They put in a candidate who was working for the port who wanted to sell it. He came out and told everyone, 'I'm here to say that we want to get rid of things like the Gladstone port because we don't care about communities just like Gladstone.'

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.17 pm): Unfortunately, putting this motion on the agenda now takes away time to talk about victims of crime in this state. There are many people in this chamber who want to talk about one of the biggest issues in Queensland caused by the Labor Party government, and that is the youth crime crisis. This little motion that Labor always does now on Wednesday afternoon is filling time. It is also wasting time, because now people will be cut off tomorrow when the House rises and the Labor Party go on their Christmas break. That is what is going to happen. People will miss the opportunity to talk about what Queenslanders want us to talk about.

If the Labor Party wants to talk about a type of government, as I said yesterday in this chamber, this government is a kakistocracy. It is a bad government led by bad people. We see the culture that came through the government in the Coaldrake report. It said that ministerial staff are running around departments like little generals and public servants are not doing what they want to do, which is give fearless and frank advice, because they are too scared of what is going to happen under the Palaszczuk Labor government. That is the problem. The Labor Party wants to talk about cuts. The only party cutting anything in Queensland is the Labor Party—the 'kings of cuts'. Deputy Premier Steven Miles, transport and main roads minister Bailey and of course Treasurer Cameron Dick are all 'kings of cuts'!

**Mr BAILEY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is clearly against standing orders to use the surnames of honourable members of the parliament, which the experienced member just did.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BAILEY:** The very experienced member just said that and it is against the standing orders.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Martin): Minister, I understand your point of order. I will get some advice in silence.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Nanango, you are warned. I remind all members to use correct titles.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The only disgraceful thing in that man's title is the word 'minister' before his name. He should not be a minister. He should have been sacked years ago.

**Mr BAILEY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the comments of the member personally offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The minister is correct. Member for Kawana, I had just brought the House to order and asked you to use correct titles and then you did not. I remind you to use correct titles and I ask that you withdraw that unparliamentary language.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. The Minister for Transport and Main Roads is an absolute disgrace. He is an incompetent minister who Premier Palaszczuk should have sacked years ago. It is a disgrace that he is still sitting around the cabinet table making decisions. The types of decisions that minister is making have led to billions of dollars of blowouts, cover-ups and mistruths in Queensland. You only had to see the train wreck of an interview yesterday. Today we hear that the Deputy Premier has led a delegation to Canberra. I have not seen the announcement yet, but does anyone in the Labor Party know that the Deputy Premier left the delegation on the tarmac? They did not go to Canberra. They were on the tarmac.


**Mr BAILEY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is clearly trying to communicate directly with members and not via the chair which is against the standing orders.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I ask all members to direct their comments through the chair.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The Deputy Premier is sitting down in Canberra and was spotted at the National Press Club lunch today—not doing anything on behalf of Team Queensland—listening to the daughter of former prime minister Kevin Rudd talk about parenthood. The Deputy Premier is sitting there on


table 9, having a good time, drinking wine, on the public dime. That is what the Deputy Premier was doing when he was meant to be sticking up for Queensland. The best thing that Queenslanders could do for Queensland and Queenslanders next year is to show Labor the door in '24. Get rid of this incompetent mob, including the transport minister.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (4.22 pm): Just before I begin my contribution, I want to remind the member for Kawana of what happened when he was the attorney-general, taking into account his comments at the beginning of his contribution: the assistance given to victims was slashed by \$323,000. We had the Leader of the Opposition standing up there saying, 'I'll guarantee this.' He came into the city of Cairns and gave a guarantee to people and then he came down here and backflipped. He absolutely backflipped on it and he did it because it was popular. If he expects to be able to come into this chamber and stand over there and talk with any credibility, he has absolutely lost that.


When you hear the member for Burnett talk about breaking the back of unrealistic entitlements, what signal does that send? Let me ask those on that side this question: what signal does it send when your own leader backflips like that? What signal does it send to the people of Queensland when your backbenchers are making those sorts of comments? What messages are people meant to take out of this when the member for Chatsworth tells people that he has already identified billions of dollars worth of cuts? You are a pack of frauds and it is as clear as the day is long. The member for Broadwater cannot even lie straight in bed.

Look at what you have done in the past. Seriously, it is absolutely appalling. In my part of the world, there were 306 health workers, including 48 nurses, who were sacked. In Central Queensland, 197 people were sacked. I often wonder how the National Party would feel if they still existed today. In Central Queensland, 197 health workers were sacked, including 41 nurses. The sackings continued: on the Darling Downs, 116 health workers; on the Gold Coast, 57 health workers, including 54 nurses; in Mackay, 32 health workers, including 12 nurses; and in Metro North, 1,432 health staff, including 731 nurses. It is absolutely appalling and your history will follow you. We have the new Coomera Hospital. We have a new Toowoomba Hospital. We have the new Bundaberg Hospital. We have the new Redcliffe Hospital expansion underway. We are investing money. You can stand up and defend all the Japanese mining companies you want. We will represent Queenslanders. I tell you what: the people of Queensland want more in '24.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (4.25 pm): I just want to step back for a moment on this motion. Obviously, this is a hyper-partisan motion that we have seen repeatedly. I want to pose this question: what kind of Public Service do we need to fix the mess that the Palaszczuk Labor government has left us after a decade in power? What kind of Public Service do we actually need? What kinds of professional skills do we need to get us out of this mess that we are in? Those opposite will continue to play the politics—all the cheap nasty numbers, all the politics they have—but what we need is to have a discussion about what is necessary to meet the needs of the future. What we have seen over the last number of years is failures of this government to back the Public Service and the kinds of skills that we need for the future.

Look at the police numbers. At the last election we were promised 1,450 police, but we are now down 202 from what we needed one year ago. What we have seen across the healthcare system is long-term vacancies. In the child safety system, we have workers who are not supported. What kind of Public Service do we need to deliver world-class services to the people of Queensland? We need a mature discussion about it, and that is exactly what we on this side of the House are doing and what the Leader of the Opposition announced just last week.

I want a Public Service where young people want to enter into it. That is why we have been talking about our graduate program—because we need young men and women wanting to move into the Public Service to provide the skills and ever-growing services that we need for a growing population in this state. We have seen from the Coaldrake review the kind of culture that this government has overseen. That culture must change. The sunlight must be let in. We need to attract the younger people into the Public Service to deliver it. We have seen what the Coaldrake review said about consultants and this government's reliance on them because they do not trust the Public Service to deliver the services that this state needs. That is why we have committed to invest in the Public Service and not in the big four and the conflict that side of the House have with the big four consultancies where they shop around for opinions. We want to back the Public Service to deliver the world-class services that we need. There is only one way for the Public Service to be backed and that is to show Labor the door in '24.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.28 pm): It is a truly sad day in Brisbane today. The workers of Brisbane are losing their jobs because Schrinner cannot do his job. I have seen him in the media parlaying himself around, trying to turn his cuts into a virtue, describing them as responsible economic management. When you have the resources of the Brisbane City Council to forecast a budget and you forecast a budget and then just three or four months later you have to slash 10 per cent off that budget, that is not responsible economic management. That results in the workers of Brisbane losing their jobs.


I see the failings of this council all the time in my community. When you drive down every street, you see grass growing out of the middle of the street. There are sporting clubs that are not supported. There is illegal dumping and when people ring the council and try to get that dealt with they get no response. I have lost count of the number of letters I have had to write to the Lord Mayor on behalf of constituents who have contacted their local councillors and have had absolutely no response on important issues like this. What we see again is workers losing their jobs because Schrinner cannot do his job.

He put out a budget in June and then he backflipped in October. It sounds like and reminds me of somebody else. It reminds me of the Leader of the Opposition. He walked into the regional sittings of parliament in Cairns and gave a speech about the Path to Treaty and then in October he backflipped on it. He made a solemn vote and then he backflipped on it. It must have been gutting for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

I tell you one thing he will not backflip on, and that is cutting the progressive coal royalties. They are definitely going to be cut. The QRC is banking on that. You have to ask: what projects are going to be cut? Will it be the Holland Park State High School? Will it be the Whites Hill State College? Will it be the expansion of the PA and the QEII hospitals? What are the projects he is going to cut? We need to know this because they are going to cut progressive coal royalties, as it says in this motion, and that means there will have to be projects cut.

Do you know what I thought was really hilarious today and yesterday? I have heard it a few times in this place. Those opposite come in here and start talking about costs on infrastructure projects. Do you know how they controlled costs on infrastructure projects? Do you know what their No. 1 control method for infrastructure projects was? They did not actually build any infrastructure projects. If you want to control the cost of infrastructure, you do not build any. The only thing they built in their three years, a mercifully short time in government, was a large building for themselves. I do not know what happened to the costs on that, but on every other project they did an excellent job of controlling the costs. They did an excellent job of controlling the costs because they built absolutely no infrastructure, and that will happen again. That will happen again with progressive coal royalties being cut.

*(Time expired)*

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (4.31 pm): I would like to remind those opposite that last time I checked we were in the Queensland state parliament, not the Brisbane City Council chambers. What I am shocked at is that we have not seen a motion from this government about their disappointment in the Labor government's cuts to infrastructure projects across this state—the road infrastructure projects that have been cut in every electorate.

In Queensland, from July 2021 to October 2023, 1,040 new child safety officers were appointed. One in three of these frontline workers have left the department. Those opposite are too concerned about decades past instead of looking at the future. Public servants are so disgusted in the government that leads this state that they are leaving in droves. It is not the opposition saying this. The CEO of PeakCare states—

In Queensland, the substantial turnover of critical frontline child safety officers and high vacancy rates in regional areas can often mean significant inconsistency and the disruption of relationships for children in care, their family carers and non-government organisations who are there to support them.

What this government does through its chaos, through its crisis, through its self-interest, through the fact it has checked out, through its disempowerment of the Public Service is risk lives—lives of our most vulnerable, lives of children and lives of women. Domestic violence services report to me that their minister cannot even make approvals for funding on time. In Ipswich, the service had to make a counsellor redundant. When we have not-for-profit services—

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, member for Pine Rivers!

**Ms CAMM:** The domestic violence sector have had to make staff redundant. That is appalling and it is shameful. In the last sitting week we have seen a reduced time frame for debate on what is very important legislation—important legislation that impacts and affects every member of this House, no matter what political party you are aligned to. Every member here needs to be reminded of the chair that they sit in and their oath. Each one of us represents victims of crime in every electorate in this state. The debate will be guillotined over the next 12 hours so that we will not get to stand up and speak on behalf of our community. Do you know what? Queenslanders are noticing, and they will show Labor the door in 2024.

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

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



**Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (4.34 pm): Before I begin my speech today, I would like to remind the House that it was those opposite, when they were in power, who reduced the funding for victims of crime. Let us not forget that for one moment. Opposition members can stand up and do all the virtue signalling they want, but that is what they did. I have listened to all of those who have spoken to the motion, but not one Brisbane member has stood up to defend the LNP Lord Mayor. I wonder if those opposite will run to see if they can get some other speakers up now. Quite frankly, Brisbane is very disappointed with the Lord Mayor.

I have been working really hard. You can imagine the sheer surprise and indeed dismay I felt to hear recently that the LNP city council are cutting \$400 million from their budget. I did do a double take, but, as my colleague the member for Greenslopes said, it is nothing to be really surprised about; it is in their DNA. We have seen it all before. In fact, in my own electorate we were punished by the LNP—by the Campbell Newman government and by the new man who is currently here as well.

What we saw in my electorate—I have spoken about it before and no doubt I will be howled down for raising it again—was punishment. My electorate's child safety office was closed. My department of housing office was closed. My bayside tenancy advice service was closed. The Caravan and Manufactured Home Residents Association was closed. Wynnum Hospital was closed and all the health services were gone. The Skilling Queenslanders for Work program was axed. Mental health services were closed. Perhaps most shameful and most disgraceful was that the Moreton Bay Nursing Care Unit was closed. Eighty-five residents lost their home, and they will not forget. My community will not forgive and they will not forget.

Some 14,000 public servants lost their job under the LNP. It is in their DNA. It was ridiculous to have to listen to the member for Toowoomba South say that he tried to have a reasonable conversation. He talked about a mature conversation. What does that mean? What does a mature conversation mean? Does it mean a bit of tough love? Does it mean a bit of pruning that we have all seen? Is that what he means? That is exactly what the member for Chatsworth has said. That is what the member for Burdekin has said. Fourteen thousand members of the Public Service lost their job, and my community will never forgive the LNP.



**Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (4.37 pm): This really is a government on its last legs. I do not think we have ever had a government in this state more obsessed with the opposition. A huge number of government members have been reading our beautiful document 'The Right Priorities for Queensland's Future'. They have all seen it. We hear about it in question time every single day. They are obsessed with the Liberal National Party opposition because they have no plans for our state. This is the fourth of these motions that we have seen in successive sitting weeks. It is a really sad attempt for those poor backbenchers to say to the Premier, 'Please notice me. Please give me a chance to be a minister. Look at Minister Bailey—I can do better than him. Please give me an opportunity.' It really is sad. This is a government focused on a decade ago.

Last week at the Queensland Media Club—and I acknowledge the member for Cooper, who was there listening in the audience, and I say thanks for coming; we appreciated you being there—was a chance for the Leader of the Opposition to outline his vision for the future. It was forward-looking. I say to the poor public servants who are watching: I am sorry that this is what your ministers are spending their time doing but there is a better way. There is the Leader of the Opposition's seven-point plan to restore Public Service integrity, capability and accountability including establishing an independent public sector commission—who could argue against that?—and setting clear goals and KPIs so that ministers and directors-general can be held accountable.

He has previously said that the transport minister 'wouldn't make smoko' under David Crisafulli, the Leader of the Opposition. The seven-point policy focuses on: reviewing the internal complaints procedures to restore integrity, independence and procedural fairness to the process; enhancing



graduate programs and opportunities; making the Queensland government an employer of choice for young Queenslanders; requiring all contracts and consultancies to include a substantial training and professional development component to strengthen the Public Service capability—that is all about rebuilding skills from within—providing training and professional development to better suit the individual needs of public servants to embrace new approaches to deliver better infrastructure and services; and, of course, committing to no forced redundancies. It is nothing to be afraid of; it is a wonderful plan for the Public Service. I do not know what the Labor government could find to attack in that because it is a vision for the future. It will end the days of poor management and budget blowouts.

**Mr Krause:** The little generals.

**Mr O'CONNOR:** I take that interjection from the member for Scenic Rim, who is not in his seat. It will end the days of staff going around like little generals. I urge Queenslanders to show Labor the door in '24.



**Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (4.41 pm): When it comes to LNP priorities, each and every Queenslanders needs to fear. LNP priorities are very wrong. We see them walking into the chamber holding their document. We see them walking all around the precinct, usually with a forced smile on their face, looking like some sort of confused butler who has seen his boss do something awful. We on this side know that there is something very wrong with this document. The document is a bit light on. It does not have much substance—much like the LNP itself. It is very important that the people of Queensland know the plans the LNP are devising for average everyday Queenslanders, and this document does not make it clear.

It is concerning for people in my community. They want to know what the LNP are planning. One good example is to look at what other LNP politicians are doing. Everybody knows what Campbell Newman did when he was the premier just a few years ago. There were massive cuts, thousands of workers were sacked and assets were privatised—it was ruthless razor gang stuff. What have we seen recently? We have seen another example of what the LNP do when they are in power. Councillor Adrian Schinnerer has cut millions of dollars from vital services, projects and jobs, which will undoubtedly impact my community. This is doubly bad, as the Calamvale ward is woefully underfunded. It is the only ward in Brisbane City that does not have a library and, sadly, this is because we have a councillor and Lord Mayor who is not focused on representing—

**Ms Richards:** Is that Angela Owen?

**Mr MARTIN:** It is Angela Owen. I take that interjection. They are not focused on representing our local area, instead their priorities are the typical LNP priorities of cuts and self-promotion. They have spent millions of newsletters and billboards, all as rates go up and services are cut. Parks like Col Benet Park and Lorikeet Park in Algester are neglected. They have old rusty barbecues, overgrown grass, no toilet blocks and no lighting. Recently, the Labor candidate for the Calamvale ward, Emily Kim, called out the LNP for their dangerous and dilapidated kids' playground at Lorikeet Park which, frankly, was a total dump. The LNP must be monitoring the candidate's Facebook page because only a couple of days afterwards, the entire kids' playground was completely removed. What did they replace it with? They replaced it with woodchips. They have covered the entire park with woodchips—another classic LNP strategy. Well done to Labor candidate Emily Kim. She is already standing up for the residents of the Calamvale ward. As she always says, 'It is time to put locals first.'

Members of my community have also been calling for important upgrades from the LNP council, but they continue to be ignored. They want traffic calming and they want better lighting, but, sadly, these massive LNP cuts mean less for our local community, not more.

*(Time expired)*



**Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.44 pm): We hear a lot about fighting for Queensland, but today a number of the mayors were actually left on the tarmac. Here we had the Deputy Premier leading all these mayors down to Canberra but, unfortunately, they had to attend by virtual means.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Ms LEAHY:** I take the interjection. I do not know how the Deputy Premier got there, but I know a number of mayors are very disappointed that they could not go in person. They could not get there; they were left on the tarmac. We hear a lot from Labor about cuts, but what about the cuts that federal Labor are making to road funding in Queensland? Projects that will not receive Australian funding at this time like the Beenleigh commuter car park in Beenleigh—

**Mr Lister** interjected.


**Ms LEAHY:** I take the interjection—the Emu Swamp Dam at Stanthorpe. The federal Labor Party have said that they do not think that project demonstrates merit or national strategic rationale. Tell that to the people of Stanthorpe and Warwick who ran out of water. What about the High Road and Easterly Street at Waterford upgrade? What about the Kenmore roundabout in the western suburbs of Brisbane that has been cut by the federal Labor Party? What about the Mooloolah River Interchange upgrade; the New England Highway upgrade at Cabarlah; the Nicklin Way and Third Avenue connection at Caloundra—I wonder what the member for Caloundra has to say about that; the Tennant Creek to Townsville corridor upgrade; the Dingo Park Road intersection upgrade; or the inland Bruce Highway?

**Mr Saunders:** It's still there.

**Ms LEAHY:** Only just! They talk about flood resilience for the inland Bruce. It is pretty clear that a number of people have not driven that inland Bruce when you look at the flood resilience in the Thallon to Mungindi section. You can do everything in the north, but when it comes to flood proofing that road, there is a lot of work to do.

When we look at what Brisbane City Council have been through with this Labor government in relation to the Metro busway, we find that they had something like 276 meetings with the state government. Adrian Schrinner had to put the contracts on hold because the state government was delaying this project. Brisbane City Council had to have 276 meetings to try to get that project underway, because the state government kept making changes. They want to come into this place and talk about cuts, but they do not want to talk about how they have cost the Brisbane City Council more money. Members want to come into this House and talk about public servants. I think they should have a think about what happened with the Goss government under the Gulag. There was vindictiveness—people had phone calls in the dead of the night. Hundreds of public servants were sacked.


*(Time expired)*

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (4.47 pm): We have heard a couple of speakers opposite say that they are trying to figure out what the connection is between the BCC's LNP cuts and the state LNP. Let us have a look at the numbers. It is a \$400 million cut—10 per cent of the Brisbane City Council budget. That is equal to \$7 billion of the Queensland state budget. Does that sound familiar? It sounds like progressive coal royalties to me, so it sounds very familiar indeed.

There was a promise made to the people of Brisbane, in the form of the council budget in June, to deliver value for money people from their rates. Then there was a recant in November. They made these commitments—including one in my local community—then they recant in November. It sounds a bit like 'no forced redundancies'. We heard that on the way into 2012, and we know how that ended up for 14,000 Queensland public servants. Those people's lives and those of their families and the communities were utterly changed by that bit of recanting.

I come to one particular commitment that was made to the people of Bracken Ridge, and the whole of the 4017 area at the very northern part of the Brisbane City Council area, in that June budget. My community on the north side of Brisbane was the region worst affected and impacted by the flooding events in early 2022. The Brisbane City Council only learnt one lesson from that whole event. They have done nothing to change how they manage development; they have done nothing to change how they manage local waterways; and they have done nothing to upgrade and increase capacity to respond to immediate events with day labour. They are doing more outsourcing through these cuts.

The one good idea they came up with was to build an SES depot at Bracken Ridge so that great community advocates like the member for Aspley do not have to be out there directing traffic for people to get their sandbags from the Zillmere PCYC. Meanwhile, I was trapped on the other side of flooded waterways unable to provide help. I was trying to help people and saying, 'What can we do about getting sandbags to people?' It was all too late because the area was flooded and the sandbags were on the wrong side. Brisbane City Council came up with one great idea and now they have cut it. No wonder Cath Palmer will be the next councillor for Bracken Ridge.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.50 pm): Here we go again. If honourable members ever needed another example of the fact that this government has stopped listening to Queenslanders, this is it. We were supposed to be debating and fighting for victims of crime at this time. Instead, that debate has been silenced and we are pursuing cheap political tricks on the part of the Palaszczuk Labor government. It sums up this government to a tee. We spoke briefly in the business program motion yesterday about how short the time for debate is on some very important bills this week, and here we are wasting 50 minutes on a cheap political trick. Nothing sums up those opposite better than that. As

the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, this is not the first time they have done it. It is not the second time they have done it. It is not the third time they have done it. It is actually the fourth time in four weeks that we have had a motion of this nature.

**Mrs D'ATH:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Resume your seat, please, member for Glass House. What is your point of order, Leader of the House?

**Mrs D'ATH:** The member is debating the procedural motion and not the motion that is now before the House. The procedural motion has been passed. We ask that he be brought back to the motion before the House.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member, I have allowed some degree of latitude, but you would need to get to the point of demonstrating how that part of the contribution is relevant to the motion before the House.


**Mr POWELL:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your direction. As I have shared in this House, including in my maiden speech, I was a public servant. Before I get ridiculed by those opposite, let me share some of my experiences. It is one of the reasons I ended up joining the LNP. It is one of the reasons I ended up standing for the LNP. It is one of the reasons I so look forward to being a minister in an LNP government. Why? Because numerous times—time after time—I would turn up at work and if I had anything to do at all it would often be a brief. I would provide that brief to the relevant authority, the minister at the time, and then I would sit there and wait for an answer.

A couple of weeks later along would come a consultant and ask me questions that sounded awfully familiar to the brief that I provided several weeks before. The consultant would go away and next we would see this report prepared that looked eerily similar to the brief I had provided the minister about a month or two earlier. The governments would continue to waste taxpayers' money getting consultants to write reports that the Public Service, who wanted to serve as frank and fearless servants of their ministers, were writing anyway.

I am so pleased to see that one of the announcements my leader made at his Media Club presentation last week was that, as part of any consultancy that a future LNP government would undertake, they must also ensure there is an opportunity to upskill and provide training to the Public Service. That is why we hire public servants: to provide that frank and fearless advice. If they cannot provide that frank and fearless advice because they are running off to a consultant every time, what is the purpose of the work they are doing?

The other thing I am really impressed in seeing is the corporate graduate program. As a product of a graduate program myself, I know that we will attract the best and brightest under an LNP government. The only way to achieve that is to show Labor the door in '24.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (4.53 pm): In listening to this debate, I reflect that in this House language matters. The previous speaker, the member for Glass House, began his contribution by saying, 'Here we go again.' When it comes to the Leader of the Opposition, here we go again: 'No forced redundancies. The Public Service has nothing to fear from me.' We heard it from Campbell Newman. We heard it from the member for Nanango. We heard it from the member for Clayfield.

I would particularly like to talk about the issue of outsourcing in the Public Service. The member for Clayfield was such a fan of outsourcing in the Public Service that he outsourced his own job to Peter Costello.


**Mr Head:** Fiona Hammond is going to be a fantastic member for Stafford.

**Mr SULLIVAN:** I take the member for Callide's interjection. It is really sad how she was treated. She was done over by her own party when the Lord Mayor thought she needed to go and had to be replaced. She was demoted from civic cabinet and then had to face a new member. I do feel for her and look forward to the upcoming election.

Just like the member for Clayfield outsourced to Peter Costello the plans to cut, sell and sack, now we hear from the Leader of the Opposition that he has a position, which is effectively to outsource Public Service sacking. He wants an independent commission so that he can do what the LNP do, which is to sack public servants but be at arm's length. That is clearly what their plan is. It is absolutely what their plan is.

I heard the member for Sandgate mention that the BCC have outlined a 10 per cent cut. I am going to talk about a local example where there is a 25 per cent cut. That is a particular intersection on Hamilton Road, which is a council road. The Queensland government has stepped in to try to do their job for them. It negotiated with the Prince Charles Hospital and provided funding. The 25 per cent cut was made in circumstances where we are trying to create safe entry and exit points for nurses, doctors and health workers to the Prince Charles Hospital. The 25 per cent cut that the Brisbane City Council introduced was to cut off 25 per cent of the intersection that would have actually produced an entry and exit to the hospital. You cannot make this up. That 25 per cent cut on a council road is an absolute disgrace to the staff, the patients, the visitors and the families who would otherwise enjoy a safer intersection. That is just one example of the ridiculous cuts that the LNP make at a city council level and that they have done at a state level, including 700 nurses cut in Metro North alone.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): There is one minute remaining on the clock.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (4.56 pm): Here we are in the last sitting week for the year with all of the important issues we have to debate in this House—

**Mrs Frecklington**: Like victims of crime.

**Mr WEIR**:—like victims of crime, cost of living, keeping people safe and trying to get people off ramps and into hospitals—but here we are debating this nonsense motion. I am a little bit amazed they would want to put 'cut' in the motion given what the federal government have just done to Queensland—what they have cut. In their last budget they cut every water project in Queensland. They cut the Urannah Dam, Hells Gates Dam and Emu Swamp Dam, and the water minister said earlier what a marvellous job they are doing. I beg to differ. As the member for Warrego has said, we have seen the work on the New England at Cabarlah has just been cut.

I see coal royalties mentioned in the motion. Last year in the budget there was \$15 billion in coal royalties. There is one minister on that side of the House who has wasted \$10 billion just on his own—

*(Time expired)*

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

**AYES, 50:**

**ALP, 50**—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.


**NOES, 32:**

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

## SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

### School Group Tour

 **Mr SPEAKER**: Honourable members, I wish to acknowledge that we have students, teachers and parents in the gallery from Burnett Heads State School in the electorate of Burnett. I hope you are enjoying Queensland parliament.

## MOTION

### Sunshine Coast

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (5.03 pm): I move—

That this House notes:

- (a) crime rates on the Sunshine Coast in the last year have increased, including a 29 per cent increase in the unlawful use of motor vehicles, a 27 per cent increase in other thefts and a 19 per cent increase in unlawful entry;
- (b) rents have increased on the Sunshine Coast by 62 per cent;
- (c) the Palaszczuk Labor government's secrecy around the site of a future desalination plant;
- (d) the decision by the federal Labor government to cut funding for the Mooloolah River Interchange;

- (e) the decision by the federal Labor government to delay funding for upgrades to Bribie Island Road;
- (f) the inaction by the Palaszczuk Labor government in delivering the Sunshine Coast heavy rail from Beerwah to Caloundra to Kawana to Maroochydore; and
- (g) the government's failure to protect the Pumicestone Passage.

and calls on the members for Caloundra, Nicklin and Pumicestone to explain to the people of their electorates why the Labor government has failed to ease the cost-of-living, health, housing, infrastructure and crime crises facing Queenslanders.


At a time of chaos and crisis with the cost of living, health, housing, infrastructure and crime, this Labor government's priorities are wrong and they are making things worse. This Labor government boasts about growth, but growth without timely infrastructure and services is causing hardship and pain that has seen record numbers of people living in tents, unable to pay their rent, or facing home invasions and car theft, congested roads and ambulance ramping at their local hospitals—all due to this government's wrong priorities and a failure to plan and deliver. All crises have a lead time. After nearly nine years of government, this Labor Premier and her cabinet cannot try and blame everything on COVID or the Ukraine war anymore. It just does not wash.

The chaos and crisis has happened under this Labor government's watch with unaccountable ministers—such as the Minister for Transport, Minister Bailey, who has blown billions of dollars—with no consequences for their jobs and who laugh it off as if it is not important to Queenslanders. Well, try telling that to someone whose rent has gone up 62 per cent in the last few years on the Sunshine Coast since this government took office. Try telling them that blowing budgets does not matter when ordinary Queenslanders and Sunshine Coast residents are paying through the nose and now too many are living in tents and are in housing distress. The hikes in rent due to a housing supply shortage and disastrously low rental vacancies of less than one per cent are due to a lack of housing supply and a government that simply did not pay attention and dropped the ball—multiple failures that are now causing great hardship. There are many areas of failure and hardship that we see as a result of this government. Minister Bailey has not been held to account by the Premier—he is untouchable—yet this is a Premier who is out of touch. If she cannot hold her cabinet to account to deliver the services and infrastructure needed, then how on earth can she solve the problems that we are seeing?

Try telling people on the Sunshine Coast who have suffered injury or lost loved ones at the black spot on the Mooloolah River Interchange and the Sunshine Motorway-Nicklin Way interchange where the upgrade is now on the chopping block due to Labor cuts. Try telling someone in the Sunshine Coast hinterland that these things do not matter when their house is invaded, who are worrying about whether their children will be safe to sleep in their own beds at night, who have lost more than just their work vehicle; they have lost their peace and ability to feel safe in their own homes.

Try telling people that the way that this government has mismanaged infrastructure does not really matter when people want to see true legacy projects from the Olympics such as rail to Maroochydore CBD at the heart of the Sunshine Coast with passenger rail connected to the South-East Queensland transport network and Brisbane, but we have only heard more delays and excuses from this government that has not got on board, yet it was silent when there were cuts looming with the freeze with its federal colleagues. Now the cuts have happened, it has failed to go in to fight in a timely way. It has let them down. The chaos and crisis has happened on its watch.

We also see people stuck in traffic, facing injury at black spots and a government that has failed to invest in a timely way to address these issues, yet when it comes to the Gabba knock-down and rebuild there has been a huge cost blowout from a \$1 billion build to a \$2.7 billion build and still we do not know what the upper limit is. This government will not be held to account. Where are the members for Nicklin, Caloundra and Pumicestone when there has been these Labor cuts to critical infrastructure on the Sunshine Coast? Like their colleagues in the ministry, they have been silent because they have the wrong priorities. They are not fighting for Queensland and they are not listening to the people. Queensland deserves a brighter future with the right priorities and the LNP is committed to making our communities safer, having easier access to health services, saving people pain for Labor's failures, securing our housing foundations and working harder for Queenslanders. Show Labor the door in 2024.

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (5.08 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'rates' be omitted and the following inserted:

are published online for all of Queensland including the Sunshine Coast;

- (b) rental increases are occurring across the country, including the Sunshine Coast and the Palaszczuk government is delivering record investment in housing and rental reform and support measures;

- (c) the Palaszczuk government's record Big Build program is supporting projects across Queensland, including on the Sunshine Coast;
- (d) that there has been no location confirmed for a future desal plant, but it will not be on Bribie Island;
- (e) the decision by the federal government to cut funding for key projects—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, members! Order! Pause the clock. As I have done every other sitting week when we are having this type of motion, I want to be able to hear the amendment in silence.

**Mr RYAN:** As I was saying—

- (e) the decision by the federal government to cut funding for key projects in Queensland;
- (f) the continued advocacy of all members including Caloundra, Nicklin and Pumicestone for their communities; and

commends the Palaszczuk government on record investment in frontline services and programs such as:


1. \$1.6 billion over the next year in new cost of living measures;
2. \$25.8 billion investment in our health system in this year's budget;
3. \$5 billion investment in housing projects in this year's budget;
4. \$89 billion investment in our Big Build program in this year's budget; and
5. \$446.4 million investment to boost police resources and support community safety.

'Federal and state LNP MPs have been lazy and have delivered nothing for the Sunshine Coast.' That is not a reflection attributable to me. That is what Mayor Mark Jamieson of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council thinks of those LNP state and federal MPs on the Sunshine Coast. One does not have to be too clever to reach the same conclusion when one sees how long they have been in those seats and how little they have delivered. They are lazy. They deliver nothing for the Sunshine Coast. I know the Sunshine Coast pretty well. My parents live there. It is a place I have grown up around. They live in the electorate of Caloundra and they think the member for Caloundra is the most exceptional member for Caloundra this parliament has ever seen. They know the member for Nicklin and they know that the member for Nicklin is an exceptional member. They know the member for Pumicestone and they know that she is an exceptional member. Why? Because they deliver for their communities. They deliver for the Sunshine Coast.

One does not have to look too far to see some of their achievements. The member for Caloundra, for instance, has been in this parliament for only three years and is already delivering critical infrastructure from my portfolio area for the Sunshine Coast. There is a commitment for a new fire station at Beerwah. There is construction underway on a new Caloundra South fire station. There is construction underway on a new police station at Caloundra South. There are commitments to deliver mobile police beats across the Sunshine Coast, including some already delivered. There is also a great foundation of previous delivery by this government for new stations at Coolumb and Nambour in the electorate of Nicklin.

In the electorate of Pumicestone there is a commitment to continue to roll out investment in critical infrastructure, there are mobile police beats coming, the major station—Caboolture station—and Caboolture watch house are receiving significant upgrades, and there is a new PCYC for Caboolture which the member for Pumicestone has championed. There is a very clear record of delivery because these members care about the Sunshine Coast. They care about their communities and they are not, to borrow the words of Mayor Jamieson, lazy members who do nothing for the Sunshine Coast, like those opposite.

We have a clear commitment to all communities across the state. It is manifest in the delivery of programs, infrastructure and services on the Sunshine Coast. It is a clear record of delivery and a record that is supporting those communities on the Sunshine Coast, many of which are rapidly growing communities that rely on Labor governments to deliver the services and infrastructure they need to support their families. Our record is very clear. The record of those opposite is also very clear: it is one of being lazy, doing nothing and delivering nothing for the Sunshine Coast.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (5.14 pm): It gives me pleasure to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore and to follow the worst police minister in history.

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

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): The level of interjection is so high that I doubt Hansard can hear the contribution from the member for Nanango, which is quite an achievement even for this chamber. You have a point of order?

**Mr RYAN:** I take personal offence and I ask that the member withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I withdraw. This minister has presided over some of the highest crime rates the Sunshine Coast has ever seen, yet the minister stands here saying that Labor is doing everything for the Sunshine Coast. Where is the heavy rail? Where has the Labor government been when it comes to infrastructure on the Sunshine Coast? When talking about the crises that are happening all across Queensland, the police minister says that he knows the Sunshine Coast because his parents live there. I am pretty sure his parents are saying, 'Come on, mate. Let's get with it.'

**Mr RYAN:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There has been some previous commentary, I think by you when you were Acting Speaker, around the appropriateness of members reflecting on family members of MPs.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I will hear the point of order in silence.

**Mr RYAN:** I am referring to a statement that you made previously, but also I take offence at the member's remarks and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will take some advice. I will take it in silence. Firstly, in relation to the commentary—and I believe it was commentary and not a ruling about the parliamentary nature of referring to family members—I would stand by that, but it is obviously the position of the Speaker to rule formally in relation to matters of that nature. I do think it is an area that we have to be careful does not tread into potentially unparliamentary behaviour. In any case, you have taken personal offence. I would ask the member to withdraw.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I withdraw. I cannot wait to talk to my husband, Jason, tonight and remind him of each and every minister who drags him into these debates whenever they feel like it! Don't you worry about that. I cannot wait to tell my husband that the Labor government are allowed to besmirch my husband—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members, there is an extreme amount of interjection. I realise that the subject matter is very personal for people here. That is why in the past I have said that this is an area that we should try to avoid. I do not believe it is parliamentary. I will start to warn people if the level of interjections continue.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** This is a government that is consistently more concerned with personal attacks than it is with fixing the problems of the state. We had to postpone debate of the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill so that they could waste an hour or two.

Let's talk about the desalination plant. The police minister raised the desalination plant. What is this government saying about a desalination plant? The government—without any business case and with no money, no budget and no plan for a desalination plant—has started announcing where the desalination plant is going to be. First it was going to be in the electorate of Pumicestone, on Bribie Island. Then the factional warfare started. The Premier said it might be there. The water minister said it might be on Bribie Island. Now the Deputy Premier has come out and said it is not going to be on Bribie Island.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.


**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Sandgate and member for Toowoomba North, you are both warned.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** That brings us to today in the parliament. The water minister was asked about the location of the 'no business case, no plan, no budget' desalination plant for South-East Queensland. But having no budget, no plan and no business case, they know where it is. Who in the Palaszczuk government announced the latest plan for where the desalination plant will be? It was the Premier of Queensland. The Premier of Queensland—in spectacular scenes, I must say—gave confirmation of where the desalination plant will be. It will be in Kawana.

Then the Premier tried to talk herself out of Kawana. She said, 'It mightn't be in Kawana; it's likely to be in Kawana.' Which is it? We know there is no business case. This is the last sitting week of the year. When the Labor government decides to come off holidays and return to this chamber in early February next year, I bet they will say that the desalination plant will be in Caloundra. I am quite sure that they will say it will be in Caloundra. They think they have saved the member for Pumicestone, but still we do not trust the Labor government because the member could be in the wrong faction. The electorate of the member for Kawana is still the most likely place because the Palaszczuk government will go, 'Hang on a minute. We need to save the member for Caloundra.' And trust me, he needs saving on the sunny coast.

That is exactly why Kendall Morton is standing up to fight for the Sunshine Coast. Kendall Morton is fighting for Caloundra. She is standing up to fight for the turtles of Kawana and Caloundra. Now that the Premier has confirmed the 'no plan, no money, no business case' desalination plant for the Kawana electorate, the questions remain for locals: where will it be, where is the community consultation and, for goodness sake, when will the Premier announce details around the spending of \$8 billion of taxpayers' money? This is exactly why we need Queenslanders to show Labor the door in '24.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (5.21 pm): What a sad and desperate contribution from the member for Nanango. I rise in support of the motion as amended by the member for Morayfield. As originally drafted, this motion is nothing more than one big own goal from the LNP. For a start, whoever thought that Pumicestone was on the Sunshine Coast?

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member for Buderim, you are warned.

**Ms KING:** The people of Pumicestone would be very surprised to hear it described as such. The people of Pumicestone know that they do not live on the Sunshine Coast. They also know that it is only Labor that invests in health and only Labor that builds hospitals. We backed our community with a massive \$399 million redevelopment of the Caboolture Hospital. The hospital has been doubled in size and can offer a whole range of new services. There is a new emergency department, a new paediatric emergency department and new cardiac care services, which were all desperately needed. What did the LNP say about our massive expansion of the Caboolture Hospital when they were last campaigning in 2017? They said that it was a stunt. They said that it was not needed. The Leader of the Opposition should bring his woeful spokesperson for health up to Caboolture and go door to door to tell my constituents that their amazing new hospital is a stunt and is not needed. It is only Labor that invests in health services in Pumicestone and right across Queensland.

Building hospitals is not a part of their right-wing priorities and satellite hospitals are missing from their dodgy dot points. The Leader of the Opposition needs to finally stand up and outline his plans. Will he cut chemo from our satellite hospital? Will he privatise our satellite hospital? The LNP are on the record as saying that the funding to build the Bribie Island Satellite Hospital should have been spent on building a private hospital instead. That is what they back when it comes to health care. They want to privatise. They want to build a private hospital. The LNP vandalised health care in Pumicestone when they marched 732 local nurses out the door. They took a hatchet to health services. The only time we see the LNP in Pumicestone is when they blow in, attack our hospitals, attack our health workers, spread their fake news and then blow out again—back to Glass House in most cases.

They have a hide talking about roads in Pumicestone. Let us remember that, when they were last in government, the LNP cut \$13.6 million from the Bribie Island Road. Queenslanders do not forget that the LNP slashed \$1.6 billion from Queensland's roads budget and they sacked 700 RoadTek workers. That is what they stand for and what a contrast that is with Labor. In Pumicestone, the concept designs for the next Bribie Island bridge will soon be coming up for community feedback. Beachmere Road is getting a start-to-finish upgrade, which is four times the upgrade proposed by the LNP.

**Mr Head** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Resume your seat, please, member. Member for Callide, I cannot see you but I can hear you. You are warned under the standing orders.


**Ms KING:** We have not one, not two, not three but four separate upgrades to the Bribie Island Road underway right now. When in government, the LNP did not start one upgrade to the Bribie Island Road. In his very first presser as Leader of the Opposition, the member for Broadwater axed his support for a new Bribie Island bridge and he shrunk before our very eyes. Now the LNP are pretending that there have been cuts to the Bribie Island Road. I will stand up for my community every day of the week



against the federal government if that is what is required, but the Bribie Island Road project got \$9 million extra under the federal infrastructure review. The LNP is spreading fake news about fake cuts.

The people of Pumicestone are not stupid. They know fake news from the LNP when they see it and hear it and when it lands in their letterboxes and on their social media feeds. They know that the only time we see the LNP in Pumicestone is when they are trying to scam people out of their vote, like they are doing with their dodgy desalination plant scare campaign. The minister ruled it out and the Deputy Premier ruled it out because Bribie Island just does not stack up for a desalination plant, neither environmentally nor financially. We are an awfully long way from the water grid. The LNP has a hide spreading their fake news about a desalination plant on Bribie Island because in 2009 they backed a desalination plant on Bribie Island. They wanted to see a 125-megalitre desalination plant on Bribie Island.

The LNP are bad news for Pumicestone. They cannot deliver roads and they are a disaster on health. All they deliver is fake news pamphlets and dodgy dot points. The Leader of the Opposition is nothing more than an empty vessel. He has no plans, no leadership and nothing to offer Queenslanders except cuts. I will back our government's record and my record in Pumicestone delivering for our community every day of the week against that of the LNP. The people of Pumicestone know that the LNP only stand for cuts.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.26 pm): Christmas has come early because I get to follow the member for Pumicestone in this debate tonight. Those who reside on the Sunshine Coast and in the northern Moreton Bay region truly hoped that 2023 would have been a better year and that finally the Palaszczuk government would start listening and addressing the health, housing, cost-of-living and crime crises that are gripping our state. However, the end of the year is near and we are ending it disappointed and worse off than ever before. Again we see that the Labor government will do and say anything before an election to hang on to power. They are more concerned about their own political futures than the futures and the livelihoods of Queenslanders. I will use three examples.

In May 2021, the federal coalition government announced in their budget a \$10 million contribution towards the Bribie Island Road upgrade between Hickey Road and King John Creek. I point out that Bribie Island Road is a 100 per cent state road. The federal government did not need to chip in at all but, because of the strong advocacy of the member for Longman, my good friend Terry Young, they did. Instead of gratitude, what did we hear from the member for Pumicestone? Nothing but complaints that the funding would not arrive until the 2023-24 financial year.

Let us roll on to 20 January 2022. The now federal infrastructure minister, then the shadow minister, Catherine King, announced that an Albanese government would bring forward that funding. She said—

Under an Albanese government, I will get straight to work delivering this project now, not years down the line.

That announcement was lauded by the member for Pumicestone at the time. Members will remember what I said about the government saying and doing anything in the lead-up to an election. It is now the 2023-24 financial year. Has the project finished? It has not even started!

In April of this year, that same federal minister, Catherine King, announced a review of the infrastructure pipeline and the projects that the federal government had committed to funding. Just this month we heard from Catherine King on the outcome of that so-called 90-day review. Sure, the Bribie Island Road project has not been cut in the same way that the Mooloolah River Interchange has, but will it start this financial year? No! In fact, they are only rolling out \$1 million of the \$10 million to do the planning. The planning has not even started. That is a broken election commitment. Before an election they will do and say anything to win that election because they are more focused on their own political futures than the futures and the livelihoods of Queenslanders.

Let me move on to something else, a bit like the member for Pumicestone did when she spruiked a hospital for Bribie Island that would be delivered by May 2023. There is no hospital yet.

**Ms King** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, member!


**Ms King** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: The member for Pumicestone is warned.

**Mr POWELL:** When it does arrive, it will not be a 'hospital'. The people of Bribie Island were promised a hospital by the member for Pumicestone but, instead, they are getting a multipurpose medical centre—no emergency department, no 24-hour care, no overnight beds and very limited services. The promised Bribie Island Satellite Hospital is little more than a clinic. Again, the member for Pumicestone and the Palaszczuk Labor government will do and say anything to win an election, because they are more focused on their political future than the future and livelihood of Queenslanders.

This brings me to my third example—I thank the member for Nanango for her contribution—which is the desalinisation plant. Thanks to the people of Bribie Island, the government was forced to rule out the island as the site for South-East Queensland's desalinisation plant. Have members noticed the language? Even in the motion tonight, it is only 'Bribie Island'. They have not mentioned Sandstone Point, Beachmere, Toorbul, Donnybrook or Ningi. There are plenty of other sites in Pumicestone for this desalinisation plant. I love the language the member for Pumicestone uses: 'As your local MP I will never allow a desalinisation plant on Bribie Island.' Remember her track record on Bribie Island Road and the Bribie Island Satellite Hospital? I am sorry, but the member for Pumicestone and the Palaszczuk Labor government will do and say anything to win an election because they are more focused on their political future than the future and livelihood of Queenslanders.

It is quite simple: whether it is Bribie Island Road, the satellite hospital or the desalinisation plant, you cannot trust the Palaszczuk Labor government or the member for Pumicestone. The only way our region can get the infrastructure it desperately needs, the health services we desperately deserve and for there to be no desalinisation plant in Pumicestone is to show Labor the door in 2024.

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (5.31 pm): I am delighted to talk in support of the amendment. I am particularly delighted to talk about the member for Maroochydore's reflection on the Sunshine Coast's crime rate. If we go to Queensland police MyGov data, according to our police the overall crime rate on the Sunshine Coast in 2014, in the last year of the LNP 'reign of terror', was 6,657 offences per 100,000 people. This year, the overall crime rate is 5,527 offences per 100,000 people. It is actually lower.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, members!

**Mr HUNT:** We know that, if confronted by the facts, those opposite will shriek that somehow the facts themselves are magically denying the problem. In Maroochydore, for example, the overall crime rate in 2014 was 9,264 offences per 100,000 people. As at 2023, it is 6,328 offences per 100,000 people. It is lower by almost a third. With this government, thanks to the outstanding efforts of our local police and our TMR staff, we have installed five ANPR cameras around the Sunshine Coast and, as we speak, our brand new—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr HUNT:** That is why it is calculated per capita.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Comments will come through the chair.

**Mr HUNT:** As we speak, our brand new, state-of-the-art police station in Caloundra South is being built and it will include 30 extra police. Compare that to the LNP, who are almost unique in Australia. They decreased community safety by marching back laws around child sex offenders. That is their community safety legacy! A purloined Peugeot sends them into fits of fake outrage, but they were not worried at all about tracking paedophiles last time they were in government. Talk about priorities!

In the same way, they are intent on making up stories about desalinisation plants. Then I wondered: what other type of facility needs to be located on the coast for access to water? It is nuclear reactors. We have the federal LNP member for Fairfax on the Sunshine Coast radiating enthusiasm for a reactor on the coast. In an article titled 'Time to Talk Nuclear', he went to Hiroshima to talk about how great and safe nuclear reactors are—Hiroshima! If we are talking about being open about large coastal facilities, let's hear from the LNP members for Kawana, Maroochydore and Ninderry. Where do you want the nukes? Buderim and Glass House are okay—they are on high ground. All they have to do is worry about fallout. Where do you want the nuclear reactors?

That brings us to passenger rail. This government is the only state government to have spent money—in the millions—around a business case for passenger rail. When they were last in government, every Sunshine Coast LNP member bar Nicklin was an LNP cabinet minister, and they contributed not one red cent to passenger rail. They spent more money on their dodgy confluents demanding passenger rail than they actually spent on passenger rail! This government is advancing the business case, as is the necessary next step.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr HUNT:** I will take that interjection from the member for Buderim. I am actually quoting the member for Fairfax when I say the 'necessary next step'. This government built the mighty Bells Creek arterial. This government is continuing with rail duplication while the state LNP has delivered precisely nothing. The last major LNP road project in my electorate was the Nicklin Way extension, completed by Mike Ahern and gazetted in 1977—46 years ago. Some of your leadership team were not even born! Housing supply is what helps with rent, and this government is delivering new social housing builds in Caloundra, Beerwah and Yandina—compared to the LNP, who delivered how many new commencements in 2013-14?


**Mr Madden:** How many?

**Mr HUNT:** I am glad you asked—zero. What do our federal LNP members have to say about spending on housing? Andrew Wallace, the Liberal member for Fisher, reckons now is not the time. The member for Pumicestone and I have secured full-time maritime safety enforcement officers for the Pumicestone Passage. We have had the navigation markers realigned and we have had the speed limit halved, from 40 knots to 20 knots. We have made real progress and we will protect the Nirimba State School from the LNP cuts of \$15 million.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Before I call the next speaker, member for Kawana, you used some unparliamentary language. Your honesty was very parliamentary, but I will still ask you to withdraw.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (5.36 pm): I rise to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Maroochydore. It is interesting to follow the member for Caloundra, who talked about statistics. I would like to know where he got those statistics from, because one thing the people of Caloundra and the Sunshine Coast do know is that there are more victims now than ever before. I would like to see this member go to his community and talk to victims about how crime is down. We know that under this government, with this member for Caloundra and the member for Nicklin, in the past 12 months you were more likely to have your car stolen in Caloundra, Nicklin and across the Sunshine Coast, with unlawful use of a motor vehicle up 29 per cent. You were more likely over the last 12 months in Nicklin and Caloundra to have had your house broken into, with unlawful entry up over 25 per cent. You were more likely to have your property stolen in Caloundra or Nicklin than you were 12 months ago, with theft up 19 per cent.

The member for Caloundra wants to talk about statistics per capita. What is down is the number of police officers on the Sunshine Coast. We know that Nambour—I will be interested to hear what the member for Nicklin has to say about this shortly—has a full strength of 31 police officers, and it has for an awfully long time. Today and for some time now they have been operating at 24 police officers—a decrease of about 25 per cent, equivalent to the 25 per cent increase in crime across the Sunshine Coast.

Kenilworth has its own police station and has had a full-time police presence for some time now, but how many police officers are at Kenilworth at the moment? Zero. There are zero police at Kenilworth. It has no police presence. The big issue that I want to explain to members in this place—it is not just that the people of Kenilworth, Imbil and the surrounding suburbs in the seat of Nicklin do not have a full-time police presence—is that it is being covered by the police and staff at Nambour, which we already know is down 25 per cent. A quick Google Maps search shows that it is a 35-minute drive from Nambour to Kenilworth. It takes over an hour for Nambour police to get there and back. We know from their roster that they are struggling to man even one patrol crew every shift, but they are also covering Kenilworth.

What is the member for Nicklin doing about it? I want to know what he is doing about it. I can tell members what he is doing about it. He has a petition. He has a petition calling to restore a permanent police presence at Kenilworth—a member of this government. We heard from the police minister lauding the results and the work they are doing locally, but the local member has a petition. He has asked the community to support his calls to restore a permanent police presence at Kenilworth. That is what he is doing. They are the true statistics.

We know on this side that crime is out of control on the Sunshine Coast as it is across Queensland. We also know that one of the biggest drivers of cost of living on the Sunshine Coast and in Queensland is crime. Not only do mums and dads, families and family businesses have to pay their insurance premiums, which are going up; they also have to pay for broken windows to be replaced, for the gap between what their insurance will pay—

**Mr Boothman:** The excess.


**Mr PURDIE:** Yes, the excess. They also have to pay for CCTV cameras. I was alarmed recently when in October I went to the Nambour RSL where the Sundale Community Foundation—a great foundation that raises money and gives it back to the community—handed out \$68,000 in grants and one of those grants was to Meals on Wheels. Every member of this House knows the amazing work Meals on Wheels do with the little that they have. On a shoestring budget they feed the elderly and the most vulnerable in my electorate.

**Mr Krause:** What was the grant?

**Mr PURDIE:** The amount of \$2,200 from the Sundale Community Foundation was given to Meals on Wheels. When Meals on Wheels came up to accept the cheque, they said, 'We put in for this grant because we need better security. We need CCTV footage because we are becoming victims of crime and our staff are fearful when they leave work.' What have we come to in Nicklin on the Sunshine Coast—one of the most beautiful places in Australia—when the volunteers at Meals on Wheels who should be putting in for a grant for more money to feed the vulnerable and the elderly in the community are putting in for a grant to improve security—\$2,200.

**An opposition member:** Shameful.

**Mr PURDIE:** It is a shame. I wanted to talk about the motorway and some other things, but I want to finish on a positive note. This might be the last chance I get to stand on my feet this year in parliament. I want to give the people of Nicklin, Caloundra and the Sunshine Coast hope, because in less than a year they can exercise their democratic right to ensure that they get back Marty Hunt and show Labor the door in 2024!

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (5.41 pm): I rise in support of the government's amended motion. I want to address some of the things that the member for Ninderry said in his contribution. As far as Meals on Wheels in Nambour are concerned, they received a huge grant from the state government this year to increase their infrastructure. As far as the petition for Kenilworth and Imbil is concerned, it is community generated. The community want them back. There are some complexities around that issue because they have a specific police officer in mind. I am not going to go into those details, because it is not for me to say.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr SKELTON:** No. I take that interjection from the member for Broadwater. It is an internal police matter. It is a legal matter—you know, you do not interfere.

Crime rates have been steadily decreasing over the past five years on the Sunshine Coast thanks in large part to the Palaszczuk government's crackdown on serious crime and repeat offenders. In Nicklin, the QPS have presided over a sustained reduction in crime with the community, and I have consistently lobbied the Queensland Police Service for regular patrols and mobile police beats, which are now both commonplace in the electorate.

Last year we opened a brand new police station and we have another one underway at Cooroy. The staffing issues involving the Queensland police are to do with long-term sick leave and other such things—which a former member should know that these positions cannot be filled against. Again, I will not comment anymore on that.

Just this morning we have announced another 1,450 police officers are being added to police stations across Queensland. This comes in addition to the record \$3.28 billion we already invested into policing services in the 2023-24 budget.

Furthermore, the Sunshine Coast police have announced today that they are taking coordinated action to enhance safety over the Christmas period, with high-visibility operations focused on high-risk locations like shopping centres, public parks and transport hubs. We have invested another \$56 million statewide into PCYCs, including \$2 million to the Sunshine Coast PCYC in my electorate. This means more Project Booyah and more breaking the cycle which is excellent.

Youth crime prevention is a central focus of the government and we are investing \$450 million over five years to tackle youth crime. This includes high-visibility police controls, a youth crime rapid response squad, youth co-responder teams, additional early action groups and police liaison officers. In January we passed Jack's Law, which expanded wandering powers to all safe night precincts and transport hubs, and network safety officers are patrolling the buses and trains in the electorate. We have strengthened all our laws to boost punishments for anyone committing crime.

We know that rental increases are occurring across the country. That is why the government is delivering record investment in housing. We have introduced laws to restrict rent rises to once per year. These are cost-of-living measures.


We are building and unlocking more homes with the help of the government's Housing Investment Fund including at Yandina, where we opened 26 new social housing units in partnership with Coast2Bay, and at Nambour, where we have delivered social housing including \$1.4 million for safe and secure housing for up to 21 at-risk young people at a time—that is, supported housing. On the wider Sunshine Coast, we are buying up the properties under the old NRAS scheme to keep unlocking supply. This all contributes to relief on cost-of-living pressures.

When it comes to infrastructure, we have delivered the \$300 million Maroochydore-Mons Road interchange. We have opened the Nambour station park-and-ride, adding another 50 parking spaces at the Nambour station and a footpath for pedestrians. We are disappointed with the federal government. There can be no doubt about that. The member for Caloundra and I have made innumerable representations to the minister's office as well as their staff from the outset—as soon as they got into government. Unfortunately, they have to make some cuts because of the tremendous deficit left by the government before them.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SKELTON:** They will not borrow. They are happy to make some cuts. When it comes to cost of living, we are all over the Climate Smart Energy Savers rebate and pensioner concession cards that will save them money. I ask all MPs to assist their small businesses and pensioners to get the rebates they deserve. It is an excellent program and contributes significantly to lowering their cost of living. It is up to all members to make sure people know about Free Kindy and what that brings to the table. There are so many cost-of-living savings delivered by this government. It is not some rolled gold magical mystery tour that those opposite present.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (5.46 pm): That from the member for Nicklin—the man whose slogan is 'Robbo gets things done'! With passionate advocacy like that, is there any doubt that Nambour is on its knees? I give points to member for Nicklin for trying, but I think it was Abraham Lincoln who said, 'Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak and remove all doubt.' To quote another famous Australian, 'I won't comment on that anymore.'

Our Sunshine Coast community is rightly outraged over Labor's funding cuts to the critical Mooloolah River Interchange project. They are outraged. Now that Labor's federal mates have cut their funding, residents want to see a commitment from the state government to make up that shortfall so work can start.

Ask any local and they will tell you that the section of the Sunshine Motorway at Mountain Creek—which was to be upgraded to stage 1—is one of the worst in the state for crashes and traffic congestion. Mountain Creek locals live every single day with the impact of road noise and sirens and of congestion and accidents on the Sunshine Motorway. In fact, I did a press conference just the other day with the member for Caloundra to talk about traffic and on the way there I got stuck in traffic at the single-lane section of the Sunshine Motorway. Traffic slows to a crawl day in day out. What have we heard from the Labor members in the member for Caloundra and the member for Nicklin? Nothing.

The state government's own business case for the Mooloolah River Interchange shows that the project will deliver \$4 of benefit for every \$1 spent and that the Sunshine Coast community will save more than \$2.8 billion in reduced travel times and operating costs—but Labor have cut the project. Yet they are funding a project in the form of Logan to Gold Coast Faster Rail where the business case says it will only deliver 62 cents for every \$1 spent and, I might add, that is calculated on the \$2.44 billion project cost, not the \$3.1 billion blowout announced yesterday.

You have to ask the question: why does Labor hate the Sunshine Coast and why are Labor members like the member for Nicklin and the member for Caloundra silent while our community suffers? Our community is suffering. Our community cannot wait any longer. The congestion and safety risks are only going to get worse. The state government need to step up to the mark, show that they are committed to the Sunshine Coast and reverse their Labor mates' cuts on the Mooloolah River Interchange and on heavy passenger rail through to Maroochydore.

The member for Nicklin and the member for Caloundra both love nodding along when Minister Bailey blows in to make an announcement, but they both go missing in action when the going gets tough. They have both been missing as the federal government has taken the axe to critical projects


on the Sunshine Coast—heavy passenger rail to Maroochydore and the Mooloolah River Interchange—and they remain silent still. The member for Nicklin even stands silent in relation to delivering on Labor's own promise to duplicate the rail line through to Landsborough. Labor committed to that in 2018 and we still have not seen any progress. It does not bode well for heavy passenger rail to Maroochydore, which I reckon is on about its 50th business case or review. Labor promised that back in May 2007. They said it would be built all the way to Caloundra by 2015—nothing; Maroochydore by 2020—nothing. Work never started. It was another hollow Labor promise. There is a pattern here.

Only a Crisafulli LNP government will deliver for the Sunshine Coast. In Marty Hunt, Kendall Morton and Clare Stewart the Sunshine Coast will have the tireless community advocates we deserve—members who will fight for the Sunshine Coast, not aimless plodders who will nod along behind incompetent Labor ministers like Minister Mark Bailey, who has presided over a generation of failure and countless blowouts. It is the Sunshine Coast that misses out because of those blowouts, and it is because aimless plodders like the member for Nicklin stand there and nod along. They do not want to take up their fight to incompetent ministers. I will not hold them to account for the failures of Mark Bailey, but I will hold them to account for not fighting for their communities.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Use correct titles, please.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** I will not hold them to account for the failures of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the Premier, but they should be fighting for their communities and they are not. We need a member for Nicklin who will stand and fight for the community—a member for like Nicklin like Marty Hunt. We do not need a member for Nicklin who, three years into the job, is still not trusted to do a press conference on his own. Who can really blame the Premier? We have seen his social media indiscretions, his drunken estimate escapades and his penchant for abusing his constituents, but he remains silent on the big issues affecting the Sunshine Coast. In a year's time the LNP will demonstrate that we have the right priorities for Queensland's future, and it will be time for Nicklin to show Robbo the door in '24!

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Before I call the next speaker I am just taking some advice.

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (5.52 pm): What a wonderful last two hours of democracy we have just had. It is fantastic! I am in a joyous mood because it is Christmas. Christmas is around the corner, and of course Christmas is a time of giving to good people. That is exactly what the Palaszczuk Labor government does: we give to the people. We make sure that we are looking after the pensioners, looking after the battlers and looking after the workers. It does not matter which Queensland household you live in, you are getting a rebate on your electricity bill because that is what good governments do. We make sure that we maintain the poles and the wires. The big coal companies take what they want out of Queensland's earth, but we make sure it goes back into the pockets of Queenslanders: \$550 for every single Queensland household, and if you are a pensioner or concession cardholder you will get \$1,072 across the financial year. This good Labor government is looking after the good people of Queensland because that is what good governments do. In fact, we have even extended that to our appliance rebate. Our appliance rebate, which has been outstanding, has seen a huge uptake. It is not only encouraging people to get more energy efficient appliances to get a cheaper power bill and get money back in their pocket; it is also great for local retailers because local retailers then support jobs.

I have some wonderful stats. The opposition motion mentioned the Sunshine Coast and the Pumicestone electorate, so I have some local government data on our appliance rebate. As of Monday just gone, on the Sunshine Coast there were over 3,000 approved rebates for \$1.5 million. How fantastic is that! In Noosa there were 446 approved appliances for over \$200,000. In Moreton Bay there were 4,346 approved rebates for a whopping \$1.9 million. How fantastic is that! That is money going back into the pockets of Queenslanders. That means they can ensure they have a good Christmas coming up. In Bundaberg there were over 1,300, and I think almost all of them have come through my office—I do want to thank my office for their wonderful work helping people—over \$600,000 worth of rebates went back to the battlers of Bundy. That is what we do. We make sure we back the people of Bundaberg.


What do we know about the LNP's plan for the cost of living? I am not going to raise it as a prop, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will keep it here. We have half a page of cost of living. The first half of that half page just talks about the Labor government, so I will halve that. When we actually get to their policy we have half of a half of a page of cost of living. There we are: that is the LNP's cost-of-living plan—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Member, you are warned. You said you were not going to use it as a prop and then you used it as a prop.

**Mr SMITH:** What else do we know about our plan for Queenslanders? This opposition motion talks about health, so let's have a chat about health. Our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan is delivering an extra \$9 billion in terms of infrastructure and builds. We are making sure that we are getting additional funding for an extra 2,509 beds on top of the 869 beds we are already delivering. In fact, we are making sure that we deliver on health staff as well. Since 2015 we have delivered over 10,600 nurses, more than 3,000 doctors, more than 1,000 ambos and more than 2,400 allied health professionals. We are making sure that we deliver for health care. What do we know about the LNP? We know that we have to halve their policy and then we have to halve that again. Do not worry, Mr Deputy Speaker, I will not present it. I do know that half of a half of a page is their plan and their policy.

What else do we know? We know that when we print out the member for Burnett's Facebook comments we can fill the page when he says 'break the back of unrealistic employee entitlements'. That is what the LNP stands for. Look at the member for Burnett! He is embarrassed because not only does he want to cut the wages of health workers; he accuses them of deliberately overdosing and killing patients. That is why nurses in the Bundaberg Hospital come to me and say, 'Tom, keep fighting for us against the member for Burnett, because we don't like the accusations and being called killers. We don't like the member for Burnett accusing us of being murderers. We just want to help people.' They do not want their entitlements cut, they do not want their wages cut, and they definitely do not want the member for Burnett anywhere near their hospital grounds because he accuses them of criminal acts time and time again. That is what the LNP stands for. Look at the rabble! The member for Burnett should hang his head in shame day after day, because when LNP donors come to me and say, 'Tom, keeping giving it to the member for Burnett,' I will every day.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.57 pm): The honourable member wants to know what we know. Well, I will tell you what we know: Bree Watson is coming for that member. She will bring dignity to this place and represent the people of Bundaberg, who have sadly been lacking in good representation for a few years just like the people of Caloundra have been lacking in good representation, as too the people of Pumicestone and Nicklin, which I will get to in a minute.

Let's start with the Palaszczuk government. They promised the world to the Sunshine Coast. The Sunshine Coast community thought, 'Wow, we might have some Labor members of government. The Labor government got re-elected. All things will flow to the Sunshine Coast.' Hasn't that been a great disappointment! This Labor government has delivered nothing for the Sunshine Coast. These Labor members have delivered nothing. They have sat on a fence that has grown so big because on every issue on the Sunshine Coast they have been sitting on it. The very first commitment the member for Caloundra made was to build a jail on Bowman Road in the tourist destination of Caloundra. He supported a youth jail, he wanted a youth jail and he advocated for a youth jail. I did the RTI. I saw the correspondence between him and the ministers. It was not until the member for Ninderry, the Caloundra community and I stood up against the Labor member for Caloundra and said 'no way' to Labor's jail in Caloundra that he backtracked.

He said, 'I never wanted a youth detention centre.' Rubbish. He spent a million dollars of taxpayer money on the Caloundra jail. I say to the Caloundra people: if the Labor government get re-elected in 2024, the youth jail is coming to Caloundra. He wants it. Whether he wants it for a future job opportunity, I do not know, but he wants it. The people of Caloundra do not want the youth jail. It is a tourist destination but he has campaigned for it. The member for Caloundra has sat silently as people in Shelly Beach have come to my office about Caloundra House. They have gone to the member for Caloundra about crime in the area, destruction and neighbourhood breakdown in Shelly Beach. He has said absolutely nothing. They are coming to the Kawana electorate office because they are not getting the service from the member for Caloundra.

Do you know who they are going to now? I will tell you who they are going to: Kendall Morton. Oh, my god, Mr Deputy Speaker Kelly; are you ready for this? There is a level of excitement in Caloundra now when Kendall goes around to community events. She is now being introduced at community events as the LNP candidate for Caloundra. She is known in the Caloundra community more than the hopeless Labor member who has been in there for three years. Kendall Morton is going to make a terrific member for Caloundra. She is a fantastic listener, she is a businesswoman, and she is going to make a fantastic contribution for the people of Caloundra. She will not sit on the issues that the current member for Caloundra has been doing as he wants to just sail back into office. Public office is not that easy.

The member for Caloundra has been silent on the Caloundra transport corridor—absolutely silent. When Minister Bailey came to the Sunshine Coast and issued a press release about the Caloundra road corridor, the member for Caloundra did not even go on the press release. He did not want to go on the press release. I have never seen it before where a backbencher in a government does not want to be advocating for a funded program—that the Labor government have just cut, I might add. The Labor Party have just cut from the Caloundra road project. They have also cut the Mooloolah River Interchange, where a huge safety upgrade is needed.

I was going to respond to the member for Pumicestone but I do not think anyone had any idea what she was talking about. The member for Caloundra was talking about crime like everything is good in Caloundra, like no-one should have any issues. I tell you what: when you have got unlawful use of a motor vehicle up 29 per cent on the Sunshine Coast, yes, people should be concerned. Unlawful entry—that is people breaking into people's homes—is up 19 per cent on the Sunshine Coast. Yes, member for Caloundra, people are concerned about this. Other thefts are up 27 per cent in the Sunshine Coast district. The member for Caloundra says, 'It's all good in Caloundra. It's all good. No problem.' That is not what the people of Caloundra are contacting my office about.

The Minister for Police says, 'I get feedback from my family members in Caloundra and it's all good in Caloundra.' That is as inexcusable as me saying, 'I bought three ducks years ago in Caboolture and I know all the local issues in Caboolture.' How ridiculous is the Minister for Police. Let us not even get to Minister Bailey. He says he is 'Bailey the Builder'. He is not; he is 'Bailey the Blunderer'.


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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): If your point of order is about correct titles, I will come to that.

**Mr BAILEY:** It is.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member, I remind you to use correct titles.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The people of Nicklin will have a chance to put Marty Hunt in there and he will be a great representative, as Clare Stewart will be in Noosa. Show Labor the door in '24.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (6.02 pm): The member for Kawana should never attempt falsetto in the Legislative Assembly. It is interesting to look at the LNP party room when he speaks. Two-thirds of them are disinterested, looking away, embarrassed, winking at other people. They are embarrassed that he is their No. 2. This is a sign of the weak leadership of the Leader of the Opposition. He thinks the second most talented member in the opposition is the member for Kawana. That is the view of the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Boothman** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, member for Theodore.

**Mr BAILEY:** It is not the view of any other member of the LNP party room.

**Dr Rowan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Moggill.

**Mr BAILEY:** We can tell this when we look at the faces over there when the member for Kawana speaks.

**Ms Pease** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Lytton.

**Mr BAILEY:** Most of them are embarrassed. Why would they be embarrassed? They are not just embarrassed about his style, which is ridiculous; they are embarrassed about his pathetic record as an MP on the Sunshine Coast.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Members, I have been calling for order repeatedly and I am being ignored while I am taking some advice. I will start to warn people.

**Mr BAILEY:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Rather than actually hear a debate, they try to scream down speeches and it is not acceptable.



Let me go to the embarrassing record of the member for Kawana and the other LNP members who were part of the Newman government when they had a record majority in this state. What did they do for the Sunshine Coast? Absolutely nothing. They did nothing. They cut everything on the Sunshine Coast, despite having entire membership. That is their record, and their vote has been going down ever since. This government has now got two very effective members in the member for Nicklin and the member for Kawana. Going down to Pumicestone, we have the member for Pumicestone who is a very effective member. They are people who stand up for their communities. We do not cut projects; we actually get things done.

**Mr Lister** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Southern Downs is warned.

**Mr BAILEY:** It is just embarrassing to see. We got nothing progressed on the Sunshine Coast on direct heavy line under successive LNP governments in Canberra. Now that we have a business case and we are actually getting close to completing that and getting a scope and a costing, suddenly they are the biggest converts. We know the LNP are supportive of a heavy rail project when they are in opposition; they never do it in government. They always cut. Cross River Rail was cut by the Leader of the Opposition, cut by the member for Kawana, cut by the member for Maroochydore.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Resume your seat, please, Minister. Member for Chatsworth, member for Moggill, member for Kawana, you are all warned under the standing orders.

**Mr BAILEY:** All they have got to offer after being cleaned out in Nicklin and Caloundra is to recycle the old failed member for Nicklin. That is their big solution.

The other interesting thing about this debate is the defensiveness of it. They are concerned about their own vote on the Sunshine Coast and that is why they have this motion in the first place. We have the defensiveness of the Leader of the Opposition—whether he is not answering questions, having no policies at the Media Club or moving a motion about an area where their vote is on the slide. It is a defensive, myopic, insular approach by the Leader of the Opposition who has got no vision, no policies, nothing of substance and no depth to offer Queenslanders.

I urge members here to support the amendment and to oppose the motion which is full of politics. Mooloolah River Interchange: are you kidding? They did nothing on the MRI when they were last in power. It is this Labor government that has led the way on the MRI. Bribie Island Road? Forget about it. Why is the electorate of Pumicestone held by Labor? Because we stand up for that electorate and we are getting it done with an effective member. Why did the LNP get voted out of that seat? Because they had someone who did not do anything. Why did we get the Mons Road-Maroochydore Road interchange upgrade done? Because we drove it from the state government point of view. Why do we have a mass transit strategy with the council? Because this government believes in the Sunshine Coast and working with local government, not picking fights with the mayor like the member for Kawana does, left, right and centre, along with all those veteran and ineffective members of the Sunshine Coast. They are even giving their new members bad tips. The members for Ninderry and Buderim are getting bad habits from members who are ineffective.

What we need on the Sunshine Coast is infrastructure, funded by Labor. Queenslanders know we will build it because we will fund it. We will not cut it like the member for Chatsworth, who said there are going to be billions in cuts, billions in pruning. They said that themselves. They are their own words. I am encouraged by this motion from a defensive and negative opposition leader.

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

**AYES, 50:**

**ALP, 50—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszcuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 32:**

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

**AYES, 50:**

**ALP, 50—**Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Madden, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mullen, O'Rourke, Palaszczuk, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

**NOES, 32:**

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

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House notes:

- (a) crime rates are published online for all of Queensland including the Sunshine Coast;
- (b) rental increases are occurring across the country, including the Sunshine Coast and the Palaszczuk government is delivering record investment in housing and rental reform and support measures;
- (c) the Palaszczuk government's record Big Build program is supporting projects across Queensland, including on the Sunshine Coast;
- (d) that there has been no location confirmed for a future desal plant, but it will not be on Bribie Island;
- (e) the decision by the federal government to cut funding for key projects in Queensland;
- (f) the continued advocacy of all members including Caloundra, Nicklin and Pumicestone for their communities; and

commends the Palaszczuk government on record investment in frontline services and programs such as:

1. \$1.6 billion over the next year in new cost of living measures;
2. \$25.8 billion investment in our health system in this year's budget;
3. \$5 billion investment in housing projects in this year's budget;
4. \$89 billion investment in our Big Build program in this year's budget; and
5. \$446.4 million investment to boost police resources and support community safety.

## VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3846, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.



**Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (6.15 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I will start by addressing comments made by the member for Nanango—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Apologies, member. Members leaving the chamber, please do so quietly. There is a member seeking to make a contribution.

**Ms BUSH:** I will address comments made by the member for Nanango in the debate in relation to the select inquiry hearings that were held last week. I do not mind the member for Nanango. I am sure she has not meant to mislead the House in her statements, and I am not going to relive the inquiry of last week, but what I will do is encourage all members, and all members of the public in fact, to look at the transcripts that are now a matter of the public record and to review those in their entirety. The facts are there for all to see. I am not going to repeat them in this debate, but I will paraphrase or speak to a contribution from PeakCare. In PeakCare's words, we are grappling with a counterintuitive reality that crime is reducing and the fear of crime is increasing and that, rather than debate that, we should instead accept that both of those realities are true.

It was refreshing, actually, to hear the member for Lockyer acknowledge on the public record that crime trends are decreasing internationally, so perhaps there is hope for a bipartisan way yet. It is interesting that the LNP can acknowledge when crime is decreasing, but when a Labor member acknowledges that we are accused of trivialising crime victims' experiences. We all wish that we did

not need a victims of crime sector, but crime does occur, and when it does we need to do everything we can to wrap around the victims affected, their families and their communities to help them get through that experience.

I am thrilled to see the next iteration of the Victims of Crime Assistance Act. I was one of the people at the table with the minister at the time we developed and introduced the original VoCA legislation in 2009. I want to acknowledge the agencies that have helped, over many decades, shape the victims landscape: the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group with Brett Thompson as the CEO—he does a fantastic job; DVConnect; Bravehearts with Hetty Johnston and Carol Ronken, who is a great friend of mine who has done a fantastic job; Protect All Children Today; Living Well; Act for Kids; BRISSC; and the Gold Coast sexual assault service with the fabulous Di McLeod. Many champions of victims' rights over many years in Queensland have shaped the landscape that we have today.

That work continues. Today we are seeing the next iteration through this bill, which will build on Queensland's victims financial assistance scheme, increasing the maximum financial assistance for victims who have directly experienced an act of violence from \$75,000, which was the amount set in 2009, to \$120,000. In relation to witnesses of violent crimes, the VoCA legislation already had provisions for witnesses of crime, and they were established in 2009 and set at \$50,000 in assistance for individuals affected. This will increase under this bill to \$75,000, which reflects the impact that witnesses, of course, feel. I am really pleased to see the funeral assistance uplift from \$8,000 to \$15,000. The costs of organising a funeral are huge. For victims of homicide, there are elements of that process that are particularly delicate. This uplift of funeral assistance will come as a huge relief in relation to homicide victims. I really want to thank the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group for their advocacy and for bringing this to the table.

Clause 13 of the bill proposes to recategorise acts of domestic violence, from category D to a more serious category B, in recognition of the serious nature of those particular acts of violence and rising reporting trends for that. I know that there will be victims of crime who will be watching the debate who have had experience of applying for victims assistance and who have experienced delays and rejections with their applications.

Even the best systems break down, and when they do people get really hurt. An independent review of the financial assistance scheme has started. The review will look at how we can make the scheme easier to access and how we can make that entire journey simpler for victims and kinder. Notably, we also have the appointment of our first Interim Victims' Commissioner, Jon Rouse. I would strongly urge victims who have had not a positive experience with any justice system to reach out to his office, because it is offices like these that can actually help. It is not the social media groups, as well intentioned as those groups are, that actually offer assistance.

I am pleased to see the inclusion of a victim-survivor on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. The member for Nanango suggested that this was at the behest of the LNP. I remind the members opposite that I was appointed by the attorney-general at the time to the inaugural Sentencing Advisory Council for Queensland in 2010 as a victim of crime, so it has been a long practice of Labor governments to include people with lived experience. In fact, it was the Newman government and the member for Kawana—the now Deputy Leader of the Opposition and then attorney-general—that abolished the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. The LNP and the member for Kawana—the now Deputy Leader of the Opposition—in one of their early moves in government, abolished Queensland's first ever Sentencing Advisory Council. I was on it at the time. Not only did they abolish it as a first move, but I was a member and a victim of crime. I found out through the *Courier-Mail*, in fact, that I had lost my job—not directly through the government at the time. This is their history.

The final thing I will say on this debate is in relation to the narrative that is currently being perpetrated on this issue. The narrative around young people right now is toxic, and it has reached a level, in my view—

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, member!

**Ms BUSH:** I have calculated that I have approximately 12,900 days left in my one life and I can tell you how many days I am going to spend debating quantitative data analysis with the member for Hinchinbrook, and that is zero. The narrative is young people are toxic and it has reached, in my view, a level of vilification that is unacceptable. Telling a child—

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Hinchinbrook. Pause the clock. That interjection was unacceptable. You are warned under the standing orders.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr Dametto** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Hinchinbrook, you can leave the chamber for one hour.

*Whereupon the honourable member for Hinchinbrook withdrew from the chamber at 6.23 pm.*

**Ms BUSH:** Telling a child—sometimes a 10-year-old child—over and over again that they are scum, that they should be subjected to the death penalty, that they should be hunted down, that they should be detained and isolated and never see the light of day does not make a young person stop offending—it actually makes everything a lot worse. The greatest threat to community safety is not necessarily the 12-year-old who is unsupervised in a suburb; it is the members here in this chamber. It is those of us in this room who cannot seem to move past party politics, who cannot or will not move the conversation beyond the reactive, predictable and tired ‘who can be tougher’ debate.

There are members in this room who are attempting to condition victims into thinking that the only way justice can be achieved is through locking more and more people up, not only in the absence of information that it helps but despite overwhelming evidence that punitive measures do not work. Children are not helped by this narrative. Victims are left feeling hopeless, helpless and confused and the community is not made any safer.

Finally, I acknowledge the victim support and advocacy agencies that made a submission to this inquiry. They were: Bravehearts, knowmore legal service, the Brisbane Youth Service and ADA Australia. Thank you to those agencies for speaking up for victims of crime in Queensland and ensuring they have a voice in the development of these bills. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (6.25 pm): I rise to speak on the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill is a concerted effort to strengthen support structures for those who have endured the traumatic ordeal of crime, with a specific focus on enhancing the assistance provided under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 and the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992.

As we have heard, Queensland is in the grip of a crime crisis and Queenslanders are living in fear of becoming the next victims of crime as they go about their daily lives. Sadly, this is reflected in the numbers with the state's agency Victim Assist Queensland, VAQ, paying out almost \$40 million in financial assistance payments last financial year. This is a 50 per cent increase in the number of applications for assistance. Even more troubling, there was an 88 per cent jump in domestic and family violence applications—making up more than half of the requests for assistance in 2022-23. An article from the ABC dated 26 September 2023 titled ‘Victims of crime payouts on the rise in Queensland, reach nearly \$40m in 2022-23’ states—

The agency fielded 7,621 requests for assistance during the past financial year, up from 4,935 applications the previous year when \$15.9 million was paid out.

...

About one in five applications were made by people who were children when crimes were perpetrated against them.

I table that article.

*Tabled paper:* Media release, dated 26 September 2023, by ABC Radio Brisbane, titled ‘Victims of crime payouts on the rise in Queensland, reach nearly \$40m in 2022-23’ [\[2038\]](#).

Domestic and family violence is an issue that deeply impacts the fabric of our community in Queensland with the repercussion of such violence being extensive and casting a long-lasting shadow over the lives of victims and their families. We know this issue is indiscriminate. It affects individuals across all demographics and it inflicts a particularly severe toll on women and children. The opposition has consistently been a pioneer in raising awareness and championing transformative change.

In 2014, the government that I was a part of, the LNP government, took a significant stride by initiating the Not now, not ever inquiry into domestic and family violence. This pivotal initiative chaired by Dame Quentin Bryce underscored our commitment to addressing this issue in our community. The proposed amendments specifically increase the maximum limit of financial assistance for a primary victim of an act of violence from \$75,000 to \$120,000, with similar adjustments for the various categories, including parent secondary victims, witness secondary victims, related victims, distress payments and an increase in funeral expenses from \$8,000 to \$15,000. Notably, the bill recognises the

unique challenges that are faced by victims of domestic and family violence, categorising it as a category B act of violence for special assistance payments, with proposed amendments to increase the special assistance payment for victims of acts of domestic and family violence from \$1,000 to \$9,000.

I refer to an article from the *Mirage* dated 10 October 2023 titled 'Assistance payments to DFV victims to increase nine-fold'. DVConnect's CEO Beck O'Connor says—

You can start to rebuild your life on \$9000. This proposal acknowledges the level of resourcing that is required for victim/survivors to begin to heal and recover.

...

We are pleased that the government is investing in systems that make these processes more streamlined.

I note that category A has increased to \$15,000, category C from \$2,000 to \$6,000 and category D from \$1,000 to \$3,000. I table a copy of that article.

*Tabled paper:* Joint media release, undated, titled 'Assistance payments to DFV victims to increase nine-fold' [2039].

Now in its third term, the government is always too slow to act unless it is in its best interests. I refer to the answers to questions taken on notice in the committee hearing on 23 October 2023 referring to wait times for non-urgent applications. The acting director-general advised that from 2018-19 average wait times were 215 days, or 7.2 months, with those numbers now sadly jumping in 2022-23 to 295 days, or 9.8 months. I table a copy of that response from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 27 October 2023, from the Acting Director-General of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, Ms Jasmina Joldic PSM, to the Chair of the Community Support and Services Committee and member for Mansfield, Ms Corinne McMillan MP, providing responses to questions taken on notice at the public briefing for the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 held on 23 October 2023 [2040].

The bill calls for an expansion of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council's membership, from 12 to 14 members, and opens the door to the appointment of individuals with lived experience as victims of crime, enriching the council's understanding of the real-world impact of criminal acts. It is encouraging to see that the government has committed funding of \$185 million over five years starting from 2023-24 and an ongoing annual allocation of \$40 million from 2028-29. This investment aims to ensure the financial assistance scheme aligns with any increases in applications and that Victim Assist Queensland is adequately equipped to disburse payments promptly.

The 12 stakeholder submissions received have been pivotal in shaping this legislation, with all but one expressing support. The voices of organisations such as Bravehearts based on the Gold Coast, Mareeba Shire Council, Justice Reform Initiative, knowmore, Local Government Association of Queensland and the Interim Victims' Commissioner have all been instrumental. The concerns raised by LGAQ regarding the support for small businesses impacted by violent crime are valid and should be part of our ongoing dialogue, along with the Interim Victims' Commissioner's call for increased staffing and resources for Victim Assist Queensland to fulfil its role.

Whilst supportive, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service has rightfully drawn attention to the delays in processing applications under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009, emphasising a further impact on victims as a result of delays. Amendments aimed to address the pressing issue of extending the time frame for retaining a suspect's reference DNA sample from one to three years is a crucial measure for clearing the backlog and ensuring justice for Queenslanders.

I want to refer to an article from the *Guardian* dated 20 November 2023, last week, titled 'More than 100,000 DNA samples may need re-testing as Queensland lab bungle worsens'. The article highlights that the state-run lab automated DNA extraction method used from 2007 to 2016, known as Project 13, was fundamentally flawed. I know that the acting shadow Attorney-General, the member for Nanango, has referred to this. The article quotes the health minister as saying—

"It should never have occurred," ...

"It was never scientifically validated.


"The DNA lab really did away with scientifically sound methodology—they sacrificed that for speed."

It is obvious that the chaos and crisis of this government continues. I want to table a copy of that article from AAP with the minister saying that methodology was sacrificed for speed.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Australian Associated Press*, dated 20 November 2023, titled 'More than 100,000 DNA samples may need re-testing as Queensland lab bungle worsens' [2041].

The focus of these amendments lies in extending the permissible retention period of a suspect's reference DNA sample from one to three years specifically to alleviate the existing backlog, and I note that this pertains exclusively to reference samples of suspects, not crime scene samples. These amendments are a critical step towards addressing the backlog and ensuring justice for victims. It is imperative the government acts swiftly and transparently to rectify the systematic failures in the justice system.

The LNP has consistently stood by victims and scientists, advocating for a thorough investigation and resolution of the issues plaguing the lab whilst, conversely, the Labor Party has resisted every review and inquiry, prioritising media management over the interests of the victims. We even heard the health minister say last week that people should just move on from this issue. How inappropriate! An LNP government will put victims of crime at the heart of our approach as we know that, regardless of whether people have been personally affected by crime, all Queenslanders are in turn victims.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.34 pm): I rise to support the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I know that as members of parliament we often meet with those who have been affected by crime and we see in their eyes, on their faces and in their tears, and sometimes feel in their hugs, how much that hurts them. This legislation seeks to help victims of violence recover from those acts by giving them financial assistance but also—and I will speak about this later—giving them a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the injuries they suffered.

I want to speak about a very brave woman in my electorate who contacted me after she had been woken in her manufactured home by her small dog, only to discover there were people in her front room. This is something that we want to happen to no Queenslanders and something that we work every day to try to ensure happens less and less. In some ways this woman refused to let this bring her down because she organised—and I will call her 'R', because I have not been able to ask whether she wants her name used in this context—in the community hall at her manufactured home park a meeting of all of the residents. They came together to hear from both me and Constable Lou from the Crime Prevention Unit at Logan and to talk about security for the park and security for elderly people in general. This was a person who had been hurt but who was determined to make things better.

I want to reflect here on the symbolic expression 'to make people whole'. That day in that hall, with every resident of the manufactured home park coming together to listen to the things we could do to keep each other safe and to express their thanks through applause and hugs for 'R', we saw a display of that expression 'to make whole' and I know it made an enormous difference. I think I will treasure the email she sent thanking me and Constable Lou for the work we put in to ensure something positive came out of something that was so negative. That is what she was doing: taking something extremely negative in her life and trying to make it positive for both herself and others, and I think that is simply incredible.

I do note there is an extraordinary amount of politicisation of this issue. I know there is an election coming up so members opposite want to perhaps mislead on this issue. I think we need to, as the member for Cooper said, carefully and judiciously look at the issues and try to make things better for ordinary Queenslanders. That is what we are here for.

I was really disappointed to hear the opposition spokesperson on this issue, the member for Nanango, speak about the change to the way crimes against the person are recorded in terms of the numbers and the statistics. When we are talking about statistics, it is important to examine their background. The source was cited in the committee report. It is the *Crime report, Queensland, 2021-22*. It is a very large document; I have it stacked here beside me. Honourable members do not have to read very much—and I urge the member for Nanango to perhaps pick up the document and read it—because on page 2 it reveals the change in police recording of offences in Queensland. It states—

From 1 July 2021, a change in recording practices was implemented by the Queensland Police Service, requiring police officers to record within QPRIME all criminal offences associated with domestic and family violence (DFV) incidents that come to their attention. Consequently, 2021-22 presents as a break in the time series for DFV-related variables that are based on recorded offences data.

The report gives this example—

If there was an existing domestic violence protection order ... a breach of that order was recorded for the offender but the associated offence (e.g. assault)—

and these are crimes against the person—

may not have been recorded.

The member for Nanango either had no idea about this change or sought to mislead this House and mislead the people of Queensland. The report goes on further to say—

If there was no DVO in place, the police created an incident record and may have issued a temporary protection order. If the victim declined to support prosecution, the offence may not have been recorded in QPRIME.

Again, that is something that the member for Nanango either was indifferent to or—

**Ms Boyd:** Ignorant.


**Mr POWER:** Yes, or ignorant of or perhaps not willing to make Queenslanders understand the difficult and real challenges of statistics that we and the police face. The Queensland Police Commissioner made this change to ensure that when a person is assaulted in their house—and very often it is a woman—that is recorded as an assault so that every Queenslander knows that that is an assault. We also have to understand that in just those years domestic and family violence assaults increased from 7,984 to 22,293. We know that in the year before 2021-22 there were significant problems with domestic and family violence assaults, and this change in recording is a very important change that this side of the House absolutely supports. When an assault occurs it should be recorded as an assault, and that means it is over 80 per cent of the change. Is any of that reflected in the talking points of members of the LNP when they talk about this?

I also want to commend the Attorney-General and the Minister for Police, because they absolutely backed the fact that when a woman is assaulted in a domestic and family violence incident it is recorded as an assault. Would they have been aware that there are those in our community who would seek to misrepresent those figures? They absolutely would have, but were they brave enough to say that when a woman is assaulted in her own house by her own partner that should be recorded as an assault because we want to stop those assaults? Yes, they were. I want to commend both the Attorney-General and the police minister, and especially the commissioner, who did this brave thing. However, we need the sophistication to read to page 2 of the document to understand that. If we do not, we are letting down the people of Queensland and we are not trying to challenge the real figures that are a part of the challenge that we have.

I also want to point out that this means from the period from 2012 through to 2015 those assaults were often not recorded. If I was being flippant or political I could perhaps say that the then police minister or attorney-general perhaps wanted those things not to be recorded as both a domestic violence incident and an assault. I will not say that, but it is the responsibility of those opposite to make clear that those assaults were not recorded and that this government is ensuring that an assault is recorded as an assault in our police numbers. That is very important.

I will say, though—and this may come across as a bit harsh and a bit political—that in this bill we seek to represent the symbolic expression of the state of the community's recognition of the injuries suffered, in this case, by those assaulted in a domestic and family violence incident. There are instructions that every police officer record every incident of assault in QPRIME and we recognise those injuries suffered, but from 2012 to 2014 that was not the case. If we are doing this and if we are serious about the symbolic expression of our state in recognising real and profound damage caused by assaults, I think the most profound damage by domestic and family violence assaults, recognising those injuries suffered by victims, is that we must recognise the important steps that were made to change the recording of victims and not be flippant about it and pretend that it is something it is not. I also want to recognise the member for Cooper, who spoke earlier in this debate. I think everyone on all sides thinks that attacking someone who has suffered from crime during a debate on helping the victims of crime was deeply inappropriate.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (6.44 pm): I rise to address the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. At the outset I want to address the comments of the member for Logan, who, despite his assertion that he did not want to politicise this issue, was very selective with the time frame he chose. He spoke about the decoupling in 2021 but ignored the fact that between 2015 and 2021 his Labor government similarly adopted the same approach that he was so critical of in relation to the LNP government. He sought to minimise the instance of crime within the community, as many members opposite have done in their contributions to this debate today, and yet page 1 of this committee report drafted by—

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

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Lui): Pause the clock.

**Mr POWER:** I take deep personal offence that I sought to minimise anyone and I ask that he withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will seek some advice. Member, can you advise what comment you took offence to?

**Mr POWER:** The member for Buderim said that I sought to minimise the impact of crime on victims. I think that is extraordinarily deeply offensive, it is completely untrue and is not a reflection of the balanced way I made that speech.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, member. Member for Buderim, the member for Logan has taken offence to your comments. Do you withdraw?

**Mr MICKELBERG:** I withdraw. To be clear, the committee's own report drafted by a Labor committee chair, signed off by the member for Bancroft, says on page 1—

Reported instances of crime and the number of victims of crime have markedly increased in Queensland in recent years.

This is a Labor report with a Labor chair and that is a quote from the report. To suggest that crime is not increasing in Queensland is ridiculous.

**Mr Whiting:** Read the whole three paragraphs.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** I am happy to read all three paragraphs if you would like. Let us read the next part since the member for Bancroft would like me to read the rest of it into *Hansard*. It states—

The Queensland Government Statisticians Office Crime Report for 2021-22, reported 64,540 victims of offences against the person, a 49.2 per cent increase in total recorded victims reported in 2020-21. In addition, there was a 54.4 per cent increase in financial assistance applications received by Victim Assist Queensland in 2022-23 (7,621) when compared with 2021-22 (4,935).

The problem is getting worse. The problem is getting worse and those opposite seek to minimise the impact of this problem on the community. I acknowledge that this is a complex problem. This is a complex problem with many social factors that are feeding it, but at its heart the issue of this government's response to crime and to youth crime across this state has been a lack of willingness to address the problem and admit there is a problem. How many times have we heard members opposite oppose breach of bail—talk about the fact that breach of bail will not work—and yet when the political pressure becomes too much they come in here and do a 180 on their position and support it? If you do not support the position because you do not think it will work, do not turn around and hypocritically change the position just to support a political outcome. There is a real impact on our community as a consequence of the crime that our community is facing. The member for Burnett and the member for Oodgeroo spoke articulately in relation to that in their statement of reservation to this bill.

I want to address a couple of the comments that have been made. I, too, would associate myself with the member for Logan in relation to the member for Cooper and her experience, and I have spoken in the past about the fact that I think that is an important asset that the member for Cooper brings to this House. However, I do want to take issue with a couple of things she raised. She spoke about the narrative around young criminals—and I am paraphrasing here—distorting and resulting in outcomes which make the problem worse. With regard to some of the examples that she gave about vigilante-type responses, no-one supports that. The LNP does not support vigilante responses, but they are a response that is reflective of the fact that the community does not feel safe, that the community feels that it is not able to rely on the institution of the state to keep it safe.

There needs to be a balance. There need to be consequences when people do the wrong thing. It is my contention that that balance is not there. No-one wants to see every young person locked up the first time they commit an offence, but if an individual is a serious repeat offender they should be locked up. They should be held to account for their actions. There needs to be a balance and the balance is not there.

The member for Cooper also spoke about the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. She made the point that she was on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council and the LNP removed that Sentencing Advisory Council. She made the point that she was a victim advocate on that Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. I am sure she played an important role in that capacity. The fact is that we are here, nine years down the track under this Labor government, and there is no victim advocate on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. This is an important measure. Since June last year we have been calling for a victim advocate on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. It is a welcome measure. It is a false argument to try to draw a parallel and suggest that the LNP has created or exacerbated this problem through its actions nine years ago when the Labor Party have not addressed this in the nine years they have been in government. This government has been in power three times longer than the LNP were in government. I find it a tad galling every time those opposite



come in here and talk about the problems of the past. It says a lot about the government's delivery on these problems that they like to talk about the problems of the Newman government but not about their own record on these issues. That is disappointing.

While I am referring to the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council, I say that I am good friends with Judge John Robertson, the former chair. I would like to pay tribute to him. I frequently have conversations with him over a coffee. We have different views on what sentences should be applied in many cases, but we are able to have those conversations respectfully, we are able to have those conversations constructively and we are able to disagree. I think what both of us would accept is that our community needs to both feel safe and be safe, and right now I am not sure that is the case. I accept that there are different views in the community, but the overwhelming view of my constituents is that they do not feel safe.


In their contribution to the bill the LGAQ spoke about the fact that small businesses have been ignored in relation to the crime problem affecting Queensland. In my capacity as the shadow minister for small and family business it is certainly feedback that I get when I travel the state, and I have raised it here in the House. I have spoken to businesses in Townsville, Cairns, Yeppoon, Rockhampton, Hervey Bay, Toowoomba and Gracemere, just to name a few. All of those businesses have been impacted. They talk about the impact not just on the business owner but also on their staff and on the community they support.

I remember meeting with owners of a strip of businesses in Yeppoon. It was seven different businesses including a FoodWorks, a butcher and a fish and chip shop. They had been broken into repeatedly, week on week, and the police knew who these young criminals were. They would arrest them and they would be released on bail. That is the simple fact of what these communities are dealing with. When businesses are broken into they have to close their doors, cancel shifts, replace stock, pay for repairs and cop an increase to their premiums. The reality is that the businesses then need to pass that on to their customers in the form of increased prices or they have to wear the costs. We are not talking about multibillion dollar businesses here; we are talking about mum-and-dad businesses in our regional communities that are suffering.

I met with a restaurant business owner in Hervey Bay. He had been broken into by what he would contend—and what I understand from speaking to the police—was the same group of individuals who had committed a lot of other offences across their community, yet there was no consequence for them because of their age. I would contend that that is not getting the balance right. I think we need to do more to support not only small and family businesses but also our entire community.

The measures that are in the bill are welcome steps. I do not oppose the measures at all. We want to see a victim advocate on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. We want to see greater action to address the impact of crime in our communities. For those opposite to suggest that the LNP is causing this problem to become worse through the public narrative around the issue is a false argument and I do not accept it. I do not think the community accepts it either. I am pretty confident that if I was to step into nearly any community in this state they would tell me that they feel like the incidence of crime has increased, in particular the instances of crime against the person. That is the key issue we sometimes lose here.

We are talking about a higher rate of recidivism with serious young offenders in particular. Something is not working. This is why we want to see greater action from the government. We want to see greater resourcing. Victim Assist is an important measure to support victims. There is obviously going to be an increase in demand, so the government's measure to increase those thresholds is a welcome one. I have spoken, as many members of this House have, with victims of crime who have not received the service they should have from Victim Assist. The message to the government is that we want to see more action to address the crime crisis affecting Queensland.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (6.54 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 proposes to amend Queensland's financial assistance scheme and increase the maximum amount of financial assistance payable to victims of crime. It also changes the composition of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council.

The financial assistance scheme was established under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 to: help victims of acts of violence to recover from the acts by giving them financial assistance; for primary victims, to give the victim amounts representing a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the injuries suffered by them; and to give related victims who have suffered distress amounts representing a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition for the distress suffered by them.

The committee's report states that reported instances of crime and the number of victims of crime have markedly increased in Queensland in recent years. This is something that members on this side of the chamber have raised in this House many times. Whilst members of the government like to deny there is a crime crisis in this state, the committee report states the opposite.

The Queensland Government Statistician's Office *Crime Report, Queensland, 2021-22* reported 64,540 victims of offences against the person, a 49.2 per cent increase in total recorded victims reported in 2020-21. Following amendment of the VoCA Act in 2017, which extended eligibility for financial assistance to all victims of domestic and family violence, the number of financial assistance applications related to this crime increased. In 2022-23, the number of applications by victims of domestic and family violence crime rose 87.8 per cent, from 2,309 applications in 2021-22 to 4,337 applications. It is a sad fact that domestic violence cases have risen across our society. No region is immune from this. In the electorate that I represent, Condamine, we have had some terribly tragic circumstances reported to our office. These people's lives have been turned upside down in a very short period of time and they are in dire need of immediate assistance. My electorate is no different to anybody else's electorate.

The VoCA Act establishes a financial assistance scheme allowing victims of crime to apply for financial assistance to cover expenses for goods and services that they require to help them recover from an act of violence. The VoCA Act sets out four types of victims for the purpose of financial assistance: the primary victim, a related victim, a parent secondary and a witness secondary. The department stated that the bill responds to calls for reform recommended by recent inquiries, increased financial pressures owing to inflation and no increases in payment amounts, except for funeral expenses, since the VoCA Act commenced in 2009.

In response to a question asked during the public briefing about the possibility of moving assistance payments to a regulation under the act, the department referred to the KPMG review and stated that that is one of the conversations that has been happening within the department and that would likely be something considered as part of the KPMG review and any subsequent legislative amendments, purely because it makes sense to have the assistance limited in regulation. However, that piece of work is quite a way away. I am sure that will be something KPMG will consider. I note the committee has recommended that the minister clarify if this is indeed the minister's intent. The special assistance payment is intended to represent a symbolic expression by the state of the community's recognition of the injuries suffered by the victim from an act of violence.

Debate, on motion of Mr Weir, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

### Glass House Electorate, Land Acquisition



**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (7.00 pm): This week on my way to parliament, I again met with families impacted by the Bruce Highway western alternative. For most Aussies, the family home is the largest investment they will ever make. It is filled with family memories. It is the home to which they bring newborns from hospital. It is the site of family dinners and countless precious moments. The state should only take that away when it is absolutely necessary, and the landowner should be well and truly compensated not only for the property but also for the entire impost of the ordeal. Here are eight principles that I think each and every government should use when such an acquisition is required.

One: landowners must be notified in person and not in the media. Too often we have heard stories about ministers announcing projects with massive footprints without any sort of interaction with the people on the ground.

Two: Crown land must be the first preference for any project.

Three: the government should pay for and provide an independent advocate for impacted landholders. These advocates would be a one-stop shop for landowners to access advice and information about the process. While the government pays for the advocate, they are independent, not in any way beholden to government, and should not be compelled to pass any specific information back to the government about their engagement with landholders.

Four: valuations should be sought from independent accredited valuers paid for by the state. The highest value should be the preference. Any appeal would be overseen by the relevant accrediting body for valuers and not the Valuer-General.

Five: the process should favour the landowner, not the state. We hear stories of Queenslanders being strongarmed into settling on a price. Landowners should not feel coerced to settle.


Six: however, for projects with long lead times like the Bruce Highway western alternative landowners should be incentivised to settle early. The incentives should consider the potential uplift in value for their property that will come as a result of the project, as this has been foregone by the landowner via the state's action. The state should bear the responsibility.

Seven: payment should be prompt and ahead of time. To secure a new home, often the landowner will need a mortgage. The funds from the acquisition should be there to secure any new property as promptly as possible.

Eight: the landowner should be provided with at least a three-month peppercorn lease of their existing property once it is acquired to allow them to find and secure that new property, that new Aussie dream, that new home for their family.

My constituents have not been treated with such compassion. They have not been treated with such consideration. It is unacceptable. That must change.

### International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (7.03 pm): On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, let us reflect on the atrocity of war on innocent men, women and children. During the past eight weeks we have seen an erosion of the most basic of human rights across Gaza and the West Bank: the right to life, food, safety and shelter. Recent casualty figures report that more than 14,854 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza. Of those, 6,150 were children, 4,000 were women and a further 6,800 are missing.


Over half of Gaza's homes have been destroyed and families have been displaced from their homes. Nearly 884,000 displaced people are seeking refuge in UN shelters, schools and hospitals. Those buildings themselves are often the target of bombings. Nowhere is safe for the people of Gaza. Food, water, electricity and fuel have been restricted to a trickle, depriving people of what they need to survive. It is unacceptable to think that not even the youngest and most vulnerable have been spared.

This devastation, though unfolding on the other side of the world, has made itself felt here in our own communities, in my own community and in communities across Australia, and people are grieving for family members and friends. I stand with those community members who not only are bearing the burden of that immense grief but also are shouldering the heavy load of advocating for the rights of their people, and they are doing it with courage and strength.

I have advocated for human rights for decades. I know this is not the first catastrophe for the Palestinian people. I have stood beside members of the Palestinian community to commemorate the Nakba, the displacement of 700,000 Palestinians from their land. I have seen the resilience, courage and remarkable faith in our political system in our community, whose members stand with and support self-determination. Today is a day to show that that faith is not misplaced.

I am incredibly saddened that the violence still unfolds, despite a fragile truce that is in place. I stand in solidarity with the international community, as represented at the UN, to call for a ceasefire across those ancient lands. Today, on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I stand beside Palestinians the world over to call for an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories.

### Renewable Energy Projects

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.06 pm): Renewable energy is essential to our state's energy security and to reducing our emissions, but like any major projects those must be thoroughly assessed and their impacts must be managed and offset. There is a genuine issue with how wind farms, in particular, are being approved in our state. Right now, it is a free-for-all.

Those are big projects. They involve significant amounts of land clearing, the construction of many kilometres of roads, huge amounts of water for concrete and the installation of transmission lines. State code 23 is woefully inadequate to manage infrastructure of that scale. It does not get the balance right. The performance outcomes are far too broad and, compounding that, for almost all measures no acceptable outcome is prescribed. There are no minimum offset requirements from protected areas. Those projects could be built right up to the border of a national park. There is no consideration of the impact of construction on biodiversity. There is no requirement for community or local government consultation.


The Energy and Jobs Plan, from September 2022, broadly talked about reviewing those regulations. We heard nothing until August this year when the Deputy Premier announced planning code 23 would be reviewed. Submissions closed in early September. That was months ago and we have heard nothing since. There has been no progress. There must be a better way.

We have world-leading environmental approval processes for resource projects. They provide a blueprint for how other major projects could be more thoroughly and more fairly assessed. My fear is that we are losing, or we may have lost already, the social licence for large-scale wind and solar projects. That makes it much harder to roll them out at the scale and pace that we need.

There are enormous opportunities in renewable energy for regional Queensland and regional Queenslanders and we need to ensure that they are taken on the journey as the infrastructure is built. We must have projects approved that have been adequately assessed environmentally and that consider and recognise the views of the communities closest to the projects. The way that Queensland has developed means that agricultural properties in urban areas are mostly on our flat country. That means that our hills and ridges are vital sanctuaries for vulnerable species. We cannot continue to sacrifice those areas without stronger environmental approval conditions.

This is not about being for or against renewable energy. It is about having regulations that keep pace with development, just as we saw with coal seam gas a decade ago. If neighbouring landholders and regional communities more broadly are continually ignored then they will more readily fight these projects. If these projects are approved in inappropriate locations and without appropriate conditions or offsets then precious parts of our environment will be put at risk. We must get the balance right to take action on climate change and secure our transition.


### Middle East

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (7.09 pm): I rise to speak on the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and the very real impact that this unfolding human tragedy is having on many in my community. I have always been proud to represent such a multicultural part of Queensland and have always stood with people of all faiths and cultures in times of celebration and, sometimes, in times of tragedy. I am extremely distressed by the daily destruction and escalating loss of life of innocent civilians occurring in Palestine. I cannot even begin to describe the hurt being felt by so many people in our community. Even though these events are occurring on the other side of the world, the feelings of devastation and grief are felt very acutely in my local community.

In this time of tragedy I stand with these community members, some of whom have friends and relatives in Palestine, who have also raised their voice for human rights and peace. I strongly feel that as we rightly recognise the loss of life of innocent Israeli citizens—victims of a terrorist attack—so too must we recognise the loss of life of innocent Palestinians, innocent victims—men, women and children—that now number in the thousands. As a nation, we cannot express selective grief. We cannot acknowledge only particular deaths. No civilians are just numbers in a war. I welcome the humanitarian ceasefire and I join with members of my community and the growing international community calling for a permanent ceasefire and the release of all hostages. I urge that all parties fully comply with international law and international standards.

I acknowledge that longer term work is needed to bring lasting peace to the region. My local community wants to see an end to the conflict and to the loss of life—and so do I. Importantly, I continue to advocate that the ongoing peace and security of Palestinians and Israelis rests in a two-state solution—for self-determination and for an end to the occupation of Palestinian territories. I will not pretend to have all the answers, but one thing I know is that a better world is possible. I know this because I see a better world every day in my local community, where people of all faiths and nationalities live side by side in peace and harmony. If anyone ever doubts that a better world is possible, I refer them to the great multicultural communities of our great state. This I know and believe strongly: a child born in Gaza, Israel or the West Bank should have the same opportunity to live a peaceful life as a child born in Kuraby. I look forward to a day, however distant it may feel at times, when children born into all faiths in all parts of the world can live in peace.

### Burdekin Electorate, Schools


 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (7.12 pm): With the end of the school year fast approaching, I want to acknowledge the efforts of staff, students and families during 2023. The role of schools in our community should never be underestimated. Our schools set our future generations on a path to achieving their goals. In some communities not only are they meeting those goals but also they are a

central meeting point for parents and community members. Whilst schools in the south-east are all about growth, in regional Queensland we have schools where the enrolment numbers ebb and flow depending on a range of factors usually out of the control of schools, staff and leaders. This results in schools sometimes facing the threat of closure, a topic we saw raised by media earlier this year including a reference to schools in my electorate. At the time, I said that we must ensure wherever possible that we retain these schools for the existing students and for the potential they offer.

Last week I visited two schools in the electorate that over the years have faced the threat of either closure or drastic downsizing. I am proud to report that today both of those schools are flourishing. In 2015, Jarvisfield State School was home to 21 students, but just three years later the number had almost halved and the school's future was uncertain. Today Jarvisfield is attended by 30 students, with further enrolments forecast for next year, and it has a breath of fresh air about it. The school grounds feature a school hall—heritage-listed, I might add—that has hosted community events and school events for 80 years, right alongside new basketball courts. The school is led by the principal Lisa Bello. Back in 2015, Kalamia State School had just eight students enrolled but, under the leadership of principal Renee Cross, the enrolment has almost tripled and the school is in need of additional teaching space. The key similarity at both schools is a connection with the school community. Parents, staff and students all feel connected to their school, and that connection benefits the wider community.

I am a proud advocate for schools throughout the electorate. After all, they are the future. I have spoken in this place about the challenges that some of these schools face, and I certainly will not take a backwards step when it comes to calling for students in the Burdekin electorate to have the same opportunities as their city cousins. Make no mistake: some of those challenges still exist and the fight will continue for as long as necessary. Today I want to put on the record my thanks and my admiration for the staff of all of the schools in the electorate and to wish all students the very best for 2024, in particular all those graduating year 12 senior students from throughout the electorate as they go on to bigger and better things. I certainly wish them all well. I acknowledge all of the other little schools that are scattered throughout my electorate which do such a fantastic job. I look forward to catching up with them all in the new year.

### **Member for Bonney, Climate Change; Railway Stations, Accessibility**


 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (7.15 pm): I was very surprised at the member for Bonney's contribution railing against the clean energy transition. He pretends to be one of the more moderate members of the LNP, yet he seems to have been convinced by the hard right of the LNP to oppose the transition and to slow it down so that we can get more coal-fired power for longer, putting out emissions and contributing to climate change. It was very surprising. I will stand up here for the constituents of Bonney who do want to see that clean energy transition—unlike their state member of parliament, who is selling them out, who has clearly had his arm twisted by the LNP and who is locked into party discipline. It was a very interesting contribution from him. It sounds like his electorate needs to know that he certainly is no longer representing their interests in this place.

I want to speak about the issue of accessibility in my local electorate. We are seeing substantial progress now in terms of the station upgrades in my electorate of Miller. Graceville, the upgrade of which was completed a number of years ago, is very well enjoyed by the constituents of Graceville, Chelmer and Sherwood. We have now completed the station accessibility upgrades at both Yeronga station and Fairfield station. This is fantastic news for all of the people who live in Fairfield, Annerley and Yeronga. We are now doing Yeerongpilly; Dutton Park to the north, which my constituents of Fairfield and Annerley also use; and Rocklea, just down the road in the member for Toohey's area. A huge amount of effort is going in to make sure that these stations are easy to use for people who have a disability. One in five Queenslanders has a disability. It is not just people in wheelchairs; it might be people with a visual impairment or a cognitive disability, senior citizens who do not get around so well anymore or parents with a pram.

At these stations now there are now lifts where people go in one way and go out the other way. They are very easy to use if you are going in the one direction. The raised platforms are very good in terms of getting straight into the train, with no step up into the train. There are a whole lot of features, including braille maps. People who cannot see can learn where everything is in that station as they arrive so that they know exactly where to go. On those sorts of things we consulted with all of the disability groups. We want our public transport system to be user-friendly for everybody, particularly people who have disabilities. I think that is their human right. We will see a lot more happening with

station upgrades across a whole lot of other areas such as Banyo, Bundamba, Morningside and Burpengary as well as the Cross River Rail stations including the full-time Ekka station, which will be well received as well.

### Sarina State High School, Staffing

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (7.18 pm): I rise to speak on the worsening teacher shortage crisis in regional Queensland schools. Sarina State High School in my electorate has not been fully staffed since December 2020. Today there are 14 teacher vacancies and a further four permission-to-teach positions, increasing the teacher shortage to 18.5 staff. Since 2021-22, Rapid Response Team teachers have taught at Sarina State High School, with the majority extending their contracts for up to three terms, but they are not eligible to extend further than that. This means that some students at school have had up to six teachers in a single year.


These shortages are having a devastating impact on student learning outcomes. The school has been forced to use inexperienced interim teachers in junior classes to free up teachers for specialised subjects in upper grades. Many others have had to be pulled from administrative and managerial positions to plug the gaps. Junior students at the school are unable to engage in woodwork and metalwork due to the shortage. That is a total disgrace given it is a trade-driven mining area. There is now a real risk that some students may not be able to complete their certificate II in engineering or achieve a QCE.

One of the main problems that schools like Sarina have in attracting staff is the town's dire housing shortage. The vacancy rate at Sarina is currently just 0.39 per cent. Most of the potential teachers who declined positions at the school over the past year cited the unavailability of housing. We have written to the minister on this situation and we hope that they can use the old hospital site. The school is now faced with 10 teachers leaving at the end of the year. When added to existing vacancies, this makes 22 positions to be filled by 2024. That is 22 teachers!

School staff have done everything they can to address the problem, but the bottom line is that the situation cannot be resolved without the employment of more teachers. Sarina State High School is now calling on the DOE to exercise its powers under the statewide transfer system to ensure the school is fully staffed according to the allocative model. This has been done previously for other critically short-staffed schools, and the situation now warrants the same measures to be used to help Sarina High State School.

This is a statewide crisis, not one confined to my electorate. Sadly, according to the Queensland Teachers' Union, the QTU, classroom vacancies have skyrocketed 38 per cent in a single year. In Rockhampton alone, teacher vacancies have jumped 60 per cent. According to the QTU, 12 schools in mining towns throughout Central Queensland are facing 'critically' low shortages. Instead of investing billions of dollars in building new schools and other infrastructure, we should be looking at spending the money on fixing the teacher shortage crisis in our schools. We should bolster teacher numbers to give our students the best education and the best start that they can possibly have going forward.

### Pumicestone Electorate

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (7.21 pm): It is a shame that the member for Mirani has not paid any attention to our Turn to Teaching Internship Program or any of the other measures that our government is taking to boost teaching numbers right across Queensland.

There is so much to celebrate in our beautiful Pumicestone communities this Christmas. It has been a big year of delivering for our community. I look back and in 2020 I promised that every Pumicestone classroom, staffroom and library would have air conditioning—and now they do. Locals told me that they were struggling to see a GP, so we fought hard against the former LNP federal government's cuts to our distribution priority area status and last year we got that restored, making it easier for GP clinics to find and attract staff. Bribie residents told me that they needed more health care closer to home, so not only are we delivering our Bribie Island Satellite Hospital but also fought hard to get chemo included into the services. I know that has been enormously welcomed by our Bribie community.

As we speak, Beachmere Road's long-awaited start-to-finish upgrade is underway. While it is a bit inconvenient for the people of Beachmere—and I particularly want to acknowledge the small businesses—I know that it will make all the difference in the world to our Beachmere community. The road is the single thing that unites the people of Beachmere. I know that they are beyond delighted to see those graders rolling, and the work is happening faster than anybody could have imagined.

Soon we are going to see the concept designs for our long-awaited next Bribie Island Bridge. I know that that will be enormously exciting to community members, many of whom have told me, 'It will never happen,' but we will see.


Coming into Christmas though, I do want to acknowledge that national cost-of-living pressures have been extra tough on families. That is why our government is providing the biggest cost-of-living support package in the country with our huge energy rebates. In particular, I want to acknowledge the work of my office who have done so much to help locals apply for their Climate Smart Energy Savers rebate. Not only are those families getting significant rebates off the cost of a much needed appliance, but their energy bills are going to be up to \$100 cheaper every year into the future. My staff—Olivia, Noeline and Domenic—have worked so hard to help people with those applications.

From 2024 I know that Bribie kindy is really excited to be delivering Free Kindy for the first time. It is a wonderful start for our littlest Queenslanders, but it is also going to help families with the cost of living, with up to \$4,600 saved every year during that kindy program. We have so many great kindy and long day care centres in our electorate. I really want to acknowledge those workers.

As the year draws to a close, I want to wish all of our communities a happy and prosperous Christmas.

*(Time expired)*

### **Bravehearts Ditto's Keep Safe Adventure Program**


 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (7.24 pm): I rise tonight to take a few minutes to acknowledge the great work of many of those who have been involved with Bravehearts and also to talk about the recent re-release of Ditto's Keep Safe Adventure Program.

Before I do, I especially want to put on the public record the thanks of a very grateful board—and I am sure many Queenslanders and Australians—for the faithful work and service of Andrew Hay from Clayton Utz. He is a director and partner there. He has been involved in that firm for some 30 years. He has volunteered his time on the Bravehearts board since November 2016—nearly seven years. I want to put on the public record my thanks to Andrew and his team for the incredible support they have provided in addressing issues of child sexual assault in our state both from a legal perspective and from his personal involvement and the value that he has added to that board over many years.

However, I particularly want to speak tonight about Bravehearts Ditto's Keep Safe Adventure Program. The original Ditto Keep Safe Adventure was launched over 20 years ago. I remember as a radio station manager promoting Ditto's Keep Safe Adventure—the CD-ROM version—on radio at no cost to help get the message out, but times have changed. Thanks to the work of people like Rebecca Balcombe and the illustrator Zoe Lewis, and Deirdre Thompson, Carol Ronken and Jo Compagne—all members of the Bravehearts team—that curriculum and those materials have been completely reworked such that we now have a whole family of friends of Ditto. There is Frankie, Watson, Belle, Sam and Georgia, and a wonderful five-book series that explores all the vital personal safety topics across five titles—everything from feelings, warning signs, body parts, e-safety and trust.

The exciting thing about the program is that it is now more broadly available. It is not just something that would travel around schools with Ditto. There are 'Ditto in a Box' packs and all of the books are available to families—grandparents and parents—to read to their children and help educate their children in a very contemporary way and also in an age-appropriate way. It is no longer a one size fits all. There are three or four different themes and they cover everything from some of the old lessons about feelings and body parts right through to issues of e-safety and how to keep your kids safe from what is going on in the online world.

### **Redlands Electorate**

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (7.27 pm): How exciting to be the last speaker for 2023! It is very exciting. I want to start my contribution with Weinam Creek. The member for Kawana and I, I believe, are on a unity ticket on this in terms of where the Redland City Council is at in delivering that for my community. I know that they had workshops on the expressions of interest that were submitted by private developers this week. What I would really love to see is some transparency. We talk about transparency a lot in this place. I would love to see Redland City Council talk about what was submitted and what that looks like and what that looks like in terms of the car park for my southern Moreton Bay

island communities. I am hoping in good faith that Redland City Council will talk to our community about what has come through and what that will look like for the future in terms of car parking for my island residents.

I note that we are heading into a week of primary school graduations. I had my first one today at Russell Island State School. Jasper from my office proudly represented me today. Young Matilda won my community spirit award for the year. She has done a phenomenal job. They have had a really tough year over on Russell Island after the house fires and what was involved there. To all of those grade 6s graduating today at Russell Island State School and to all of those that come next week: congratulations and I look forward to watching the next chapter of your learning journey in high school.

To the Redland District Special School—a place very close to my heart—I had the opportunity to attend their graduation last Friday night. It was just beautiful. To principal Andrew Thompson, I give my most heartfelt thanks for your nine years of service to the Redland District Special School. You have been amazing and I know that your next chapter will have a very great influence on making sure that education is well placed for our young people with disability. To Andrew, I am wishing you the best of luck and to our young people who graduated this year. I know that your next chapter will be equally as exciting.

To Chris Richards and the team at the YMCA Youth Vocational School, it was very exciting to see the sod turn, with Bedford there, for their junior campus that builds on the year 9 and 10 campus that we have. They are doing fantastic work with our young people in that alternative schooling space.

To our BUSY school—another fantastic organisation delivering for our young people in the Redlands—the year 11 graduation was absolutely fantastic and it was great to speak with young people and to hear what their plans are in terms of leadership and their studies for year 12.

To our Macleay Island Progress Association, congratulations on a fantastic twilight Christmas markets. It was absolutely awesome to be there. The creative artists and crafts there were absolutely fantastic.

Finally, to everybody in the Redlands, I wish you all a very merry Christmas. Please have a safe and a happy, amazing time with your friends and family. To everyone in the parliament: merry Christmas!

The House adjourned at 7.30 pm.

## ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Camm, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, D'Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Head, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Hunt, Janetzki, Katter, Kelly, King A, King S, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, MacMahon, Madden, Mander, Martin, McCallum, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, 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