



RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 30 November 2023

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THURSDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2023

The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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



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

REPORT

Auditor-General



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received from the Auditor-General *Report 4: 2023-24—Deploying police resources*. I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General Report 4: 2023-24—Deploying police resources [2049].

SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Speaker's Ruling, Apology



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, yesterday I made a ruling based on my understanding of an earlier statement by the Premier. At the time I indicated I was happy to be corrected, but I heard the Premier say something along the lines of 'could', not 'would' or 'should' or 'will'. The *Record of Proceedings* shows that the Premier did say 'will', although then she corrected herself and said 'likely' twice. Question time can be very robust at times and sometimes it is almost deafening; however, I want to unreservedly apologise to the Manager of Opposition Business for my recall of matters yesterday.

Chamber Sound System



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members will be glad to hear that the chamber sound system is set to be replaced after the House adjourns and before the beginning of sittings next year. Indeed, work is to commence from Monday, 4 December 2023—yet some members, unfortunately, will still be heard.

The work required to decommission and install the new system will require access to all areas within the chamber and furniture. As a courtesy, in preparation for the installation of the new conferencing system in the green chamber, all members are requested to remove any items from their space in the chamber by close of business today. It is tidy box clean-up time. That is not an excuse for muck-up day either, just so we are clear.

Christmas Tree, Parliament



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, tonight after the rising of the House at 6.30 pm the lighting of the Parliament House Christmas tree will take place at the front entrance of Parliament House near the gates on the corner of George and Alice streets. It was decided this year to place the tree at street level to enable as many visitors as possible to enjoy the Christmas atmosphere. Following the lighting of the tree, refreshments will be provided on the Speaker's Green. I certainly look forward to seeing members and staff at our Christmas celebration this evening.

School Group Tours



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to advise that we will be visited in the gallery this morning by students and teachers from: Hilder Road State School in the electorate of Ashgrove; Payne Road State School in the electorate of Ashgrove—member for Cooper, it is okay, old habits die hard; and Middlemount Community School in the electorate of Burdekin.

PETITIONS

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

Wooroolin, Speed Limit

Mrs Frecklington, from 288 petitioners, requesting the House to reduce the speed limit through Wooroolin to 50 km/hr to create a safer road environment for school children and pedestrians [\[2042\]](#) [\[2043\]](#).

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

Bowen Basin, Road Infrastructure

Mr Last, from 597 petitioners, requesting the House to recognise the financial contribution of the Bowen Basin and implement upgrades to the Peak Downs Highway, Saraji Road, Kilcummin-Diamond Downs Road, Bowen Developmental Road, Suttor Developmental Road, Dysart Middlemount Road, Clermont-Alpha Road and May Downs Road [\[2044\]](#).

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

Deongwar State Forest

1,177 petitioners, requesting the House to acknowledge the harm being done to 'nature' in Deongwar State Forest and act to ensure the needs and aspirations of future generations are met [\[2045\]](#).

Petitions received.

TABLED PAPERS

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

MINISTERIAL PAPERS

The following ministerial papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (Hon. Palaszczuk)—

[2046](#) Queensland Government: The Queensland Plan Annual Progress Report 2022-23

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence (Hon. D'Ath)—

[2047](#) Queensland Human Rights Commission—Annual Report 2022-23

[2048](#) Queensland Human Rights Commission—Progress and pitfalls: The fourth annual report on the operation of Queensland's Human Rights Act 2019, 2022-23

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.35 am): Mr Speaker, 2023 has been a big year for our state. It has been a year of delivery. We have delivered nation-leading infrastructure, including the Cairns Convention Centre, stage 5 of the Townsville Ring Road and the Rookwood Weir, just to name a few. We have nation-leading growth and unemployment at 4.2 per cent. Thanks to our progressive coal royalties, Queensland's economic strength has translated to budget strength, which has allowed our government to deliver big for Queenslanders with the biggest cost-of-living relief package in the nation. totalling \$8.2 billion, to: give all Queenslanders \$550 off their power bills, which increases to a massive \$1,072 for pensioners and seniors; put cash back in the pockets of Queenslanders for upgrading to energy-efficient appliances; and provide free TAFE for our next generation of skilled workers. We are delivering the \$89 billion Big Build, the largest since Federation—building the new roads, rail, schools, hospitals, housing and infrastructure Queensland needs as it grows, creating very good jobs for Queenslanders. Today I am pleased to table progress reports on the implementation of our 2020, 2017 and 2015 government election commitments.

Tabled paper: Queensland Government: Report titled 'Progress report on 2020 government election commitments', September 2023 [\[2050\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Government: Report titled 'Progress report on 2017 government election commitments', September 2023 [\[2051\]](#).

Tabled paper: Queensland Government: Report titled 'Progress report on 2015 government election commitments', September 2023 [\[2052\]](#).

At just over 70 per cent through this term, 70 per cent of our 2020 commitments have been delivered. At the last election we promised to create jobs and deliver on our economic recovery plan. We now have the strongest economy and more than 292,000 extra jobs in Queensland since the last election. That is an average of more than 260 jobs a day created in Queensland since the 2020 election, taking the total number of jobs created under our government to more than 543,000—or over half a million—more Queenslanders in work since we were elected. We will continue to deliver—not cut—because that is what Queenslanders expect and deserve.

We are on track to hire an extra 9,475 frontline health staff, just as we committed. We have already hired 3,700 new nurses and midwives, 1,200 new allied health professionals, over 1,000 extra doctors and more than 400 paramedics. We have delivered 5,100 more teachers, 2,100 new teacher aides and over 260 more firefighters. Since the last update tabled in parliament we have also delivered four of the seven satellite hospitals, at Tugun, Redlands, Caboolture and Ripley—I am advised they have already welcomed over 28,000 Queenslanders through their doors—and one more will open to patients before Christmas. By the middle of next year all seven will be open, providing free health care closer to home.

Since 2015 our government has built and opened 25 new schools including Ripley Central, Woogaroo Creek and South Rock state schools and the Palmview State Secondary College, which all opened this year. Since the last election commitments update we have also: opened upgrades to the Bowen TAFE, with an Agriculture Centre of Excellence; announced the aquaculture facility at Cannonvale TAFE; delivered the new robotics lab and cybersecurity training centre at South Bank TAFE; opened training facilities at Gladstone State High School to prepare schools for the hydrogen industry; opened the Bells Creek Arterial Road, which I know the member for Caloundra is especially excited about; provided new classrooms at Toowoomba West Special School; carried out upgrades to playgrounds at Woody Point Special School in Redcliffe; delivered a new multipurpose hall at Glenala State High School; delivered a new multipurpose hall at the Townsville Community Learning Centre; provided new training resources at Tara Shire State College; delivered manufacturing training facilities at Dalby State High School; and delivered the Brisbane Holocaust Museum, which I am incredibly proud that our government was part of. I could go on, with more than 200 commitments delivered over the last year. I am proud of what we have achieved so far with our vision for a better future for all Queenslanders.

Health System



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.39 am): Our government is committed to delivering good health care for Queenslanders wherever they live. That is why we are investing a record amount in Queensland Health. We are adding more beds than ever before, and we are hiring more doctors, more nurses, more paramedics and more allied health staff. Just this week, part of Caboolture Hospital's \$399 million redevelopment was opened, meaning more people can access health care in this fast-growing region. In more good news, as I have said, our fifth satellite hospital will open before Christmas. We are bringing good health care closer to home.

Today I can announce another Australian first, born right here in Queensland. The health minister will introduce a bill to allow for better midwife-to-patient ratios in Queensland's public hospitals. Under the proposed changes, the minimum ratio will be one midwife to every six patients. This is the first time in Australia that babies will be counted as a separate patient to their parent. Queensland has always led the way in this space.


Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We know they don't like nurse-to-patient ratios and they obviously don't like this.

Mr Dick: They voted against it.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take the Treasurer's interjection; they voted against it. In 2015, we led the nation by introducing Australia's first nurse-to-patient ratios in medical, surgical, mental health and public health facilities. These were implemented in 2016. I know that this is something midwives have been calling for, and we are a government that listens.

Premier's Anzac Prize; Anzac Day Trust Fund

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.41 am): We have some very special visitors in the House today. I welcome Eloise Brown from Mansfield State High School, Jacqueline Loh from Brisbane Girls Grammar School and Bronte Fleming from All Hallows' School. Today I can announce that these girls—along with five other students from Townsville, Ayr, Cairns and Stanthorpe—are the recipients of the 2024 Premier's Anzac Prize. There they all are standing up there in the gallery. Let's give them a wave.

In recognition of their academic efforts and dedication, these eight outstanding young people and two teacher chaperones will travel to Europe next year to visit World War I and II sites. They will visit places that remain, and will always be, at the centre of our history and identity, including attending the Anzac Day dawn service at the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux. I have no doubt it will be a life-changing experience for all and I am sure all in the House join me in wishing them safe travels.


Honourable members: Hear, hear!

Ms PALASZCZUK: While I am on my feet, I can today announce that nearly 180 organisations will benefit from our government's Anzac Day Trust Fund Grant Program and Anzac Day Trust Fund COVID-19 Grant Program. Nearly \$1.8 million will be distributed to organisations that support the welfare of veterans and their families. Grants have been awarded to organisations across Queensland, including Australian War Widows Queensland, Young Veterans Australia and the Vietnam Veterans Association. Grants previously provided under this program have already gone a long way to help our ex-service organisations—for example, the Mossman RSL, assisting members with food and clothing where it is needed; the Townsville Vietnam Veterans Association, to host commemorative events and funerals to honour members; and Legacy Bundaberg, to provide education bursaries and financial assistance. It is only right that we give back to the people who dedicated their lives to protecting their country and to those who lost loved ones in the pursuit of our safety.

AFLW Grand Final, Brisbane Lions; WBBL Final, Brisbane Heat

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (9.43 am): This weekend the Brisbane Lions will take on North Melbourne in the AFLW grand final. The girls have already proven themselves as championship winners after taking home the grand final trophy in 2021. Let's back it up with another win for Queensland this weekend. Our government is right behind our women and girls of all ages to participate in AFL. Since 2015, we have approved over \$49 million of funding to support the sport of AFL in Queensland, including \$18 million towards the development of the women's home ground in Springfield. This goes hand-in-hand with a \$37 million funding injection earlier this year to support women and girls sport. I also wish our women's Brisbane Heat cricket squad all the best in their final against Adelaide on Saturday night. Let's bring it home.

Federal Labor Government, Infrastructure Funding

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure) (9.43 am): Queensland is booming. We have begun the biggest decade of infrastructure delivery in our state's history. On this side of the House, we are delivering the projects that Queensland needs through our Big Build. We are delivering more Bruce Highway upgrades, reducing commuter times and making our roads safer. We are investing in major transport infrastructure, like Cross River Rail and Bruce Highway upgrades, freeing up space on our roads, improving road safety and making it easier for Queenslanders to get where they need to go.

There are a range of Queensland infrastructure projects that benefit from federal funding, and that is why we need to ensure that Queensland gets a fair deal. Yesterday on behalf of Queensland I travelled to Canberra with a delegation of Queensland mayors and industry representatives to meet with the federal infrastructure minister about Queensland's—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members to my left!

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I will wait for the House to come to order.

Mr Skelton interjected.

Mr Brown interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Nicklin and member for Capalaba. You are both warned under the standing orders.

Dr MILES: Yesterday on behalf of Queensland I travelled to Canberra with a delegation of Queensland mayors and industry representatives to meet with the federal infrastructure minister about Queensland's need for federal infrastructure support and funding.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, you will cease your interjections and if you do not put those comments through the chair I will warn you under the standing orders.

Dr MILES: Queensland is well served by our local governments and mayors, and the mayors all strongly put their case for the needs of their region. Mayor Butcher from Lockhart River told the minister how the Peninsula Developmental Road was changing the lives of First Nations people on the cape and Torres Strait. Mayor Harding from Ipswich put the perspective of one of the fastest growing communities in Australia. Acting Mayor Richard Baberowski represented the Sunshine Coast, putting the case for new public transport and road upgrades. They all did their communities proud. Gary Mahon from the Trucking Association put the views of our truckies and road freight industry about the importance of roads for productivity, safety and cost of living.

Following a productive meeting with federal minister Catherine King, I am pleased to inform the House that we received a number of commitments from the Australian government. The Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line will be prioritised as part of the transport program for the 2032 games. The Australian government has reserved \$1.44 billion for the construction of this project. This is in addition to the \$160 million available for the business case, planning and early works on the project.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

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

Dr MILES: The Australian government have also confirmed their commitment to the inland freight route, also known as the Second Bruce. Earlier this week the transport minister announced we are kickstarting early works on the Second Bruce, including priority upgrades to this critical freight route. The Palaszczuk government has brought forward our funding for this critical project.

In addition, the Australian government have confirmed there will be no reduction in Australian government funding to Queensland over time. The Australian government's commitment to fund new projects on a 50-50 basis will not result in less funding being provided to Queensland overall. Where the Australian government have committed to fund existing projects on an 80-20 basis, that funding split will not change. They have agreed to work together with us to prioritise projects required for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The 2032 games provides an opportunity to deliver a significant infrastructure legacy across South-East Queensland, delivering more jobs, housing and transport infrastructure. The Australian government will consider proposals for future projects once we have completed scoping, planning and costing.

While there remain outstanding issues, which the Premier will raise at National Cabinet next week, I am pleased the delegation was able to make some progress. I thank the mayors and industry representatives, CoMSEQ and the LGAQ for their support.

Economy; Federal Labor Government, Infrastructure Funding



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.48 am): Tomorrow the nation's treasurers will meet in Brisbane to discuss the major economic and fiscal issues and reforms our nation needs, and I will be telling my colleagues about the many good things about our state's economy. Recent ABS data shows that Queensland's economy grew by 2.3 per cent in 2022-23. That was faster than the two per cent forecast in our budget. It follows an exceptionally strong 5.5 per cent economic growth Queensland recorded in 2021-22. Our economy is now a remarkable 11 per cent larger than it was in 2019-20—outperforming national growth of 9.7 per cent over the period.


Most importantly, Queensland is the home of jobs. ABS labour force data for October 2023 shows employment in Queensland has grown 11.1 per cent since the pre-COVID level recorded in March 2020. That is an additional 287,000 people who now have a job, equivalent to the entire population of Ipswich. The same data shows the strength in the labour market extends across our great state.

Toowoomba, Townsville and Logan-Beaudesert have all seen employment grow by over 20 per cent since pre-COVID levels. In the last 12 months, Cairns, Central Queensland, Mackay, Townsville and Wide Bay have all recorded their lowest unemployment rates in a decade.

However, at the meeting of treasurers tomorrow it will not all be a positive discussion. State and territory treasurers are united in demanding that the federal government continue the GST no-worse-off guarantee. Our ability to fund the services that we need and to deliver the big infrastructure projects, like the Sunshine Coast rail project, all hinge on whether the Commonwealth decides to extend the no-worse-off guarantee beyond the current forward estimates. We will be putting that case to the federal Treasurer tomorrow. The continuation of a no-worse-off guarantee is absolutely critical to all states and territories and to the delivery of jobs, services and infrastructure that all states and territories need.

It is the festive season, and all I want for Christmas is for all members to back in progressive coal royalties, not just for the forward estimates but, just like the no-worse-off guarantee, forever! In the spirit of the season, I also want to wish Ian Macfarlane a Christmas farewell and plenty of coal in the stocking. I know that Mr Macfarlane was upset when we did not attend his lunch a fortnight ago. He should also be upset that the Leader of the Opposition did not attend the QRC lunch. I learned that this week. I correct the record from my earlier statement and, in the spirit of Christmas giving, I apologise for inadvertently misleading the House. I wish the Leader of the Opposition all the best, and I do hope that the QRC will buy him lunch next year. It is the very least they can do.

Maternity Services

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.52 am): Every Queensland woman deserves safe, compassionate and comprehensive maternity care. That is why today is such a momentous day for mums and bubs in Queensland. After years of campaigning by our incredible frontline midwives, I am pleased to announce that we will be introducing a bill to create midwife-to-patient ratios in our public maternity wards. In an Australian-first, we will count the babies as patients. We know how hard our midwives work to provide world-class care to our mums and bubs. Today, the introduction—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry, Minister. Member for Scenic Rim, member for Warrego, member for Mudgeeraba and member for Nanango, you are all warned under the standing orders.

Ms FENTIMAN: Today, the introduction of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill will recognise their hard work. Under our proposed changes, the minimum ratio will be one midwife to every six patients, including babies. This will mean that mums and bubs receive higher quality care, and midwives will not be tasked with unmanageable workloads.

We know that ratios work. Queensland was the first state to introduce nurse-to-patient ratios back in 2016 after the LNP refused to vote for them. Research has shown that Queensland's nurse-to-patient ratios led to lower mortality and readmission rates and shorter lengths of stay and gave nurses more time to detect changes in patients' conditions. Nurses have reported better job satisfaction and less burnout, while patients were more likely to recommend the hospital to family and friends. Now we are extending this to our midwives. I am so proud that we are listening to and delivering for frontline staff and Queensland mums and bubs.

Our government also has a strong track record, unlike those opposite, of empowering a woman's right to choose. The bill I introduce today will also take steps to improve access to termination-of-pregnancy services by allowing appropriately trained nurses and midwives to administer drugs such as MS-2 Step. We know that women still face barriers to accessing termination services, particularly in rural and remote Queensland. Access to these services should not depend on a woman's postcode. Allowing nurses and midwives to administer medical termination drugs will mean greater choice for women, particularly when access to surgical termination is not available. This government will always defend a woman's right to choose. We know that those opposite will not, which is why we are taking this important step.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to remind all members and their staff that COVID boosters will be available for free today at the QUT Medical Centre, so if members can get down there during their lunchbreak, boosters will be available. The Chief Health Officer has said this week that, whilst COVID cases are beginning to stabilise, it is so important that everyone remains up to date, so if you are due for a booster please head down there on your lunchbreak. Keep yourself and your community safe.

Crime, Independent Ministerial Advisory Council



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (9.55 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to community safety and listening to the voices of victim-survivors. We have been listening to victim-survivors, who tell us that they want a stronger voice for people with lived experience in our conversations about reform. We have listened and we have acted. Today I am pleased to announce the membership of the new Independent Ministerial Advisory Council, known as IMAC. The IMAC will offer its advice, guidance and perspectives on how we can reform the criminal justice system and support for victims, particularly in relation to youth crime.

The IMAC will be co-chaired by retired District Court Judge Mr John Robertson and Beck O'Connor. Mr Robertson was a judge of the Childrens Court of Queensland for his whole judicial career and president of that court from 1999 to 2001. He is presently a part-time judicial member of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and recently chair of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. Ms O'Connor has over 20 years experience in senior leadership roles in the community and human services sector. She is the Chief Executive Officer of DVConnect, where she also leads VictimConnect, Queensland's victims of crime support service.

The other council members announced today are: Ms Julie Arthur, manager of the Cloncurry Justice Association; Ms Elvie Sandow, Mayor of Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council; Mr Brett Thompson, Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group; Mr Robert 'Keith' Hamburger AM, Queensland patron of the Justice Reform Initiative; Professor Lorraine Mazerolle, an international expert in policing and crime prevention; Professor Susan Dennison from the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University; Mr Timothy Grau, a practising barrister in regional Queensland; Matilda Alexander, CEO of Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion; Mr Ben Cannon, victim advocate from Voice for Victims; Mr Zac Davidson, a youth parliamentarian; Andrea Storey, who will bring her experience of navigating the criminal justice system as a victim-survivor of domestic violence; Mr Ian Leavers APM, General President and CEO of the Queensland Police Union; and Ms Christine Castley, CEO of Multicultural Australia. Two additional members appointed to IMAC with lived experience of victims of crime have requested to not be identified at this stage, and this government respects their right to anonymity.

I would particularly like to express my gratitude to Mr John Robertson and Ms Beck O'Connor for co-chairing the IMAC. IMAC will play an integral role in shaping our response to youth crime and support for victims, helping to keep Queenslanders safe. This is part of the government's broader reform program, including the victims assistance bill currently before the House and the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee. The first meeting of IMAC will occur in December, and I look forward to their contributions.

Arnold, Mr M; McCrow, Ms R



Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (9.58 am): We said we would not forget them, and we have not. As we approach the 12-month anniversary of the tragic deaths of Constable Rachel McCrow and Constable Matthew Arnold, the deaths of these two fine young people will be forever etched in the collective memory of the broader police family. The loss of Rachel and Matthew came about because of the callous, the brutal, the unspeakable actions of a trio of perpetrators. I will not name the perpetrators; they do not deserve it. They do not deserve to be remembered. They do not deserve anything other than eternal condemnation.

I will say this: it is tempting to think of evil in the abstract, as a notion that has little application in our daily lives, but Wieambilla shook our souls—it showed us that evil can be real. It was evil that took Rachel and Matthew from our midst, but those foul, dark and evil deeds sparked a reckoning, a reckoning of the soul. In the end, evil was puny and was overwhelmed by good. The police family and the broader community came together. The many who were hurting—family, friends, colleagues and loved ones—were all enfolded within a communal embrace. That communal embrace was real; we all saw it. We saw it at police stations across the state: the impromptu, spontaneous memorials—the endless flowers left there. Those memorials are still there. In a way, it is a memorial to what is best in us. It is a memorial to our humanity, a reminder that people like Rachel McCrow and Matt Arnold are the light. They are the light that outshines the darkness of evil, and we will never forget them. Never forget, Rachel and Matt.

Path to Treaty



Hon. LM ENOCH (Algerie—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (10.01 am): I want to associate myself with the contribution of the police minister. They were some very moving and beautiful words.

Mr Speaker, as you say in this House at the start of every parliamentary sitting day, 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. Queenslanders are aware of that today more than ever. Sadly, they are now more than ever aware of the gap in life outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Queenslanders. They are now more than ever aware of the urgent need to close those gaps.

In 2020, we joined all other jurisdictions in this country in signing the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. The year before that, we began our journey towards treaty and truth-telling in this state with our *Statement of commitment to reframe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland government*—a commitment we took to the 2020 election. Unlike the Leader of the Opposition and the LNP he leads, the Palaszczuk government remains committed to closing the gap and committed to the promise we made to Queenslanders when this parliament passed the landmark Path to Treaty legislation earlier this year.

Today I am pleased to advise the House that we are taking the next steps on our path to treaty and truth-telling. Expressions of interest are now open for members of both the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry and the First Nations Treaty Institute. I acknowledge the members of the Interim Truth and Treaty Body for the significant work they have done to progress the Path to Treaty in this state. Some of them are here today in the gallery. They are Mick Gooda, Aaron Fa'aoso, Cheryl Buchanan, Sallyanne Atkinson, Michael Lavarch, Seleena Blackley, Marg O'Donnell, Bianca Beetson, Natalie Siegel-Brown and Ray Rosendale. They collectively have facilitated 887 engagement sessions across the state with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Queenslanders since they were established last year. It is this work that has been crucial to informing these next steps. I thank the ITTB for their work and their support with community preparedness for truth-telling ahead of the establishment of the Treaty Institute and, of course, the important inquiry.

The five members of the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry will be appointed, with the majority of members being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. At least one member must be a legal practitioner of over five years standing and with experience relevant to the functions of the inquiry. Membership will also reflect the gender diversity of Queensland. The First Nations Treaty Institute will comprise two co-chairs and eight members, all of whom will be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. They will also need to have standing within community and will collectively reflect the cultural, geographical and gender diversity of Queensland.

We will harness the expertise and experience of the inquiry and institute members to develop a shared truth in relation to the often confronting nature of this state's past and the impact of harmful and discriminatory government policies. We cannot collectively make a difference in closing the gap without first understanding the true history of this state and the reason these gaps in life outcomes exist in the first place.

The journey of reconciliation has always been characterised as one of hope and optimism. In Queensland, the reconciliation journey has been long and has weathered many challenges, particularly in recent months. The path to treaty will no doubt face its own challenges over the years to come, but it is a journey and a path that is worthy of steadfast commitment—worthy of the promises we make and keep in this place and worthy of our collective resolve to get this done.

Youth




Hon. MAJ SCANLON (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing) (10.05 am): One of the biggest challenges for young people who are leaving government services is the transition to live independently. It can be hard if you do not have a safety net. What we have heard is that something as simple as furniture, moving costs or transport can be the barrier. We have seen some great outcomes through our youth foyers and justice programs, and we want to make sure a young person's next step to independence is successful. Today I am pleased to announce a \$4.6 million package to help young people set up their life. Eligible young people exiting government services can get help with costs of up to \$5,000 to afford the basics, from furnishing a property or purchasing textbooks or uniforms through to transport to get them to employment. A young person will discuss their needs with their support

worker or a staff member, and agencies, service providers or housing service centres can apply to access the funding on the young person's behalf. This has been welcomed by the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition. Executive director Lorraine Dupree said—

Given poverty is both a causal factor to youth homelessness and an impediment to young people accessing housing and stability, financial assistance will benefit young people who are experiencing homelessness or at risk.

Investments like this help young people to achieve long-term goals like employment and education. It gives them dignity, respect and a chance at a good life. That is what Labor governments believe in, and that is what we are delivering.

Premier's Anzac Prize; Summer Racing Carnival

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (10.07 am): I join the Premier in welcoming the recipients of the 2024 Premier's Anzac Prize who are visiting state parliament today. I wish Eloise Brown, Jacqueline Loh and Bronte Fleming all the very best on their well-earned visit to Europe next year, along with other prize recipients from around the state. Well done.

I am pleased to advise that the Queensland Summer Racing Carnival has arrived. The summer carnival, which kicked off on 18 November with the Mooloolaba Cup in the electorate of Caloundra, will showcase our world-class industry across nine incredible weeks of racing, as Australia's best gallopers descend on Queensland to chase a record \$25 million in prize money. The carnival will also feature plenty of off-the-track fashion, food and entertainment options to draw tourists to the Sunshine Coast.

While there will be plenty of action at Eagle Farm and Doomben, the Gold Coast Magic Millions Raceday will once again be the jewel in the crown of the carnival. This year, it will be the only race day in the Southern Hemisphere to stage eight races worth over a million dollars on the one card. The Magic Millions will be raced on a newly revamped racecourse, thanks to our game-changing Gold Coast track and lights upgrade. It will reach new heights, with a major prize money boost to its two blue-chip features: the 2YO Classic and the 3YO Guineas.

The carnival will see the Country Cup's Challenge, which brings together the best of our country and regional gallopers, hold its final at Doomben on 2 December. The challenge not only highlights the best of country racing—indeed, one of its qualifying races was the Gordonvale Cup in your electorate, Speaker; it also supports fundraising for the iconic Royal Flying Doctor Service and the crucial role it plays in regional and remote communities throughout Queensland.


The \$750,000 King of the Mountain race at the Toowoomba Turf Club will return on New Year's Day 2024. The King of the Mountain is a great initiative supporting local industry participants, because it is only open to Queensland bred and Queensland trained horses.

I am pleased to report that Australasia's premier harness-racing event, the Inter Dominion Championship, kicks off tomorrow at Albion Park ahead of the final on 16 December, with Queensland hosting the event for the first time since 2009. With record prize money, a pipeline of major infrastructure projects underway across the state and a summer carnival set to reach new heights, racing is going from strength to strength in Queensland thanks to the Palaszczuk government. I encourage all members to get out to the track for what is set to be another stellar summer of racing.

Mr Stevens: Okay.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Mermaid Beach needs no convincing.

First Nations Children

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services) (10.09 am): Our children and young people deserve a childhood free from violence, abuse and neglect. This is why the Palaszczuk government supports parents and carers to build stronger families and keep their children safe from harm. However, we know First Nations children continue to be disproportionately represented in the child protection system. It is unacceptable and the Palaszczuk government is taking action. To turn the tide, we have been working hard to strengthen our services to ensure First Nations children and young people grow up safe and thriving, cared for in family and connected to community and culture.

This week the Secretariat for National Aboriginal and Islander Children in Care, or SNAICC, the national peak for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, published their latest progress report examining what Queensland and other jurisdictions are doing to reduce overrepresentation and improve outcomes. I can report to the House the *Family matters report* shows that overall Queensland

is leading the nation. Queensland is outperforming all other jurisdictions based on all four 'Family Matters building blocks' for the second year running. Queensland has the second lowest rate of overrepresentation nationally of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care. Queensland is the second highest in terms of spending on First Nations community controlled organisations to deliver intensive family support services.

The Palaszczuk government is championing progress on key nation-leading reforms like delegated authority and we have backed our reform with over \$167 million over four years. I acknowledge more work needs to be done. This was rightfully called out in the *Family matters report*, but it shows that the Palaszczuk government has the right priorities and our investment is making a difference.

I am truly grateful for the dedication, focus and commitment of all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders who work closely with my department on our shared goal, and that is to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up safe and connected to family and culture. Together, we remain resolute in achieving this important goal.

Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program



Hon. LM LINARD (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.11 am): The Palaszczuk government is committed to partnering with our traditional owners to cooperatively care for country across Queensland. After all, who is better to care for country—managing native wetlands, bushlands, coastal areas and estuaries across Queensland—than the people who have been caring for it for over 60,000 years? An important aspect of our partnership is the Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program. In 2020 we committed to doubling the number of funded Indigenous land and sea ranger positions from 100 to 200 by 2023-24. I am proud to announce that we have delivered on that commitment. I am pleased to announce today that the distribution of the final 46 new ranger positions will join the 154 rangers already employed and delivering valuable environmental and cultural services across Queensland.

Having the full complement of 200 rangers employed boosts the Palaszczuk government's investment in Indigenous land and sea rangers to almost \$27 million this year. Traditional owner organisations were selected through a competitive funding round and will receive grants and other support to employ community-based rangers. A total of 15 First Nations organisations will benefit from this latest investment in 46 ranger jobs. New ranger teams will be established in the Gulf of Carpentaria, Cape York, Sunshine Coast, Central Queensland and South Burnett. Ten new rangers will be added to existing ranger teams based in Burketown, K'gari, Kuranda and Cape York.


This program is not just an investment in jobs and our environment; it is also an investment in rebuilding Indigenous knowledge and empowering Queensland's traditional owners to care for country. Rangers are combining traditional knowledge with new technologies to protect and conserve country based on traditional owner and community priorities. Land and sea rangers are undertaking fire management, biodiversity surveys, marine debris removal from beaches and estuaries, feral animal control, weed treatment and cultural site management. Over the past year Indigenous land and sea rangers have carried out fire management over more than 665,000 hectares of land, completed more than 920 biodiversity surveys, removed more than 9,000 kilograms of marine debris from Queensland foreshores, and recorded and monitored 570 culturally significant sites.

Indigenous land and sea rangers are integral to the protection of Queensland's threatened species including marine turtle, dugong, migratory shorebirds and the golden-shouldered parrot. They also play a key role in their communities. They are delivering junior ranger and youth engagement services including in-class talks at Queensland schools and on-country camps. In 2022-23 ranger groups engaged more than 3,700 young people in over 120 activities. The program has a strong emphasis on training with many rangers achieving qualifications in conservation and land management and completing leadership development. A total of 29 rangers are currently completing a tailored Indigenous ranger leadership program, which is helping to foster a new generation of leaders in the care of country.

The Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program supports jobs and delivers positive environmental, cultural, social and economic outcomes for First Nations communities. Delivery of funding to double the number of rangers in Queensland reflects our government's strong and deep commitment to partnering with traditional owners across Queensland.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Report

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (10.15 am): I table the following report of the Ethics Committee, report No. 220 titled *Report on a right of reply No. 43*.

Tabled paper: Ethics Committee: Report No. 220, 57th Parliament—Report on a Right of Reply No. 43 [\[2053\]](#).

The report deals with a request for a citizen's right of reply. The committee has recommended that the response in the terms set out in the report be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I commend the report to the House.

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, may I respectfully ask that you withdraw the warning you have given to the member for Nanango, who was not even present in the chamber when the warning was issued?

Mr SPEAKER: The member was in the chamber when the warning was issued. If there is another member who is not the member for Nanango who was interjecting ad nauseam from that side, I would love them to identify themselves.

Ms CAMM: Mr Speaker.


Mr SPEAKER: Member for Whitsunday, are you volunteering?

Ms CAMM: Mr Speaker, I was interjecting at the time of your ruling so I am happy to take the warning as necessary.

Mr SPEAKER: The Christmas spirit has come early and it is wonderful to see. I will withdraw the member for Nanango's warning. I hope I do not have to put it back on later. Member for Whitsunday, you are cheerfully warned under the standing orders.

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report


 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (10.17 am): I lay upon the table of the House a report of the Transport and Resources Committee, report No. 46 to the 57th Parliament titled *Public works inquiry into the state-controlled roads from Birdsville to Bedourie and Birdsville to Windorah*. I commend the report to the House.

Tabled paper: Transport and Resources Committee: Report No. 46, 57th Parliament—Public works inquiry into the state-controlled roads from Birdsville to Bedourie and Birdsville to Windorah [\[2054\]](#).

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

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

Cost of Living

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.17 am): My question is to the Premier. In the last 12 months Queenslanders have seen that insurance premiums are up 15.9 per cent, rents up 9.5 per cent, health costs up seven per cent and transport costs up 6.4 per cent—some of the highest rises in the country. Does the Premier accept responsibility for the Queensland cost-of-living crisis?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Some of these issues are federal issues, but let me say this. There are national cost-of-living issues affecting—

Mr Dick: Groceries, fuel, mortgages.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—groceries, fuel and mortgages. Once again the Leader of the Opposition is proving that they are not fit for office; they do not understand the basics. I will say this to the Leader of the Opposition. We acknowledge that cost-of-living pressures are absolutely having a big impact on families. That is why on this side of the House we are providing the largest cost-of-living relief that Queenslanders have ever seen because it is a big issue. It is not just a big issue in Queensland; it is a big issue in New South Wales and also in Victoria; it is right across the country. It is not unique to Queensland, so he should not put his head in the sand. Let me say very clearly, that is why we are giving the cost-of-living rebates in terms of energy relief so money can go back into the pockets of

Queensland households. Why can we do that? We can do that because we own our electricity assets. That is right: we on this side of the House kept our electricity assets while those on that side of the House wanted to sell them off.

Mr Dick: And we've got progressive coal royalties.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right. We also have progressive coal royalties, which are giving more money back to Queenslanders in cost-of-living relief. It is obvious that those opposite do not understand. We stand in this House every day talking about the \$550 going back to Queensland families and the \$1,000 going back to pensioners. The Leader of the Opposition has not made it clear whether or not he will cut the \$8 billion cost-of-living relief package that we have announced in the budget.

Mr Dick: They did it when they were in government last time.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right; I take that interjection: when those opposite were last in office, they cut cost-of-living relief. They cut it.

Mr Bailey: People remember.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right, and people will never forget. We will remind them between now and the election of the damage the Newman-Crisafulli government did to Queensland. We know that those opposite will sell the assets. They will sell the assets because they will do a secret deal with the QRC. Mr Macfarlane might be going, but I am quite sure there is going to be someone in there who will be in the pockets of the LNP. The progressive coal royalties will go, and that will mean less money back into the pockets of Queenslanders.

(Time expired)

Crime

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. In the last 12 months car theft has increased by 15 per cent and you are three times more likely to have your car stolen in Queensland than in New South Wales. Does the Premier accept responsibility for the crime crisis gripping Queensland?

Ms GRACE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There was a pronoun that is not supposed to be used in questions. 'You' was used and I ask you to rule it out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: No, it is within context, member. The word 'you' can be used as long as it is not directed at another member of parliament, so, no, that is not correct.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The Leader of the Opposition sat in this House and voted for our strong laws. He stands up in this House and tries to protest, but he voted for the laws—the laws that went through here which will tackle those serious repeat offenders. That is what this government is doing. In relation to the police, members would have heard the Police Commissioner's statement and commentary on ABC Radio the other week. We have a pipeline of police coming through the police academies.

Mr Hart interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have a pipeline of police coming through, and we thank those men and women who do an extraordinary job every single day out there fighting crime for our community. Vehicle immobilisers are being rolled out in Townsville, Cairns and Mount Isa and there has been a great uptake for the community.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Ms Pease: Try listening instead of talking.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He is just always talking and not listening. This is just absolutely—

Ms Grace: Speaking to himself.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right; I take that interjection. We will continue—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana!

Ms PALASZCZUK: We do understand that community safety is paramount. That is why we are tackling those complex causes of youth crime. That is why nearly every time I go to Townsville I sit down and speak with the people who are involved in tackling these issues, whether it is Stronger

Communities, whether it is the police force or whether it is going out on the ground meeting with people, because this is a community issue that governments and oppositions need to work together on and that is why a parliamentary select committee has been put in place.

Ms Grace: Bipartisan.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is right; it is called a bipartisan select committee. That is why—

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango, welcome to the club. You are warned under the standing orders. It was only a short reprieve.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is why, if those opposite were listening, the Attorney-General announced today the IMAC, which is the independent ministerial advisory body that will be responsible for being the voice for victims. What we need to do very clearly is continue to roll out our youth justice programs across our state and—

(Time expired)

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, you will cease your interjections.

Cost of Living, Relief

Mrs MULLEN: My question is of the Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Can the Premier advise how the Palaszczuk government is helping young Queensland families, and is the Premier aware of any alternatives?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for Jordan very much, because the member for Jordan was there when we announced the doubling of the First Home Owner Grant in Springfield—and this is a situation right across Queensland—so that young people and anyone trying to get into their first home can do so because of that First Home Owner Grant. This is incredibly important and it is going to make a huge difference to thousands of Queenslanders across our state. That is cost-of-living relief about which we have heard nothing from those opposite as to whether or not they will support it. In further cost-of-living support, we have been talking about our electrical rebates—an outstanding program. The Minister for Energy updated the House this week in relation to it. In the Ipswich LGA I can advise that over 1,500 rebates have been approved so far.

Mr SPEAKER: Sorry, Premier. Member for Maryborough and member for Lockyer, you are both warned under the standing orders. Take your conversation outside.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I can advise the House today that 47,583 rebates have been approved across Queensland, including 14,000 refrigerators, 4,700 air conditioners, 16,000 washing machines, 3,000 dryers and 1,000 solar and heat pump hot-water systems. That is giving cost-of-living relief to the families that need it across the state. No other state is doing this. We are doing it because we understand that these measures help people.

One of the key initiatives I am incredibly proud of is that next year there will be free kindy right across Queensland, so kids in Jordan and right across the state will be able to attend kindy for free. Why is that important? Because it gives our young people the very best start in life. This is incredibly important. It is something that I am passionate about and that I know everybody in government is passionate about. Once again, all of this is at risk—all of our rebates, including our electricity rebates into families' pockets—because the opposition does not support progressive coal royalties. The progressive coal royalties are \$7 billion, which enables us—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK:—to provide the biggest cost-of-living relief in the nation. Do we acknowledge that there are cost-of-living issues across Queensland? Absolutely, and that is why we have over \$8 billion out there for families. All of that is at risk under the Leader of the Opposition because he does not support progressive coal royalties and all he will do is cut, sack and sell.

Economy

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Premier. ABS data shows that in the past 12 months Queensland's economy grew zero per cent in per capita terms, the worst performance in the country. Will the Premier accept responsibility for the economic pain Queenslanders are feeling?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Our economy has grown 11 per cent since the start of COVID, and let me say this: at the last election we said that if we had a strong health response we would have a strong economic response. We have the fastest growth in the country, and that is because we have a strong economic plan—a strong economic plan delivering jobs.

Mr Dick: Not like your plan.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take that interjection: in terms of the right-wing priorities of those opposite—the little glossy brochure that they parade around with—that is not a plan; that is a pamphlet.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Chatsworth. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Creating over half a million jobs since we came to office is a proud legacy of this government. It is a great achievement—an unemployment rate with a '4' in front of it across the state. Jobs are crucial to a person and a family, because otherwise you cannot pay the bills. When I travel around regional Queensland I am incredibly proud that these economies are booming because of the strong employment growth, because of the plans that we have put in place. Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which was axed by those opposite, has created thousands of jobs.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Leader of the Opposition, I have tried to give you some guidance. You are warned under the standing orders. The continual interjection is becoming monotonous.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Unemployment rates are coming down across regional Queensland, including the Outback, because we have put in place job-creating programs. We are growing this state with new industries—the hydrogen industry, the aerospace industry—and by bringing rail manufacturing back to Maryborough and making sure we are building tanks in Ipswich with Rheinmetall, which is in the electorate of Bundamba. This is about setting Queensland up for the future. Of course, the Olympics is the icing on the cake. They will create a lasting legacy for Queenslanders for decades to come. Our tourism industry continues to grow from strength to strength in this state. Last week we had the honour of celebrating and toasting the fact that those industries are doing such a great job and bouncing back after COVID. This is a government that backs Queenslanders and families and will always listen.

Infrastructure

Mr RUSSO: My question is to the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympic and Paralympic Games Infrastructure. Could the Deputy Premier please advise the House how the Palaszczuk government is delivering more infrastructure for Queensland, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Toohey for his question. I know that he is as passionate as everyone on this side of the House to see Queensland infrastructure delivered to meet the growth that we are experiencing. Queensland is booming. People are moving here in droves. They want to experience our lifestyle. They want to take up the jobs that we are creating. We need to deliver the infrastructure that they will need. We have the largest population growth. We have more coming with a record migration program from the Australian government. We have the largest road network of any of the states. Transport infrastructure is the arteries of our great state—the arteries that move people around, that move goods around, that move our exports to port. That is why yesterday I was pleased to lead a delegation of Queenslanders to Canberra to emphasise just how important our infrastructure funding is. I was grateful to our Queensland mayors and to the Trucking Association who made the effort to travel with me. They did a good job. I was pleased we were able to secure some progress, ensuring that we continue to have funding available for the Sunshine Coast heavy rail—a commitment where there is no intention to reduce funding to Queensland beyond the forward estimates or across the 10-year horizon.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

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

Dr MILES: That commitment alone could be worth up to \$5.7 billion to Queensland. There are still outstanding issues, and the Premier will be raising those at National Cabinet next week, but this was good, important progress for our Big Build. It means that the only real risk to our Big Build, the only

real risk to our infrastructure is those opposite and their plans to cut. They have already outlined \$10 billion of cuts to the Big Build. Then there is the secret pruning that the member for Chatsworth told us all about—billions more they intend to cut.

While I was in Canberra I was surprised to overhear one of the contributions in the chamber. The National's leader in Canberra, David Littleproud, was talking about the fire ant eradication program. This was a bit surprising because those opposite have spent all week saying we should do more on the fire ant eradication program while their leader in Canberra was saying that we should put an end to it—that we should give up on the fight against fire ants. He said the Australian government should commit no more money. That is what they say in Canberra. On this side of the House we will keep fighting for Queensland.

Health System

Ms BATES: My question is to the Premier. In the last 12 months Queensland's surgery waiting lists grew again to over 59,000 and ambulance ramping remains the worst in the country at 43 per cent. Will the Premier accept responsibility for the Queensland health crisis?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for the question. What we have learnt today from the opposition is they do not like Queensland. They are always talking it down and they are not talking it up. Coming from the 'member for dress ups' and the member who calls regional health workers duds, that is an embarrassment and a disgrace. Bring the member for Moggill in as the shadow health minister, for goodness sake. Let him come in and have a bit of decency in that portfolio so we can have a rational discussion across the chamber between two people who understand health.

Next week the No. 1 issue on the National Cabinet agenda is health because it is a national issue. This side of the House has the largest hospital build that Queensland has ever seen in our entire history—over \$9 billion. Who can forget, in relation to our world-leading satellite hospitals, that those opposite have criticised them every step of the way. At the last election I said we would deliver seven satellite hospitals, and by the next election there will be seven satellite hospitals. That eases the pressure on emergency departments. Those opposite have their heads in the sand, but over 120,000 people are moving to Queensland—the population of Rocky and Gladstone. Of course that is putting pressure on our hospitals, which is why we are building three new hospitals in Bundaberg, in Toowoomba—

Dr Robinson interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK:—and in Coomera. That is why we are building a world-class, dedicated Queensland cancer hospital. All of that is at risk at the next election if those opposite take over. I know what those opposite will do: they will cut the programs, they will cut the hospitals, they will sack the workers because that is in their DNA. The LNP DNA is to cut allied health workers. The last time they were in office they cut the adolescent mental health facility, which we will never forget.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the next member, I would like to remind members that members need to be addressed by their correct parliamentary title or electoral district. I have noticed on a couple of occasions this morning that incorrect titles have been creeping in. I ask you to consider standing order 244.

Screen Industry

Mr MELLISH: My question is to the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. Will the Treasurer update the House on the economic contribution of the film and television industry and any other matters relevant to the economy this season?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Aspley for his question and acknowledge his strong support for the screen industry and the arts in Queensland. I also acknowledge his support and that of the member for Kurwongbah for live music. Queensland's screen industry has made significant contributions to the state, culturally and economically. Since 2015 our government's Production Attraction Strategy has secured 59 local, interstate and international productions for Queensland. Those productions have contributed more than \$2 billion to the local economy and created more than 20,000 jobs for Queensland cast and crew.

Queensland's film and television sector truly is one of our great cultural and economic assets. To see that we need only look to Queensland's own Margot Robbie and that amazing film *Barbie*. I know that some members opposite are against the film on moral grounds: it is new, it is modern and it is a film by women about women, unlike the LNP. I encourage members opposite to watch *Barbie*. They might learn something.

Every story needs a Ken, and the member for Broadwater fits the bill perfectly. In 2012, at Christmastime, kids could buy Tropical Ken from Townsville but, sadly, that model was discontinued in 2015. Since 2017 it has been Beach Ken. Beaching and moaning: that is all we ever hear from Beach Ken. However, it runs deeper than that. Like Ken, the member for Broadwater is desperate to be noticed. We know that he can do flips: just look at the Path to Treaty. In the film, Ken drags Barbie Land backwards when he discovers the patriarchy. Enter Ken from Everton. As everyone knows, the LNP want to do the same thing to Queensland.

What about the co-stars? Kawana Barbie comes in an action jumpsuit, in pink of course. His views from the 1950s fit Barbie perfectly—Vintage Barbie, in fact—but he is more into chain gangs than Chanel. Maybe this year Queensland kids will be more inclined to buy Mudgeera Barbie.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member, it skirted on a couple but this one is actually an incorrect title being used. I ask you to withdraw. Member, this is not the Barbie Dreamhouse; this is the people's house. You need to come back to the question as asked.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Speaker. I appreciate your direction. In the cast, there is always one character who is not a Barbie—

Mr SPEAKER: Member, you will need to withdraw.

Mr DICK: I withdraw. I am sorry, Speaker. In the cast, there is always one character who is not a Barbie or a Ken. The member for Toowoomba South: Allan. Queenslanders know that this Christmas they cannot trust a word the LNP says and they know exactly what is in the LNP's Barbie box: just a bunch of beaching Kens.

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer, please get back in your box.

Housing

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Premier. The latest data released by the government for the past 12 months shows that residential lot approvals have decreased by a further four per cent. Will the Premier accept responsibility for the housing crisis facing Queensland families?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As I said at the start, there are issues happening across the nation and housing is one of them. I find this ironic coming from the man who was a housing minister in the Newman government, which wanted to sell off not 10 per cent and not 20 per cent of community housing—indeed, not 30, 40, 50, 60, 70 or 80 per cent—but 90 per cent, according to his press release.

Mr MANDER: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have already written to you about the Premier misleading the House on this particular issue and now she is doubling-down once again. I will be writing to you again about the misleading of the House by the Premier.

Ms Palaszczuk: I am correcting the record.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members to my right. Member for Everton, it needs to be a matter of privilege suddenly arising if that was what you were seeking to do. I am aware of correspondence and I will look at that in due course, plus any other correspondence you may send my way.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I was merely correcting the record. I apologised for saying 95 per cent when it was 90 per cent.

Mr Mander: Doubling-down again.

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, I am correcting the record from your press release. It was your media release.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Everton, you have made your point.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Who do they get to ask a housing question? The person who wanted to sell off community housing! That is a great idea.

Mr Mander interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is why we have a historic \$5 billion investment into social and affordable housing, which is the largest investment of any Queensland government.

An opposition member: The question was about supply.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In relation to supply, over 120,000 people are moving to Queensland, which is around 2,000 a week. The Deputy Premier is releasing more lots and working with the councils on the SEQ regional plan. We want to make sure that councils are working with the government to unlock more supply and put in place the catalytic infrastructure that opens up areas—infrastructure such as the Bells Creek Arterial Road that the Minister for Transport, the member for Caloundra and I opened recently. We built it 10 years ahead of schedule. It unlocks more opportunities for more houses to come online more quickly.

You only have to go to Yarrabilba, Coomera, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast to understand very clearly that those are growth areas of our state and houses are being built as quickly as possible. Through our build-to-rent project, we are building units in the inner city to ensure that people have access to affordable housing. Of course, we are looking at progressing the villages for the Olympics to make sure that affordable housing comes online on a much more advanced time line, to ensure that people can access that well ahead of schedule and so that there are lasting legacies in relation to that. In relation to supply, once again I say to those opposite: what are your ideas? Nothing!

(Time expired)

Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line

Mr HUNT: My question is of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services. Can the minister update the House on planning for the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line and the merits of any alternative approaches to planning for this infrastructure?

Mr BAILEY: I thank the member for Caloundra, who is doing an outstanding job for his electorate. He is achieving things in a very short space of time such as the Bells Creek Arterial Road project, which was delivered 10 years early. His record is already outstanding.

I thank the Deputy Premier for so effectively leading the delegation to Canberra yesterday to ensure that the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line will be prioritised by the federal government for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. He is a member who gets things done and he works very hard. Why do we have the Olympic and Paralympic Games? It is because this government funded another railway line, Cross River Rail. We fund rail. That is what we do. Whether it is Gold Coast Light Rail, Cross River Rail, the Sunshine Coast rail duplication or the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line, this government backs rail and backs the Sunshine Coast

Why is there a corridor for that project? It is because previous Labor governments secured the corridor for the heavy rail connection. In terms of preparing for it, the planning was co-funded by the Albanese government and this government when we finally received some interest in the project from Canberra. Previous governments under Abbott, Morrison and Turnbull gave zero. Now the business case is nearly completed, funded by this government. That is our record on the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line.

I was interested to look at some of the history of others on this issue. I have an article that outlines that, on 17 March 2009, the member for Maroochydore announced that the LNP would build a rail line from Caloundra to Maroochydore. Let us think about that: it was not connected to the heavy rail network. The member for Maroochydore announced that she wanted to build a heavy rail line that was not connected to the South-East Queensland rail network. The next day, the then LNP leader, Lawrence Springborg, called it 'an aspiration'. That is another LNP phrase for 'cuts'. We have heard 'pruning' and 'savings' from the member for Chatsworth, but at that time they called it 'an aspiration'.

They finally got into government in 2012, and what did they do about the Sunshine Coast direct line? Nothing. Zero! They had every Sunshine Coast MP and they did not build it! That is their record in terms of the Sunshine Coast direct line. The member for Maroochydore did not even plan to connect it to the rest of the rail network! Who gets rail done? The Palaszczuk Labor government gets rail done. I want to thank the Deputy Premier, the mayors and the Queensland Trucking Association for their advocacy. We get things done.

(Time expired)

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Premier. Given the government's annus horribilis and the Premier's refusal to take responsibility for the youth crime crisis, the health crisis, the housing crisis and the cost-of-living crisis, why should Queenslanders trust the Premier to provide the solutions in 2024?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker—

Mrs D'Ath interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I take the Attorney-General's interjection. Queenslanders cannot trust the LNP because of their track record. I say very clearly: there was one key theme at the last election that was repeated every single day. That was that if we had a strong health response it would lead to a strong economic recovery. That is what I said to Queenslanders and that is what I have delivered. When I said that I would not sell the assets, we did not sell the assets; we kept them in public hands. Our government has kept the assets in public hands. When those opposite came into office they sent them off to be sold off to the highest bidder.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Toowoomba South.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to give a history lesson, because some in the LNP were not around when the LNP was last in government.

A government member: A lot them were, though. A lot of them sat around the cabinet table.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Actually, some of them are still here and are now sitting around the shadow cabinet table. When we say that we are going to grow frontline services, we grow frontline services. When those opposite say 'no forced redundancies', we know what 'no forced redundancies' means. It means sacking 14,000 public servants. I will say this to those opposite: the Public Service can trust us because we stand by them every step of the way in every aspect of their work.

Mr Janetzki interjected.

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

Ms PALASZCZUK: Those opposite have very little understanding of history and process, because it was those opposite who used this parliament to sack the PCCC in the middle of the night—led by the member for Kawana. The member for Kawana, the then deputy premier and the then premier in the middle of the night sacked the PCCC right here in this chamber. The people of this state know me. They know that our government works hard and they know that we back Queenslanders. We have grown the economy to now be an economy with a '4' in front of it. That is something that governments dream of. Through our programs we have worked hard every single day to ensure that people have a job and the dignity of work. There is nothing more important than that. I urge members to get out and talk to people on the ground.

(Time expired)

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Achievements

Mr WHITING: My question is to the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing. Can the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's key achievements, including for the public sector and for Queensland schools, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Bancroft for his question because he has seen in his electorate that we have delivered in relation to schools, infrastructure and services supporting students. We were elected in 2020. This year has been an outstanding success. It is probably one of the first, what I call, more typical school years after three very difficult, atypical years during COVID. Our teachers, school leaders, teacher aides and staff in schools have risen to the occasion and done a great job. We are rolling out all of the infrastructure that we said that we would deliver. It was great to open four new schools this year—Ripley Central in Ipswich, Woogaroo Creek in Jordan, South Rock State School in Logan and the Palmview State Secondary College in Buderim.

Members can imagine my dismay when last night during a debate about the Sunshine Coast members opposite were talking about not delivering for the Sunshine Coast. They said that the Palaszczuk government is delivering nothing for the Sunshine Coast. They must have forgotten about the six schools that we have delivered since 2015—Baringa primary, Baringa secondary, Nirimba

primary, Palmview special, Palmview secondary and Palmview primary. Members opposite had the audacity to get up in this House and say that the Palaszczuk Labor government has delivered nothing for the Sunshine Coast. They fail to mention the roads, health facilities and everything else that we have delivered. It is incredible. The whingeing and whining from those opposite on every occasion never ceases to amaze us.

One measure we were proud to announce this year is free kindy in 2024. The Kindy Uplift and the Kindy for All have delivered increased numbers of those children we want in kindy. How proud we are of that. We are saving families \$4,600.

Another program of which I am very proud is LAFHAS, the Living Away From Home Allowance Scheme, which gives remote families \$4,000 in savings. Some 1,000 remote families will benefit from \$4,000 in savings. I was most upset that that I could not make the ICPA Julia Creek conference because when my DG announced this he got a standing ovation. I missed out on it. I was very upset about that. I was very happy that it was overwhelmingly welcomed and that then ICPA president Louise Martin labelled it as a game changer for rural and remote families. That is what we are doing for families in this state. We are saving them more money than any other state in the country. We will not be lectured to by those opposite on health or education services.

(Time expired)

Police Service, Recruitment

Mr LAST: My question is to the Premier. The Auditor-General has just released his report titled *Deploying police resources*. The Auditor-General found the Palaszczuk Labor government is not on track to meet its election promise to deliver an additional 1,450 police officers by 2025. Will the Premier admit that this is a broken election promise, failing to keep Queenslanders safe?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The police minister and the Police Commissioner have addressed this on numerous occasions. There is a national issue when it comes to attracting police officers and recruits. My recollection was that the commissioner said that there were 600 currently in the academy and 1,600 in the pipeline. We have introduced incentives to encourage people to get into that pipeline. I am advised that the Police Commissioner has supported the five recommendations made by the Queensland Audit Office. I have been further advised that work is already underway to address these recommendations.

Agriculture Industry

Mr MADDEN: My question without notice is to the Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities. Will the minister highlight the recent success of the Queensland government's support for agriculture, and are there any risks of alternative approaches?

Mr FURNER: I thank the member for his question. No doubt, three minutes does not give me time to explain all the successes of the Palaszczuk government in providing for our primary producer friends in Queensland. I put on record the Palaszczuk government's appreciation for them, particularly given the difficult times they have been through this year. They provide the food from paddock to plate for not only those in Queensland but also those in the nation and around world. They do a sterling job. I commend them for that.

When it comes to support not just at Christmas but throughout the year, it is the Palaszczuk government that provides that support and is the true friend of the farmers, including me as 'Furner the farmers' friend', of course. When it comes to LNP support for agriculture, it is the Christmas grinch, the National's leader David Littleproud, who Queenslanders need to be really scared of. The Deputy Premier was in Canberra yesterday and probably did not realise the significance of David Littleproud's statements in terms of wanting to rip \$268 million in funding from Queensland under the National Fire Ant Eradication Program.

The member for Maranoa, who purports to represent Queensland, should be ashamed of himself. He claims to be supporting Queensland yet wants to strip away that sort of funding. It is incredible to think that a National still cannot understand the national program that it is. No wonder they are called the 'door Nats' in Canberra. David Littleproud was ignorant when he was minister for agriculture. He wants to be vindictive to Queenslanders—a true LNP grinch.

We remember the federal LNP government's cuts of 25 per cent to biosecurity when they were in power last time. Conversely, those opposite should be quite familiar with these things. When the LNP were in power, Mr McVeigh told Fairfax Media that the total number of budgeted positions they wanted to cut from the fire ant program was 181 to 126 jobs. They also cut millions of dollars out of the program.

That is no surprise from those opposite. It is in their DNA when it comes to dealing with not only biosecurity and agriculture but also the Public Service—cutting jobs and cutting millions of dollars out of successful programs like the fire ant program that is in place now. Had we not funded this program, the fire ants would have spread as far north as Bowen, as far west as Longreach and as far south as Canberra. That is why this program is so successful. We are on top of it. We are eradicating fire ants. Those opposite want to cut the program. The LNP opposition in Canberra want to cut the program as well. That is the case as it stands.

Children, Gender Dysphoria Treatment

Mr KATTER: My question is to the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women. I refer the minister to the statement to the House on 14 September this year that the policies and practices with respect to the treatment of gender dysphoria at the Queensland Children's Hospital, which has suspended a senior child psychiatrist, Dr Jillian Spencer, over her management of children presenting with gender dysphoria, 'is of very high quality and based on the best available evidence'. Would the minister please provide the source of that evidence?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Traeger for the question. Firstly, I want to say that the Palaszczuk government proudly stands with trans and gender-diverse Queenslanders and respects the rights of everyone to live freely and without discrimination. Our Queensland Children's Gender Service is one of the best in the country and delivers life-changing care based on that international best practice.

I can confirm for the member that the Queensland Children's Gender Service provides best practice care by adherence to peer reviewed national and internationally accepted published practice clinical guidelines. That includes those published by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, which has synthesised the last 10 years of research resulting in updated standards of care. This publication has incorporated a rigorous and evidence-based approach to care of this group of individuals who are particularly vulnerable.

Whilst acknowledging that best practices rely on some aspects of transgender health care and there is not consensus, the work continues. This is also guided by the *Australian standards of care and treatment guidelines for transgender and gender diverse children and adolescents*, published in the *Medical Journal of Australia*, and the *Endocrine treatment of gender-dysphoric/gender-incongruent persons*, published in 2017. I am happy to get a copy for the member.

The Queensland Children's Gender Service is also a member of the Australian Research Consortium for Trans Youth and Children. That group was launched last year and is co-designing and co-delivering research with consumers that continues to work on a stronger evidence base to inform the care of transgender and gender-diverse children, adolescents and young people. I have met with many people who have used this service, and they absolutely rely on this service. This service supports some of the most vulnerable young people in the Queensland. The evidence is developing, member for Traeger, but the evidence that is there and has been published in internationally renowned journals I am happy to provide for the member. I am also happy to arrange for a briefing for the member from the Chief Executive of the Children's Hospital, Mr Frank Tracey, to talk about the work that is happening at the Queensland Children's Gender Service.

Neighbourhood Centres

Ms BOYD: My question is to the Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts. Will the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's support for Queensland's neighbourhood centres?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Pine Rivers for her question and for her ongoing support and advocacy for these important centres in our communities. We know that neighbourhood centres are incredibly important. They play a crucial role—an increasingly important role—in communities. We know that they are a point of universal support. They are often the first point of contact for vulnerable Queenslanders. Increasingly, we are seeing their role extending into supporting those who are impacted by natural disasters and other events that are affecting the pure fabric of the community. We note that they are very important.

That is why last year we saw the Palaszczuk government deliver a record \$115.8 million funding boost for the neighbourhood centre sector over four years. That included the single biggest increase in base funding for state government funded neighbourhood centres in our state's history. I know that the neighbourhood centre in the electorate of Pine Rivers is very happy to be receiving that extra funding. In fact, it is almost double the base funding that they had been receiving previously. It recognises that they are such an important part of our community.

We are also investing in new builds and rebuilds of our neighbourhood centres across the state. It is part of our Big Build. Mr Speaker, let me tell you a few of the places. We have been investing in building and rebuilding centres in Atherton—I want to acknowledge the member for Hill, who opened the new centre in Atherton—Bowen, Gladstone, Inala, Kallangur, Thursday Island, Wilsonton Heights and Yarrabilba. That is an incredible amount of build that has happened with our neighbourhood centres.

In addition, the government is continuing its work to deliver new centres and redevelopments in Bribie Island, Caboolture, Manunda, Manoora, Ripley, Rockhampton and Yeronga. We know that they are going to be important parts of those communities. We know that because Queenslanders are doing it tough and, because of national cost-of-living pressures, they are often turning up to our neighbourhood centres for the support they need, including emergency relief. Funding for emergency relief providers doubled last year as a result of our commitment to ensuring we are dealing with cost-of-living pressures in Queensland. In this budget, further funding of \$3.3 million has been committed to expand the emergency relief response through our neighbourhood centres.

All of that is at risk. Those opposite cut emergency relief to those organisations when they were in power—to organisations like St Vincent de Paul and others that delivered an amazing amount of support to people. On this side of the House we will continue to support people in their time of need—vulnerable Queenslanders. On the other side they will only cut and sack and sell.

(Time expired)

Housing, Vacancy Levy

Dr MacMAHON: My question is to the Premier. This week, after pressure from the Greens, the Victorian Labor government increased their levy on properties left vacant long-term to bring homes back into the rental market. When will this government follow the lead of Victoria and introduce a vacancy levy to get thousands of properties left empty by investors back into the rental market?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for the question. There are no plans to do that.

Regional Queensland, Resources Industries

Mrs GILBERT: My question is of the Minister for Resources. Will the minister outline how the Palaszczuk government is supporting resource communities?

Mr STEWART: I thank the member for the question. I know that she has been an important advocate when it comes to Glenden in particular and the future of resources in our great state. The Palaszczuk government will always support our regional and rural communities. We are committed to that. Our resources belong to Queenslanders. It makes sense that Queenslanders stand to benefit when it comes to the business of extracting and selling those products. This is not just about our progressive coal royalties, which those opposite oppose. This is about helping to pay for projects like CopperString 2032, in my neck of the woods, from Townsville to Mount Isa. That is a game changer for us. In fact, it is the game for us.

It is part of our Big Build, including Queensland's Energy and Jobs Plan. The Palaszczuk government has ensured that our regional and rural communities benefit from Queensland's resources through the Strong and Sustainable Communities Act we passed here in 2017. This act ensures that businesses in the resources sector boost local economies by hiring local workers and businesses to carry out work rather than exclusively relying on fly-in fly-out. Unfortunately, the Glenden coalmine was not captured by this legislation due to the timing of when it was passed. That is why we moved additional legislation through this parliament in August to ensure the people of Glenden could have certainty and clarity about where workers would be housed when working at mine operations in their own backyard.

The member for Burdekin has criticised the Palaszczuk government for acting to save Glenden. The member for Burdekin said that he has advocated for Glenden since 2017, but not one phone call was made to me during this process to advocate on behalf of Glenden—not one phone call. Forgive

me for thinking that Isaac Regional Council Mayor Ann Baker may have been the member for Burdekin, because as it was unfolding it was the mayor and her team and her local representatives whom I heard from time and time again about saving Glenden. Where was the member for Burdekin during the 'save Glenden' campaign? If I recall correctly, the member for Burdekin used his time in parliament while the legislation was being discussed to complain that the Palaszczuk government was moving this legislation through urgently. Now the member for Burdekin is asking in his local newsletter, 'Why did this take so long?' It is obvious to me that the member for Burdekin is not interested in representing Glenden or the community he is supposed to be the member for. He is only interested in attempting to get a political dig in at the Palaszczuk government to suit his own political interests. There was no phone call, no text message, no email, no letter and no idea. The people of Burdekin deserve better.

Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure. I note the Deputy Premier celebrating the already announced and committed \$1.6 billion federal government contribution to the Sunshine Coast direct heavy rail. How much is the state contribution over the next four years, and when will heavy rail be completed to Maroochydore?

Dr MILES: I thank the member for Maroochydore for her question. As she well knows, the planning process for Sunshine Coast heavy rail is well advanced. It is good news that the Australian government has agreed to work with us to prioritise it as part of not just transport planning for Brisbane 2032 but the wider vision for people being able to get around the South-East Queensland region, from the Gold Coast to Brisbane and north to the Sunshine Coast. This is the kind of region-changing infrastructure that on this side of the House we are committed to. We deliver public transport. We make trains to run on those train tracks and we connect those train tracks to the other train tracks so that the train can get you from one place to another place. We will not be building the member for Maroochydore's train to nowhere. We will be connecting the Sunshine Coast line to the wider South-East Queensland network so you can get on the train on the Sunshine Coast, Moreton Bay, Ipswich, the Gold Coast, Brisbane or Logan and get around the region, because that is—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock.

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(a), debating the matter. The question was: when will it be delivered and how much is the state contribution?

Mr SPEAKER: There are a couple of things. I believe that the minister is actually saying it may not be delivered and he is explaining why, if I hear the response correctly. The second part is that the minister has one minute and 34 seconds left to round out his answer.

Dr MILES: As I said at the outset, we are concluding the business case, concluding the planning for that important region-shaping project. We can complete that planning work now that we have that rock-solid commitment from the Australian government to commit at least \$1.6 billion to it. We welcome that commitment. We welcome their agreement to work with us on wider regional transport planning between now and 2032. Of course we will do that work, and that work will outline the timing and costs for the project.

Mr Speaker, I tell you what will guarantee that you never get a rail line to the Sunshine Coast, and that is those opposite and their plan to cut to cut \$10 billion from our Big Build. If you take \$10 billion from our Big Build then you cannot be investing in the rail network. How do we know that? In 2012, when they boasted about cutting the infrastructure program, they rejected Australian government funding for Cross River Rail. We would have Cross River Rail right now—it would be open and it would have been funded partly by the Australian government—if those opposite had not walked away from it. Without Cross River Rail you could never have entertained Sunshine Coast rail; there never would have been the cross-city capacity. On this side of the House we will proudly deliver for infrastructure—

(Time expired)

Multiculturalism

Mr BROWN: My question is to the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Can the minister update the House on the Palaszczuk government's efforts to encourage multiculturalism in Queensland, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr SPEAKER: I call the minister. You have one minute to respond.

Ms LINARD: I thank the member for the question and for his commitment to the multicultural communities in his electorate and acknowledge the many festivals we have across Queensland. We know that Queensland is incredibly multicultural. Around 20 per cent of Queensland's population was born overseas. I think many do not realise that around 50 per cent of Queenslanders were either born overseas or have one or both parents born overseas—half of our population. One in every eight of us speak at least one of over 190 overseas languages. Our government knows that with great diversity comes the need to foster genuine, authentic inclusion so that all Queenslanders can contribute, belong and thrive.

I am pleased, in the very short time I have, to announce today that the Palaszczuk government will provide \$900,000 in funding to support 125 events and festivals celebrating Queensland's diversity in 2024. I encourage all members to encourage their constituents to attend those events.

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Comments by the Member for Mudgeeraba



Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (11.17 am): I rise to make a ministerial statement. I have an update for the House about the Gold Coast University Hospital allegations that were raised by the member for Mudgeeraba in the House earlier this week, and reported by the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, that staff were apparently so busy they were passing urine bottles in full view of the triage area. I have been busting today to give this update to the member for Mudgeeraba, and I think she will probably be a little peed off about what I have to say, because I can confirm—

Mr SPEAKER: I think there is an inference in terms of the context of that. I would ask you to withdraw that.

Ms FENTIMAN: I withdraw. Perhaps the member for Mudgeeraba should learn to bottle it up and maybe check her facts before coming into parliament. I can confirm that the HHS has now reviewed CCTV footage of the entire hospital on Monday afternoon and has not found one shred of evidence—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Please resume your seat, Minister. Member for Mudgeeraba, do you have a point of order?

Ms BATES: No, Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. Paramedics have already sent me that photo. It is the wrong area, you fool! It is not Berocca—

Mr SPEAKER: Member, you will resume your seat!

Ms Bates: It is not a bottle of Berocca.

Mr SPEAKER: The member will resume her seat!

Ms Bates: It is not a bottle of Berocca. You are just after whistleblowers!

Mr SPEAKER: Member, that was completely unparliamentary. I will ask you to withdraw elements of your statement that were certainly unparliamentary, particularly the offensive term used aimed at another member directly.

Ms BATES: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Based on that—

Ms McMillan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mansfield, you are warned under the standing orders. Member for Mudgeeraba, for that disorderly conduct I will ask you to withdraw for the remainder of the day under standing order 252. I ask that you do that now.

Whereupon the honourable member for Mudgeeraba withdrew from the chamber at 11.19 am.

Mr SPEAKER: Do you have anything further to add, Minister?

Ms FENTIMAN: As I was saying, I can confirm that the HHS have reviewed CCTV footage and found no evidence of anyone passing urine in the hallways. What they have found evidence of is that ED staff regularly drink electrolyte drinks whilst they are on shift and there are bottles of Berocca that are kept on the ED counter. In fact, here is a photo of one taken just this morning. I table that photo.

Tabled paper: Photograph depicting a bottle of liquid [2055].

That is a regular occurrence at the ED. I think the member for Mudgeeraba might be relieved to hear that this is simply a matter of staff doing what they must on a very busy afternoon to help Queenslanders on the Gold Coast.

Again, can I thank Dr David Green and the team at the Gold Coast emergency hospital. Despite the huge amount of pressure they faced, the average patient-off-stretcher time was 28 minutes and they never reached capacity. I have not heard the opposition thank the staff at the busiest ED for the work they have done. The chief executive of the Gold Coast University Hospital will of course be in contact with the *Gold Coast Bulletin* to retract those comments, and I will be writing to you, Mr Speaker, about the member for Mudgeeraba misleading this place once again. Can I say a merry Christmas to the member for Mudgeeraba. That makes 23 times she has been excluded from this place in 2023.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister, for your statement.

Ms FENTIMAN: Sorry, Mr Speaker. It is 23 times this term, but it is 23 by 2023.

Mr MICKELBERG: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There is a convention in this place that we do not reflect on members after they are no longer in the House. I would contend the minister is reflecting on the absence of the member for Mudgeeraba.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, the convention is that we do not refer to their absence in the chamber at the time, not about the fact that they have been excluded previously. That is well and truly within the standing orders to be able to do so.

MOTION

Citizen's Right of Reply



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (11.22 am), by leave, without notice: I move—

1. That, notwithstanding sessional order 6, this House now notes report No. 220 of the Ethics Committee and the recommendation of the committee that a right of reply be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*; and
2. That the House adopt the committee's recommendation and incorporate the right of reply into the *Record of Proceedings*.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

RESPONSE BY DR JILLIAN SPENCER TO STATEMENTS MADE BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH AND AMBULANCE SERVICES AND MINISTER FOR WOMEN AND MEMBER FOR WATERFORD, HON SHANNON FENTIMAN MP, ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2023

On 14 September 2023, the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women referred to me by name when responding to a question without notice.

The Minister's statement suggests that I am the subject of a number of patient complaints.

That is incorrect. There is only one patient complaint lodged against me.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction



Hon. G GRACE (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (11.22 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Safety in Recreational Water Activities Act 2011, the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Education, Employment and Training Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 [2056].

Tabled paper: Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes [2057].

Tabled paper: Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [2058].

I am proud to introduce the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The bill continues the Palaszczuk government's long record of strengthening workplace health and safety laws in Queensland and leading the nation in doing so. This bill builds on our substantial reforms in 2017 which introduced the offence of industrial manslaughter and established the independent Work Health and Safety Prosecutor.

Ensuring Queensland workers are protected by robust and contemporary work health and safety laws is of paramount importance. The impact workplace fatalities have on loved ones, friends and colleagues is immense—the pain and grief unimaginable. Today, I again extend my deepest condolences to the family, friends and workmates of workers who have lost their lives as a result of work. We must do all we can to ensure workers are protected in the workplace and that employers comply with health and safety laws.

The bill gives effect to substantial legislative recommendations made by the independent 2022 review of the Work Health and Safety Act, as well as nine recommendations from the 2018 national review of the model work health and safety laws undertaken by Ms Marie Boland. On 18 August 2022, I announced a review into the Work Health and Safety Act as I considered it timely to examine whether existing frameworks in the act are robust and operating effectively to secure the health and safety of workers and workplaces.

To lead the Work Health and Safety Act review, I appointed three independent reviewers: Mr Craig Allen, former deputy director-general of the Office of Industrial Relations; Mr Charles Massy, a barrister specialising in industrial relations and employment law; and Ms Deirdre Swan, former deputy president of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. These eminently qualified experts brought a valuable combination of regulatory, practical and legal perspectives to the review. The terms of reference for the review focused on ensuring the provisions relating to health and safety representatives and issue and dispute resolution are effective and operating as intended and ensuring that workers are appropriately represented and assisted when it comes to health and safety matters.

I acknowledge the careful consideration the reviewers gave to stakeholder views and express my thanks for their thorough examination of the issues raised during the review. I also extend my thanks to Dr Rebecca Loudoun, associate professor at Griffith University, and Dr Carol Hon, senior lecturer and research fellow at the Queensland University of Technology, who provided the reviewers with support during the review. I know their contribution was greatly valued by the reviewers.

I would also like to extend my thanks to all stakeholders who participated in consultation during the review of the act and the development of this bill. I am very pleased that registered unions and employer groups could find common ground on measures to protect the health and safety of people in Queensland workplaces. It is very well established that safety is improved when there is effective worker representation on work health and safety matters. Health and safety representatives play an integral role in improving health and safety outcomes in the workplace through providing representation and the support necessary to identify, notify and resolve work health and safety issues.

The bill implements recommendations of the review to strengthen the operation of the health and safety representative framework in the act. It does this by clarifying and better integrating the role of the health and safety representative in the workplace. The bill requires employers to be proactive in supporting the formation of work groups and the election of health and safety representatives. This includes: advising workers about the role, powers and functions of health and safety representatives; the election process; and who may represent workers in negotiations for work groups. Further, employers must invite workers to request that the employer facilitate the election of health and safety representatives. The bill also introduces new offences to prohibit employers from intentionally hindering, preventing or discouraging workers from making a request about facilitating the conduct of an election for health and safety representatives.

Clear time frames are established for the completion of work group negotiations and establishment of health and safety committees, as well as for resolving any disputes in relation to them. This will ensure no unnecessary delays in establishing these important consultative arrangements at a workplace. Negotiations for work groups must be completed within 14 days, though there is space to extend this date by mutual agreement. The time frame for establishment of a health and safety committee is reduced from two months to 28 days.

The bill implements the recommendation of the reviewers that relevant unions, by written request, can be a party to work group negotiations. This enables a relevant union to become a party to any resulting dispute without requiring a worker to make the request and identify themselves as a union

member to their employer. The reviewers also heard from stakeholders that they want faster and more definitive resolution so that, if there is a dispute regarding work group negotiations or the establishment of health and safety committees, an inspector can be appointed to assist the parties to reach an agreement or to otherwise make a decision within seven days. If required, a party to the dispute can refer the matter directly to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission for resolution. The inspector's decision will stand until the matter is otherwise determined by the QIRC. This ensures that workers are represented for safety matters even if there is an ongoing dispute. Relevant unions, as a party to work group negotiations, can also apply to have the dispute resolved by the QIRC.

Importantly, the bill delivers on an election commitment that health and safety representatives can choose their training provider. It also clarifies that remuneration while attending training is to include any overtime, penalties or allowances they would otherwise be entitled to receive if the worker was performing their usual duties. This ensures workers are paid their usual pay during health and safety representative training and takes away any barrier of financial disadvantage which might discourage some workers from becoming a health and safety representative.

The Work Health and Safety Act review found that for health and safety representatives to perform the role envisaged by the Work Health and Safety Act it is necessary for them to be fully integrated into the identification and resolution of safety issues at the workplace.

The bill requires health and safety representatives to be notified when an inspector or work health and safety entry permit holder is on site and to allow them to join them where the visit is relevant to their work group. Employers are required to provide health and safety representatives with copies of enforcement notices issued by inspectors, work health and safety entry permit holders' entry notices, and mandatory incident notifications made to the regulator that are relevant to the representative's work group. To ensure that a health and safety representative has information on enforcement notices issued, the representative can also request that information from the regulator.

I fully endorse the reviewers' finding that it is impossible for a health and safety representative to be effective in performing their functions and powers if they are not fully apprised of safety issues that have been identified at their workplace. For the most serious circumstances, the bill implements the recommendations of the reviewers to improve the cease work powers of health and safety representatives and make them more effective. If a serious risk to health and safety remains unresolved after the health and safety representative has consulted with the employer and attempted to resolve it, the representative may issue a written cease work direction to the employer who must cease the work until such time as the issue is resolved or the direction is set aside in accordance with the dispute resolution process. This provides greater clarity on cease work arrangements and supports resolution of serious issues that put workers at risk. Health and safety representatives retain the power to direct a worker to cease work where there is an immediate exposure to risk that is serious enough that prior consultation is not reasonable. Training for health and safety representatives will cover the cease work notice direction to ensure they understand and have the confidence to exercise these powers if the need arises. My department will develop straightforward templates for use by health and safety representatives exercising this power.

This bill will also create greater consistency between the Work Health and Safety Act and the Industrial Relations Act. Firstly, the bill amends the definition of 'discriminatory conduct' in the Work Health and Safety Act to include treating a worker less favourably than other workers. This change closely reflects the Industrial Relations Act and provides an additional circumstance in which discriminatory matters can be brought under the Work Health and Safety Act. This will include situations in which a worker is treated less favourably than other workers on the basis that the worker has been, or seeks to be, involved in work health and safety issues at the workplace. Proceedings relating to discriminatory or coercive conduct will occur in the QIRC rather than the Magistrates Court, with clarification that a relevant union has standing to commence a proceeding. With the additional workload of the commission, due to changes to the Industrial Relations Act and further changes incorporated in this bill an expression of interest process has been conducted for additional appointments to the commission.

Secondly, the bill also clarifies rules on the representation of workers by relevant registered unions for work health and safety matters to ensure consistency with the amendments made to the Industrial Relations Act in 2022. The reviewers found that the involvement of registered unions improves safety outcomes and there is strong evidence that registered unions are the most important source of support for health and safety representatives. This supports the government's longstanding position

that primacy is given to registered employee organisations with appropriate coverage by ensuring that unions that seek to exercise representation rights under the Work Health and Safety Act are those organisations that fulfil the stringent governance and accountability requirements under the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009 or the Industrial Relations Act 2016. Unregistered organisations are not subject to the same rigorous transparency, accountability and registration requirements as registered industrial organisations. Therefore, the bill excludes associations of employees or independent contractors and other non-union organisations that represent, or purport to represent, the industrial interests of workers from involvement in resolving work health and safety matters.

The bill clarifies the rights of work health and safety entry permit holders in relation to suspected contraventions to enable them to perform their intended role and functions effectively and minimise the opportunity for disputation. The bill clarifies that the requirement to give notice of entry does not limit the ability of a work health and safety entry permit holder to enter the workplace before giving notice, and any defects or irregularities—for example, incorrect spelling—in the notice do not make the notice invalid. Work health and safety entry permit holders, on giving notice of entry, will be able to remain at a workplace for the time needed to achieve the purpose of entry within usual working hours at the workplace. The bill also clarifies that, in relation to suspected contraventions, work health and safety entry permit holders can consult with workers and access employee records at the workplace without the requirement to give additional 24 hours notice.

Currently, a work health and safety entry permit holder must comply with any request to meet a work health and safety requirement at the workplace that is reasonable. The reviewers found that in some cases this was not used appropriately. The bill clarifies that a request is not reasonable if complying would unduly delay or unreasonably hinder or obstruct a work health and safety entry permit holder from exercising a right of entry—for example, requiring them to undertake site induction at a location far from where the entry is sought or excessive and unnecessary use of exclusion zones that would unduly delay entry to the workplace.

The bill enables work health and safety entry permit holders to request information from the regulator about enforcement notices issued by inspectors. Protections have been included to ensure that any personal and confidential commercial information cannot be disclosed. This will support work health and safety entry permit holders in fulfilling their role by providing them with an avenue of awareness of health and safety issues that have been found by the inspectors at a workplace.

The bill also continues the Palaszczuk government's delivery of an election commitment to implement recommendations of the Boland review. This includes an important amendment to extend the category 1 offence to include the fault element of negligence. This means that where the duty holder's negligent conduct leads to a high risk of serious harm, they can be subject to the same significant penalties as the reckless conduct category 1 offence.

This bill introduces new offences to prohibit a person from providing, entering into or benefiting from a contract of insurance or indemnity to cover liability for monetary penalties imposed by the Work Health and Safety Act and the Safety in Recreational Water Activities Act. This was a recommendation of the best practice review of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland that has been adopted in the national model work health and safety laws. It is simply unacceptable for companies to put workers' safety at risk and to use insurance to avoid any financial penalties imposed on them.

While this bill represents a substantial package of reforms, some of the recommendations of the review are being delivered separately. In response to recommendation 31 of the work health and safety review, I have requested that the Work Health and Safety Prosecutor conduct a review of the industrial manslaughter laws which were introduced in the 2017 act amendment. In conducting this review, the Work Health and Safety Prosecutor will bring knowledge and practical experience in the operation of these provisions since they have come into effect.

Work is continuing on the remaining legislative recommendations from the review. This includes two recommendations that were originally intended to progress with this bill to extend the powers of the health and safety representatives and health and safety entry permit holders to take photos and make videos and take measurements and samples. Further consultation will be undertaken to ensure these powers are accompanied by robust safeguards to protect privacy. These recommendations will be progressed next year.

Consultation is also continuing on the elevation of the hierarchy of control from the Work Health and Safety Regulation to the Work Health and Safety Act. The hierarchy of control is an important part of risk management in the workplace. In addition, to complement the improvements contained in the bill, it is my intention to commission an independent review of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland, the regulator, to ensure its activities remain contemporary and reflective of community expectations. Initial stakeholder consultation will commence this year, and I anticipate that the review will be completed in early 2024.

The bill strengthens the Work Health and Safety Act by improving worker consultation and representation and ensures any disputes can be dealt with effectively and without unnecessary delays. This builds upon the Palaszczuk government's proud record of standing up for Queensland workers. We believe that every single worker has the right to be safe in the workplace and to return home safe and healthy to their families and loved ones at the end of the day. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. G GRACE (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (11.42 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 Education, Employment and Training Committee

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

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Introduction

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (11.43 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Criminal Code, the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, the Mental Health Act 2016, the Public Health Act 2005, the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Health and Environment Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023 [\[2059\]](#).

Tabled paper: Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023, explanatory notes [\[2060\]](#).

Tabled paper: Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[2061\]](#).

The Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023 will: lay the groundwork for introducing minimum midwife-to-patient and baby ratios in maternity awards; enhance access to termination of pregnancy care in Queensland; promote quality improvement and patient safety in public health facilities in Queensland; and improve the operation of health legislation.

The quality of maternity care at our public hospitals is one of this government's key priorities and an issue that I care about deeply. Queensland families deserve access to the best quality care, and our midwives work incredibly hard to deliver compassionate and comprehensive care to mothers and their babies. That is why we are implementing minimum midwife-to-patient ratios in our larger hospitals. Queensland was the first state in Australia to introduce nurse-to-patient ratios in 2016, and we have since seen other states follow our lead. This is the next step.

Currently, we do not have any minimum midwife-to-patient ratios in our Queensland maternity wards. The amendments clarify that for calculating midwife-to-patient ratios on maternity wards a baby will be counted as a separate patient when they are staying in a room with their birth parent. Under our proposed changes, the minimum ratio will be one midwife to every six patients, including babies. Midwives have been calling for this change for years. We know that ratios work, and I am so proud that we are delivering for our frontline staff. More staff members means better patient outcomes.

Since 2015 we have legislated minimum nurse-to-patient ratios in prescribed medical, surgical and mental health wards in public health facilities as well as across Queensland Health's 16 public residential aged-care facilities. Queensland's minimum nurse-to-patient ratios have led to low mortality and readmission rates as well as shorter lengths of stay. Ratios also give nurses more time to complete necessary care and time to detect patient changes. Nurses also reported better job satisfaction and less burnout, while patients were more likely to recommend the hospital to family and friends. I am confident that these same benefits will be realised in our larger hospitals once we implement minimum midwife-to-patient ratios. I thank and pay tribute to all of the amazing staff who have pushed for these changes to become possible. Thanks to them, the care that Queensland mothers and their bubs will receive is going to be far safer.

The Palaszczuk government has always recognised the importance of Queenslanders' access to reproductive services. In fact, we just marked five years since our government progressed landmark reforms to establish a new framework for lawful terminations in Queensland under the Termination of Pregnancy Act. As a result of these reforms, termination of pregnancy is now regulated primarily as a health service rather than under the criminal law.

Although we have come a long way, there is still work to do to remove barriers that pregnant people face when seeking reproductive health care. Access to termination-of-pregnancy care remains a significant issue for Queenslanders. Early medical terminations are currently performed using the termination drug MS-2 Step, which is a schedule 4 medicine approved in Australia for the medical termination of pregnancy. However, there is only a short window of opportunity for pregnant persons to choose to have less invasive, early medical termination by taking MS-2 Step—up to nine weeks gestation. A person seeking a termination after this time may have to be admitted to hospital for a more complex and psychologically challenging medical induction or surgical termination. For people living in rural and remote areas, this often involves the added social and financial burden of travelling long distances to access these services. The current arrangements result in inequitable access to safe, early medical termination-of-pregnancy services. We know that too many people are missing out on the short window to choose to have a less invasive early medical termination by taking MS-2 Step because they do not have access to a medical practitioner who prescribes the drug.

Access to safe termination-of-pregnancy care is a human right. No pregnant person in Queensland should have to travel hundreds of kilometres to access this essential drug. On 11 July 2023, the Therapeutic Goods Administration announced that from 1 August 2023 changes would be made to the prescribing and dispensing requirements for MS-2 Step. One of these changes means that MS-2 Step can now be prescribed by any healthcare practitioner with appropriate qualifications and training. The prescribing of MS-2 Step is no longer limited by the TGA to registered medical practitioners, and we have taken action to implement this change in Queensland as soon as possible. During consultation, stakeholders overwhelmingly agreed that nurses and midwives have the necessary skills, experience, qualifications and training to undertake this important role and provide greater access to reproductive health care, particularly in rural and remote communities.

The amendments in the bill to the Termination of Pregnancy Act and the Criminal Code will enable nurses and midwives to perform medical terminations using a registered termination of pregnancy drug in appropriate circumstances and in accordance with their authorised activities under the Medicines and Poisons Act. Importantly, this framework will include the gestational limits at which registered termination of pregnancy drugs, such as MS-2 Step, can be used. The bill includes a regulation-making power to allow additional types of registered health practitioners to be prescribed to perform medical terminations of pregnancy using a registered termination of pregnancy drug, such as MS-2 Step, in the future. This will allow flexibility to adjust the legislation over time to extend access to termination of pregnancy services as other cohorts of health practitioners become suitably trained, qualified and experienced to perform medical terminations of pregnancy such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

As is already the case, doctors will remain the only practitioners authorised to perform either surgical or medical terminations of pregnancy for gestations nine weeks and above. The bill also allows prescribed practitioners, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers, and students on clinical placement to assist nurses and midwives in performing early medical terminations. This will ensure these prescribed practitioners are able to learn and gain experience in providing reproductive and termination of pregnancy care.

The bill also removes gendered language from the Termination of Pregnancy Act and related provisions in the Criminal Code and the Powers of Attorney Act. The Termination of Pregnancy Act currently only authorises terminations in Queensland to be performed on a 'woman'. This language is

not inclusive of people who are gender diverse or do not identify as women, such as transgender men, who may also require reproductive health care. The bill will ensure that all pregnant people can lawfully access termination of pregnancy care in Queensland. Removing gendered language will strengthen legal recognition of transgender and gender-diverse communities accessing health care in Queensland and aligns with this government's commitment to make our laws more inclusive. The use of gender-neutral language in legislation is also consistent with contemporary drafting practices.

The bill also includes important amendments to procedural aspects of the Mental Health Act about the use and storage of expert reports and court transcripts. The most significant change in the bill will allow expert reports and transcripts from Mental Health Court proceedings to be admissible in criminal proceedings for any criminal offence. The reports and transcripts will only be able to be used to assist the criminal courts to consider a person's unsoundness of mind, fitness for trial and sentencing. This change does not impact the court's discretion about whether the evidence is admissible, and courts will still be able to decide whether to admit a report or transcript in evidence based on established evidentiary principles.

The bill will also streamline procedures for the use of expert reports that have been filed with the Mental Health Court registry but not yet formally received in evidence. This will facilitate the reports being used for planning and delivery of a person's assessment, treatment and care while they await their Mental Health Court hearing and for the reports to be considered by other experts when formulating their opinion and evidence for the Court.

We know Queensland's health system is world class. However, the delivery of health care is complex and occasionally things do not go as expected. The Hospital and Health Boards Act includes a clinical incident management framework to ensure patient safety issues are addressed in a timely and meaningful way. The framework fosters a culture of safe and reliable care through analysis and learning to reduce preventable occurrences and improve patient safety.

To encourage a focus on learning, professional development and clinical improvement, the Hospital and Health Boards Act prohibits the disclosure of information about clinical incident management, particularly information which may identify a patient or a health professional, subject to very limited exceptions. Although it is very important that these processes are subject to strict confidentiality provisions, it has been identified that changes are required to improve patient safety and ensure that the provisions are working effectively.

An important change is that the bill will require a quality assurance committee to notify a health professional's chief executive if the committee reasonably believes that a health professional poses a serious risk of harm to a person because of their conduct or performance. The current provisions of the act prevent quality assurance committees from sharing information about serious risks with the department or a hospital and health service so that these risks can be proactively addressed.

The inclusion of 'serious risk of harm' is a deliberately high threshold for reporting. It is designed to ensure quality assurance committees are only required to report when there are very significant concerns that harm is being caused. This threshold will also encourage health professionals to continue to participate in the quality assurance committee process. The bill will also improve the sharing of recommendations from root cause analysis reports and ensure the chief executive of Queensland Health can take action on clinical reviews and health service investigations regardless of whether those processes were commenced by a hospital and health service or by the department.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to prioritising the health and safety of all Queenslanders. The bill facilitates initiatives that promote quality improvement and patient safety to drive the safe and effective operation of our health system to achieve the best possible health outcomes for Queenslanders. As Minister for Women, it is extremely important to me that all pregnant women and people in Queensland have the right to choose termination of pregnancy care and pregnancy health care. Access to those services should not depend on someone's postcode.

At the last election, we committed to boosting frontline health services and expanding nurse-to-patient ratios in maternity wards and I am so proud we are delivering something for which our frontline staff have called for many years. I would like to again acknowledge and thank our amazing nurses and midwives and other health workers for their dedication to serving the people of Queensland and providing world-class health care. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the many individuals and organisations that engaged in Queensland Health's consultation process and provided feedback on the policy proposals in this bill. 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) (11.55 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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Environment Committee.

PHARMACY BUSINESS OWNERSHIP BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (11.55 am): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

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

MESSAGE

PHARMACY BUSINESS OWNERSHIP 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 regulate ownership, control and operation of pharmacy businesses, and for other purposes, and to repeal the Pharmacy Business Ownership Act 2001, and to amend this Act, the Public Sector Act 2022 and the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 30 November 2023

Tabled paper: Message, dated 30 November 2023, from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023 [\[2062\]](#).

Introduction

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (11.56 am): I present a bill for an act to regulate ownership, control and operation of pharmacy businesses, and for other purposes, and to repeal the Pharmacy Business Ownership Act 2001, and to amend this act, the Public Sector Act 2022 and the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 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: Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023 [\[2063\]](#).

Tabled paper: Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023, explanatory notes [\[2064\]](#).

Tabled paper: Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[2065\]](#).

The Palaszczuk government is a proud supporter of our community pharmacies. The Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023 will ensure we have a modern and effective framework for regulating the ownership of pharmacy businesses in Queensland, supporting our local pharmacies to provide essential services to all Queenslanders. Community pharmacies are an integral component of Queensland's healthcare system. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our wonderful pharmacists for their dedication to serving the people of Queensland and providing world-class health care.

The importance of our community pharmacies was recognised by the Palaszczuk government when we became the first jurisdiction in Australia to authorise pharmacist administration of the COVID-19 vaccines, providing much needed access to the lifesaving vaccine in our regional

communities. For many people, their local pharmacy is their first port of call when they or someone they love is unwell or injured. Community pharmacists are medicine experts, providing professional advice and counselling on medications, including their use and effects. Their services are highly accessible. In the vast majority of cases, these services are offered to consumers without the need to make an appointment. We are committed to ensuring our community pharmacies can continue to provide world-class health care to Queenslanders.

Queensland has a long history of supporting the community pharmacy model, which requires pharmacies to be primarily owned by pharmacists. This model ensures that the owner of a pharmacy is first and foremost bound by their professional obligations to ensure the welfare and health outcomes of the patients they treat. Pharmacy owners told us that this is their highest priority and upholding these obligations can come at a cost to their business. For example, a pharmacy business owner may need to decline to sell a person medication where the patient's safety may be at risk. They need to enforce staged supply of medications where overuse or abuse is suspected. They may need to take time to counsel patients on the safe use of medications.

We know that many community pharmacies are the health hub of their community—a place where the staff know their customers by name and take time to talk and check in. This is especially the case for some in our vulnerable elderly community, who often view their pharmacy not just as a shop but somewhere they can go and have a confidential conversation with someone they can trust. We know that particularly in rural and regional Queensland community pharmacies are truly part of, and involved in, all that happens in their community.

The Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill 2023 will ensure that Queensland has a modern and effective framework for the regulation of ownership of pharmacy businesses and support the continued operation of the community pharmacy model. The bill will repeal and replace the Pharmacy Business Ownership Act 2001, which has been in place for over 20 years. The act is no longer fit for purpose in ensuring community pharmacies are protected. The bill will retain the current ownership restrictions, which require pharmacy businesses in Queensland to be owned by pharmacists or pharmacist controlled corporations. The bill will ensure the Mater and certain friendly societies can continue to own pharmacy businesses, as is the case under the current act. These ownership restrictions ensure that pharmacy businesses are operated in a manner that places the health and wellbeing of customers and the community ahead of commercial considerations. The bill also retains the existing limits on how many pharmacy businesses a person or entity may own. A pharmacist or pharmacist controlled corporation may own a maximum of five pharmacy businesses. The Mater and permitted friendly societies may own up to a maximum of six. This ensures proprietors can maintain an active interest in each of their pharmacy businesses.

I think it is largely uncontested by members of this House that the current ownership restrictions that I have just outlined are appropriate and in the public interest. The question is: how do we appropriately and adequately regulate these restrictions? Historically, Queensland Health has played the role of the regulating entity of pharmacy business ownership, but this is not the standard approach. In comparable Australian jurisdictions like New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, pharmacy business ownership is regulated by independent pharmacy regulatory authorities. These authorities are largely or wholly operationalised through fees sourced from industry and have a diversity of members that regulate the ownership of pharmacy businesses. The bill proposes to adopt the approach of these jurisdictions by creating a Queensland Pharmacy Business Ownership Council. The council will be a regulatory body with responsibility for administering and enforcing the pharmacy business ownership restrictions.

To ensure the regulatory council has appropriate oversight of pharmacy business ownership in Queensland, the bill creates a licensing framework which requires pharmacy business owners to obtain a licence for each business they own. The bill also facilitates changes to licences—for example, to accommodate new partnerships and other changes to ownership structures or change of premises. The bill provides for an annual renewal process to ensure the council has regular oversight of all pharmacy businesses in Queensland. The bill also contains powers for the council to suspend or cancel a licence where necessary for the safety of the community and continued protection of the community pharmacy model. For example, a licence may be cancelled if the owner is no longer a fit and proper person to be a licensee because they have been convicted of an indictable offence.

The former parliamentary Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee's report *Inquiry into the establishment of a pharmacy council and transfer of pharmacy ownership in Queensland* and a QAO report demonstrated that the current regulatory scheme is not fit for purpose. By introducing a new Queensland Pharmacy Business

Ownership Council, along with an updated licensing approach, our government is ensuring that the overriding intent of the act, which is to maintain pharmacist ownership of pharmacy businesses, is upheld.

We also know that diversity delivers better results. To that end, the bill requires that the council be constituted by a diverse and expert membership. It must consist of at least five members appointed upon the recommendation of the minister. A person is eligible for appointment to the council: if the person is the owner of a licensed pharmacy business or the director of a corporate owner; a practising pharmacist who is an employee of a licensed pharmacy business; or a person with qualifications or experience in accounting, business, financial management, law or carrying on a pharmacy business. The minister may also recommend the appointment of a consumer representative. To ensure probity, there are strong conflict-of-interest provisions in this bill to deliver decisions that have integrity and transparency.

I acknowledge that there have previously been recommendations against Queensland adopting this approach, notwithstanding that it is common in other jurisdictions. While I acknowledge the rationale behind these recommendations, it is the Palaszczuk government's belief that retaining the 'community' in 'community pharmacy' is imperative, and that is why ensuring we have an appropriately resourced regulatory council, like we see in other states, is the best way to do that. I expect there will be a diverse array of viewpoints on this bill, and I look forward to working with all stakeholders to deliver a robust community pharmacy sector for years to come.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to the community pharmacy model. This resilient model of primary care has enabled the Palaszczuk government to deliver a number of commonsense patient wins. Our successful UTI pharmacy trial has been embedded now as a standard practice across Queensland and our Queensland community pharmacy scope of practice pilot will ensure that more Queenslanders can access primary care closer to home. Pharmacists have been an integral component in the rollout of our free flu program in recent years. We want to continue the great work of community pharmacies and build on it in the future. This bill allows our community pharmacies to do just that—to continue to provide high-quality health services to all Queenslanders. 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) (12.05 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Health and Environment Committee


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Health and Environment Committee.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from 29 November (see p. 3878), on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (12.05 pm), continuing: The VoCA Act categorises acts of violence against primary victims as follows: category A, attempted murder or rape; category B, including attempted offences of category A, sexual offences and grievous bodily harm; category C, including attempted offences of category B, serious assault and robbery; and category D, including attempted offences of category C, assault and unlawful stalking. Clause 13 of the bill proposes to recategorise acts of domestic violence from category D to the more serious category B. Alongside the rate increases, the proposed provisions in the bill would increase the amount of special assistance payable to victims of domestic violence from the current \$1,000 in category D to \$9,000 in category B.


LawRight recommended that, in addition to the recategorisation of the acts of domestic and family violence, acts of sexual violence against a minor should be recategorised as a category A act of violence. The department acknowledged the seriousness of offences against children and the serious and detrimental effect of sexual offences committed against victim-survivors under 16 but noted that the VoCA Act allows for the special assistance category to be uplifted to category A for other offences where the victim has suffered a very serious injury or been infected with a very serious disease. A 'very serious injury' includes a mental illness or disorder or intellectual impairment that has resulted in a permanent and significant reduction in quality of life or is otherwise very serious.

The proposed amendments will subsequently increase the maximum amount the state may recover from a person. The VoCA Act includes safeguards on the ability of the state to recover financial assistance from a person, including where the person has been convicted and has exhausted all avenues for appeal of the conviction; only the amount that has been paid to the victim may be recovered; and for special assistance payments the state may only recover the amount that is relevant to the category of violence for which the offender has been convicted. The department advised that, in terms of financial recovery, Victim Assist Queensland issues notices to an offender regarding a potential amount for recovery. The offender may have an opportunity to respond with regard to providing submissions as to whether or not they were convicted of the relevant offence for which the state is seeking recovery.

Mr Jon Rouse APM, Interim Victims' Commissioner, welcomed the payment increases proposed by the bill but noted that the increases will 'result in increased applications for financial assistance being lodged with Victim Assist Queensland'. The commissioner recommended that the passing of the bill be accompanied by an increase in staffing and resources for Victim Assist Queensland. Given the ever-increasing crime rate under this Palaszczuk government, one can understand this concern.

The bill proposes to change the composition of QSAC, established under the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 as a statutory board 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.

In September 2023 the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, the Hon. Yvette D'Ath, announced that the Queensland government was committed to ensuring that a representative of victims of crime was appointed to the QSAC. As I stated earlier in my contribution, the number of victims of crime continues to increase. Nowhere is immune, from our largest cities to our smallest regional towns. Just down the road from where I live in the small town of is a store with a number of fuel bowsers out the front. This store has been ramraided on a number of occasions. On one occasion the owner found himself spread across the bonnet of a car in a drive-through fuel theft. We have had police cars rammed in the small towns of Meringandan and Goombungee. Homes and businesses have been the victims of crime on multiple occasions. The LNP will be supporting this bill as victims of crime need to be supported and are crying out for help, but what we really need is a government that will tackle this crime crisis head on. That is the LNP. There is only one way that things will improve in this state and that is to show Labor the door in '24.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (12.10 pm): I rise to make a short contribution in relation to the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Originally, I was not going to speak on this bill. I had read the committee report and when the announcements were made by the Premier I saw that there was resounding support for the objectives of this bill in terms of increasing financial assistance for victims and for victims having a greater say in a number of the statutory bodies that we have in the state. Understanding from the outset that the opposition would be supporting this bill, I did not see what I would necessarily have to contribute to this debate. However, listening to the opposition members supposedly support this bill—a bill which is there for the victims of crime—all I am hearing is electioneering and slogans. To stand here and say that they support victims of crime and then use an election slogan as part of it is really doing an injustice to victims right there and then. Victims of crime deserve a voice. They deserve to be heard. They do not deserve to be puppets. They do not deserve to be wheeled out, to be retraumatised, so someone can make a political point.

Mr McDonald: Say that to the victims!

Mrs McMAHON: I am a victim and I resent every time I see the opposition wheel out a victim just for the purpose of an electioneering slogan. I do not see any respect on that side. It turns my stomach. Every victim is different; every crime is different.

Mr McDonald: Talk about electioneering!

Mrs McMAHON: I have not mentioned it once! I am here to see an increase in support to victims. This bill apparently has partisan support—bipartisan support even—but that is not what I am hearing. I am hearing this bill being used as an excuse to trot out victims and stories. I have been a victim of crime. This term my house was broken into twice in the one week—once while I was home alone with my children. I will admit that as a result of my career of going to job after job, day after day speaking to victims of crime—up to five, six, seven times a day—I am desensitised to the effects of crime, even when I am the victim of a crime like a break and enter, but I do understand that every crime is different, every victim is different and every victim's response is different. There is not a one-size-fits-all response.

I understand that there are many stages of response—like the stages of grief—that a victim will go through. There will be disbelief, there will be denial, there will be anger and there will be someone they want to blame. That is absolutely understandable. That is human nature: I am angry, I did not do anything to be a victim of crime, but here I am. Let us be angry, let us point the finger at somebody and, yes, offenders deserve to be held accountable. That is the other side of this bill. There is work that we do to support victims. There is work that we do to hold perpetrators to account. They are not mutually exclusive. This House and the legislation we introduce can help every step of the way. The preventative measures that we implement in this space in relation to offenders are just as laudable as what we try to do to support victims.

I was on the road and operational when the VoCA Act was first introduced. In my last job in the vulnerable persons unit, we were responsible for liaising with Victim Assist Queensland. The introduction of the police referral program was to make sure that victims of crime were linked with appropriate support agencies. When that program first rolled out there was only a very small number of agencies. As this program has expanded and grown, and as it became a police procedural requirement to refer victims on to specific support agencies—and one of those includes Victim Assist Queensland—the number of victims accessing and applying for support has increased—and it should. It is there to be used. When I talk to victims who come in to my office to speak to me, most of them admit that they have never been told about Victim Assist Queensland.

I know it is part of police protocol that police must log a record of every job and what agency the victim has been referred to, but police are not counsellors. When they are dealing with victims it is a very transactional, procedural process. Police have many things on their mind when dealing with a victim. Not every copper is going to be an empathetic person. They have a particular focus when a crime has happened and that is establishing what has happened and where the perpetrator is. There is urgency, there are procedural questions and sometimes it can be quite abrupt and confronting and leave the victim without appropriate support at the time. The police officer is there to try to catch the offender and hold them to account. They are not a social worker. They are not a psychologist. They cannot do it all.

That is why we have these referral and support agencies. I understand it is police policy to refer victims on to support agencies, but that may not happen in every single case and not every victim is going to be happy with the interaction they have with police. It is the very nature of it. Victims in many instances are never going to be happy with an outcome. Some may be and some may not. Every victim is different. I support our first responders doing what they can. In the five to six months of training at the academy, a police officer is not going to be trained to be empathetic, to have the best communication skills in the world, but as long as they are trained to get the information they need to hold perpetrators to account, that is their side of the equation. It is what we do in providing support services through Victim Assist Queensland and all the referral agencies out there, that are usually specifically tailored to the victim, that is the other side of the equation. That is what we are talking about here today.


I get to speak to victims and survivors of sexual assault on a regular basis. They are some of the most vulnerable people. They carry a level of trauma with them. No two victims are the same. I know how hard it is for some of them to stand up and talk. Not one of them ever wants to be used as a tool.

Mrs Frecklington: Tell your police minister that.

Honourable members interjected.

Mrs McMAHON: I understand that there are points to be made about police funding or about jurisdictions, procedures, sentences, penalties and offences. I understand that the funding of the police, courts and so on is absolutely up for grabs because that is a political policy point. However, I had thought we could come in here and have a supportive debate about victims of crime as we had bipartisan support for this bill. I have heard so many good contributions on this bill from both sides of the House. However, I can tell the House that that goodwill and the need to do something for victims deserves to be more than just something that is tacked onto an election slogan. Let us go back through *Hansard*. I am happy to name all of the members who decided to use this debate and their speech about victims of crime to give a '24 election slogan. That is shameful.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Before I call the member for Southport, there is before me a vast list of members who have been warned: Nicklin, Capalaba, Whitsunday, Mudgeeraba, Scenic Rim, Warrego, Burleigh, Nanango, Lockyer, Kawana, Chatsworth, Broadwater, Buderim, Oodgeroo, Everton, Toowoomba South and Mansfield. You know you have been warned. If you interject from this point and you are on this list, you will be asked to leave the chamber for one hour at least.

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (12.21 pm): I rise to make a short contribution in respect of the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that is before the House. It is always interesting to hear the reflections of those in this chamber. I, too, am a victim of crime. Eighteen months ago, my car was parked in my driveway and it was broken into. Six young people were involved in the burglary. While it was not a particularly traumatic event for me, I understand that those sorts of incursions and events impact people in many different ways. On that occasion, for me it was inconvenient. By the time I replaced keys, had damage to the car repaired and replaced a few items that were stolen, I was probably out of pocket by a few thousand dollars, which my insurance company did not cover. I put it down to just one of those horrible life experiences that happen. I am fortunate enough that I have good friends and family and I think I am a fairly robust individual, so I was able to move on fairly easily from the incident.

However, I did receive a call from the police about the matter. They caught the six young people, who were from the south side of Brisbane and had made their way down to the Gold Coast. One of them was a 14-year-old girl who was a part of that gang. It was suggested that I might like to meet with that young person as part of the youth justice restorative program. I thought that would be an interesting experience and if there were an opportunity to have some positive influence over that young person then I was not prepared to let that go by. I thought it would be an insightful experience. It took three or four months of phone calls and emails to organise the first meeting with that young person at the Logan Youth Justice Centre. On one occasion I made a special trip up only to find that the young person did not turn up. The meeting was rescheduled and I attended again.

It was heartbreaking. The young girl walked in with her mum. I heard the story of the mother's multiple relationships and several cases of domestic violence. She was a young person who had moved house several times, moving in and out of public housing and private rentals. She has three other siblings, including a sister from the same dad who had been in and out of foster care. In my heart I just wanted to encourage that young person and do what I could to help them. I thought I was pretty easy with the conditions that I applied. I went so far as to find that person what she described as her dream job, as she had turned 15. Unfortunately, she was never able to take up that opportunity because they had to move again. The mother was in crisis again. As I stand in this House and I hear the debate around these issues, I think it is important to remember that we are talking about people. We are talking about families and young people whose lives have been destroyed.

The small loss that I endured was nothing to me, but I do know that for many victims of crime the impact is significant and people's lives are changed. One afternoon, in the back of Ashmore, I met four families in the car park of an apartment complex. In the space of two weeks, on different nights, four cars were stolen from that complex. Each incident involved people entering homes and taking keys off kitchen benches or dining room tables. Those people were traumatised to the extent that they were holding a community meeting to talk about the additional security measures they could put in place to protect their complex.


This legislation is important. I am pleased that one of the recommendations is the appointment to the board of someone with lived experience. I think that is an important step forward. I am also extremely pleased that Jon Rouse has been appointed as the Interim Victims' Commissioner. Jon Rouse would have to be one of the most decent human beings I have ever met. I have had the privilege and pleasure of knowing him through his work and engagement with Bravehearts over many years. He has been a guest speaker at some of our functions for White Balloon Day, now known as Bravehearts Day. He has attended many of those functions. I note that he is currently on the board of the Daniel

Morcombe Foundation, which says a lot about the heart of the man and his concern for young people. His record of involvement with Task Force Argos is well known to everyone. Some of the accounts of his involvement there and the initiatives he has pioneered are simply outstanding. They have been world-changing. They have led to the capture and detection of some fairly significant bad people in our community and in other parts of the world, for that matter. I wish Jon well. I am sure all of us in this House are extremely pleased to see someone of his calibre appointed to that role.

I note that throughout the various inquiries there were a number of submitters, and I am pleased that Bravehearts was one of those. It is a cause that is close to my heart. I have spoken many times about my involvement with Bravehearts. I note also that Di Macleod, the director of the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence, also made submissions to the inquiry. She had some very important things to say about trauma informed and victim-centric therapy and support. There is so much more needed in that space.

Time and time again we hear the same thing in relation to victims of domestic and family violence and people struggling with mental health issues. We have heard from the Mental Health Commissioner in previous inquiries, documentation and through their strategic plan that the most important thing we can do is put a roof over a family's head and provide them with stability. I reflect on the young person who was involved in the burglary of my home. Here is a young person who has probably lived in about six or seven different houses over the past 10 years. That does not provide for a healthy lifestyle, a positive outlook or a sense of security. When I asked her about the group of young people with whom she was involved, she told me that she had only become involved with them because she had recently been moved from the school that she loved and had been at for a number of years, she had been cut off from all of her friends because her mother had to flee domestic violence—yet again—and now the only people who would befriend her were this bunch of kids who basically led her astray. I believe there are many good young people whose lives are being destroyed simply through relocation and multiple placements. We need to do better and we need to do more in respect of supporting those many young people.

In closing, I want to acknowledge the great work of Gold Coast Community Legal Service. There are so many great people in our state who support victims of crime. It was my pleasure to host their AGM at my office a couple of weeks ago. In their annual report, they reported that last year they provided free legal assistance to nearly 3½ thousand individuals and families just on the Gold Coast. We need those community organisations and services to continue the great work that they do in supporting victims of crime and victims of family and domestic violence and the many other challenges that people face or struggle with in terms of just needing good solid advice and guidance.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.31 pm): I would like to start by acknowledging that very thoughtful and sincere contribution of the member for Southport. I had the great pleasure of working for about a year with the member for Southport on the inquiry into mental health and alcohol other drug services. What the member described there do not surprise me at all. If you had the opportunity to work with the member, you will know that that is his standard operating procedure. He has been a good advocate for those people in his community who do it tough. I think the member's statements are extremely genuine, but I wonder how they reconcile with his party's position in relation to removing detention as a last resort for juveniles. I will move onto this bill.

A few years ago, I read a very thought provoking book by Leigh Sales called *Any Ordinary Day*. It was a series of essays about how people healed and recovered after traumatic events. Many of these stories would be well known to members of this chamber. They involved victims of crime. Of course there are other traumatic events that did not involve crimes, but a large number of them involved victims of crime. It gave a great insight into the challenges facing people who are victims of crime and their journey to recovery, and how complex and difficult that is.

I first encountered a person impacted by crime as a fairly new nurse. I was probably only 18 or 19 at the time. We had a patient who chose to spend her entire admission with the curtains pulled, choosing to bathe and toilet at her bedside, which was strange and unusual in the old Nightingale wards where there were 20 people in a room. She seemed like a very nice lady, but you could tell that she was deeply traumatised. Eventually I learned that her ex-husband, just over a decade before I nursed her, had committed a terrible crime—one of the most infamous in Queensland's history—just a short distance from the hospital where I was caring for her. I remembered how terrible this crime was for the victims. Some of those victims' families still reside in my electorate to this day. There is also the terrible impact that this had on the perpetrator's family and how far-reaching crimes can be in creating victims. I do not recall any of the people in the book by Leigh Sales being described as 'choosing to cloister themselves away for eternity', but that was this woman's response.

On many subsequent occasions I would care for victims of crime. I saw the terrible physical and emotional damage people endured. I saw some recover and I saw some that would never fully recover. I certainly witnessed the terrible financial impacts, often intergenerational, that occur when someone is a victim of crime. One of the main reasons I support this bill is its attempt to deal with that part of the victim of crime experience.

For over 25 years, Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre in my electorate has been providing support for girls and women aged 12 to 25 and their children who have been victims of sexual assault or domestic violence. Despite the incredibly difficult work that they do, every time I meet them the staff are always so positive and hopeful. Most importantly, they are always 100 per cent focused on the victims that they support. They quietly tend to the people who seek their help, looking to support them with all their needs, whether that is counselling, health care, accommodation, finances, employment or anything else. I have learned much from the staff at Zig Zag over the years, have tried to help them with various issues and have made many representations on their behalf to ministers. One of the key things I have learned from this is how often women who are victims of sexual or domestic violence are left financially destitute. The provisions in this bill will definitely provide further assistance to the women supported by Zig Zag. I also acknowledge the work of the Women's Legal Service who support women at the Holland Park Courthouse when the domestic violence court is in session. I was pleased to work with them to improve the courthouse so that victims could be properly separated from the accused perpetrators and properly supported by that service and other services.


In her book, Leigh Sales described many ways that victims try to recover and heal. One of the common reactions was to attempt to prevent what had happened to them or their loved ones from happening to anyone else. In my community, I have seen this in practice. Hannah Clarke's family have endured a terrible crime but have since created an effective foundation, the Small Steps 4 Hannah Foundation, that is bringing real change to our community through their advocacy to government and their education in the community. I want to pay tribute to Sue and Lloyd Clarke.

After her daughter was a victim of domestic violence, Carolyn Robertson created Beyond DV. Carolyn came to see me very early in her journey, and I was able to assist her with some initial funding. The organisation has grown considerably and is focused on supporting women and their children to recover from domestic violence.

Voice for Victims was set up by Ben Cannon following an incident in our community. I met with Ben several times before he set up the organisation and I assisted him to meet with ministers. Voice for Victims is a strong advocate for better support for victims. I am pleased that the government has been listening to them and all of the other groups that advocate on behalf of victims.

I will always listen to victims, their advocates and community organisations and work hard to ensure victims are well supported on their journey to recovery. I have outlined just a few organisations in my community that support victims, but there are so many other great people and organisations doing so much important work right around our state. I want to particularly acknowledge my parliamentary colleague Jonty Bush and her long advocacy on behalf of victims.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the very hardworking police officers in my community based at the Coorparoo, Holland Park and Camp Hill stations. They dedicate their life to preventing crime and are the first point of contact and recovery for many victims. This bill, like all the people and organisations I have mentioned, is focused on improving support for victims of crime. We must continue to work nonstop and tirelessly to prevent crime, but we know that sadly there will always be victims of crime. We must ensure there is good support for those victims. This bill works to improve the available support for victims. I commend the bill to the House.


 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (12.38 pm): I will start on a positive note, noting that the LNP is supporting the bill. I wanted to put on the record the fact that increasing the payments available to victims of crime under the act is a good move and one that has probably been a while coming. The government's move to appoint an Interim Victims' Commissioner, which I do not think is strictly dealt with in this bill, is also a good move. Hopefully, the structure around that will be put in place permanently over the coming period.

I am not going to reflect directly on the contribution of any other member from the government other than to say that this bill, in that it has quite limited purposes, I believe is a missed opportunity to do more in this space in this particular time frame. I reflect on the fact that the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee undertook an inquiry into victims of crime which touched on this act. One of the recommendations that flowed out of that inquiry was the Interim Victims' Commissioner and the review of payments that can be made under this act. That inquiry, though, was a missed opportunity, so this

bill has become a missed opportunity as well. The inquiry was a missed opportunity because it was too short. It was far too short. Although the committee did its best to do a good job in that time, it was just not long enough.

I know that some members of the government regret that. They made representations to the people who make decisions in the government about extending it, but it did not happen. We missed that opportunity to do more in this space. When I hear accusations thrown across the chamber that we are not listening to victims of crime or not listening to them for the right reasons I reject that absolutely, because we had the opportunity to do that through the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee and the government decision-makers did not let us do it properly. Instead of having a very big committee report amending victims of crime legislation, we have a committee report and a bill that do about two things. They are important things but it should have been a lot more. I am not going to cop the criticism that we are not listening, because we tried to listen in the committee but the government did not let us.

We need to revisit the victims of crime inquiry. It should have been six months—not six weeks. The member for Noosa and I made that quite clear in this House one day when we tried to move a motion to extend it and we were voted down. Actions speak louder than words when it comes to listening to victims of crime. The government have failed in their actions to put it on the record, to stand up and to properly listen to victims of crime through that process. As a result, we are dealing with limited things here today. Hopefully next year we will get somewhere in a more substantial way, but this bill, as good as it is, does not do that. I will leave my contribution there.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.41 pm): Every crime is one too many. Unfortunately, we have people in our communities who do not respect those around them and they commit violent crimes of both assault and robbery. As a society we must look after the victims of crime and help them to put their lives back together. Violent crimes can cause physical injury as well as psychological harm.

After a crime, some of the effects on a person not always so evident to the public can be that victims experience serious psychological distress including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. Some victims also report experiencing poor sleep, nightmares, lack of focus and continuous replaying of the incident. When a violent crime is committed, we see the community in general portray a sense that their baseline of safety is disrupted, making it more difficult for families and communities to sustain a sense of stability and safety.

The policy objectives of this bill are to increase the maximum amounts of financial assistance payable to victims of acts of violence. The Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 provides financial assistance to certain victims of acts of violence. The VoCAA establishes a financial assistance scheme.

To protect potential future victims, we need to reduce the pathway to a possible life of crime for our young people. When the member for Nanango made her contribution, she spoke at length about youth crime. In Mackay, programs addressing the complexities of the issues of crime include youth co-responder teams where police and youth justice staff patrol the streets and engage with young people at parks and shopping centres. They do this at night and with great success. They engage with those young people who are at risk.

Under the Transition 2 Success program we have seen many graduations and heard wonderful stories of young people who were not making the best choices. This program aims to prevent at-risk young people entering the youth justice system and to reduce reoffending among those already involved in the system. Programs like this are making sure we keep the youth crime rate in Mackay one of the lowest in the state. We have justice conferencing, which brings victims and young people together, plus elders and other relevant parties, to hold young people to account and help repair harm caused by offending. This is having great results. We have bail support, which helps young people meet their bail conditions.

We also have the services of Bravehearts. They provide specialist counselling services to young people who have been referred to restorative justice conferencing for offences of a sexual nature. We also have case management, which is undertaken with young people who are subjected to youth justice orders. They have wraparound services for our young people and they are making a difference. I would also like to put on record my thanks to all of our sporting clubs, the PCYC, Girl Guides, Scouts, Rangers, Rovers and all the groups in our community that are supporting our young people to make good choices.

I want to touch on an issue that comes up quite often in our communities with young people when it comes to drug and alcohol use. Adults who model responsible drinking behaviour and maintain an open and communicative relationship with their children can positively influence their attitudes towards alcohol. Conversely, adults who engage in irresponsible drinking or exhibit a lack of control can contribute to the normalisation of this behaviour.

Adults within a young person's social circle, including family and friends and older siblings, can impact their attitudes towards alcohol. Peer pressure and the desire to fit in may lead to experimentation with alcohol. We should never be putting children in situations where people are putting peer pressure on our young people. Adults, including parents, teachers and community leaders, all play a crucial role in providing education about the risks and consequences of under-age drinking. Informative programs can help shape responsible attitudes.

Alcohol can have a detrimental effect on the developing brain and body of young individuals. Early and frequent alcohol consumption may interfere with cognitive development and increase the risk of health issues. Under-age drinking is associated with a higher risk of mental health issues, including depression and anxiety. Alcohol can exacerbate pre-existing mental health conditions or contribute to the development of new ones. Regular alcohol consumption during adolescence can lead to poor academic performance and lower educational attainment. This, in turn, may have long-term effects on career opportunities and success and can lead to a life of crime. Under-age drinking is illegal. We must make sure that we assist our young people to make the right choices.

I have had contact from a lot of people in the Whitsunday electorate. I would like to thank those sporting codes that are trying to stamp out the drinking culture that has been associated with some sporting codes. They are working really hard to make that distinction. I have fielded complaints from some citizens from Whitsunday complaining about an under-14 breakup, where children allegedly were drinking alcohol—UDLs, Canadian Clubs et cetera. Secondly, they were angry that the member for Whitsunday, the shadow minister for child safety, referred to the incident as an error of judgement at a meeting. They were expecting that she would call out this behaviour for what it is, stand up for the children to make sure they do not have socialisation where they may, in turn, turn to a life of crime and early addiction. Having 12-, 13- and 14-year-olds allegedly drinking liquor is not acceptable, so she should stand up and say, 'This is not acceptable.' Some of the people who contacted me were concerned because they believe that some of the—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. I ask that the member return to the long title of the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Member for Mackay, there has been a degree of latitude given to all speakers, but you are way off the long title of the bill. I invite you to return, please.

Mrs GILBERT: Okay. Sorry for that, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was just following up on what the member for Nanango said. She was talking about youth crime and how we can stop young people from getting into a life of crime through alcohol—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I note that the member on her feet is challenging the Speaker's ruling, and I ask that you rule in that regard.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is outrageous; I take that interjection.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member is not challenging my ruling. I accept the member is giving an explanation of her view on relevance—

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have not finished speaking, member for Pine Rivers. The member has been asked to return to being relevant, and I will invite her to do so before she resumes speaking. Member for Pine Rivers, what is your point of order?

Ms BOYD: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order in relation to the behaviour of the member for Nanango. She is currently on a warning, as I understand it, and has just been arguing across the chamber with other members—


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Pine Rivers, that is not a point of order. I am in charge of order in this House and I will dispense rulings as I see fit. The member for Nanango may be on a warning, but she has not done anything wrong in rising to a point of order. Member for Mackay, you have the call.

Mrs GILBERT: The victims of crime assistance bill is a very important bill, so I would call on the member for Whitsunday to stand up for the children in her electorate. If she does not, I call on the opposition leader to sack her from her position because she is putting children at risk by not standing up for the children in her electorate and calling out behaviour which is unacceptable when it involves such young children—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Mackay, I have given you—

Mrs GILBERT: I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I gave you guidance on relevance. You were straying at the time. You have concluded your contribution. I call the member for Bonney.

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (12.52 pm): Today I want to give a voice to the victims of Labor's crime crisis in my community by sharing in this House some of the stories of the people who have got in touch with me. Ron told me, 'As an older person I no longer use public transport during times of high school student usage or at night.' Jenny said, 'I no longer go out after 5 pm. I lock myself in my house, which prevents me from enjoying the magnificent Gold Coast lifestyle.'

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: Geoff wrote, 'Enough is enough. Us older people are frightened to leave home. We are aged pensioners and do not go out at night because of youth crime.' Margaret told me, 'I have always felt very safe in Queensland and feel so sad that things have deteriorated to the extent that they have.'

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Deputy Speaker, can I get some support? I have a government minister interjecting while I am trying to read out victims'—

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Member for Pine Rivers, I do not need your assistance. You are warned under the standing orders. The member on his feet is not taking interjections. I will start warning members formally under the standing orders from this point on. I remind those who are on a warning that there is no further latitude and if they interject they will be asked to leave the chamber.

Mr O'CONNOR: Karen-Anne said—

Things must change. We were robbed last Christmas—actually Boxing Day morning—around 3 am. Christmas presents and jewellery were stolen, when we were all home. We had a large dog at that stage, but the dog was sick when we awoke, so we are guessing she had been given something as she didn't wake up during the robbery. Our insurance premiums and excess went up dramatically as a result.

Julian wrote—

Our brand new car was stolen overnight from our garage. The car was found and written off due to extensive damage incurred by three youths who were 13, 15 and 17. They got 6 months probation.

Greg wrote—

Our son works at night to pack shelves. His car was vandalised with both windscreens, roof jumped on, and metal pole smashed every panel. A shopping trolley was also used to inflict damage. We don't feel safe letting our teenage son work [there anymore].

Finally, Janice shared her experience. She said—

I had my little Subaru Impreza stolen from my garage and it was burnt out on the Sunshine Coast Forest. I am an 81-year-old pensioner and had to use my savings to replace the vehicle as insurance only covered part of it and of course I had to pay the excess as it couldn't be recovered from the thieves. The teens were actually in my house whilst I was sleeping so I can think myself lucky I wasn't hurt, but it is a very scary thought as I live alone.

These are real people. This is not a media beat-up or a rent-a-crowd like Labor members have claimed. To Ron, Jenny, Geoff, Margaret, Karen-Anne, Julian, Janice and countless other people who have been victims of crime in my community, I want you to know that your voices are heard. There are many more examples because crime in my community is not isolated; it is happening right across Queensland.

There are two local victims of crime whom I must also mention, and that is, of course, Brett and Belinda Beasley. They have been through the unimaginable, and they devote their lives now to making sure no other family has to go through what they have. Everyone will know this story. Their son Jack was murdered in the middle of Surfers Paradise almost exactly four years ago, in December 2019, and they are driving change in his name. I am very proud to call Brett and Belinda my friends, and I am proud to serve on the board of the Jack Beasley Foundation alongside other local people. The JBF is

all about driving the campaign against knife crime and youth violence. Our focus is on educating young people about the real-life consequences of carrying a knife when they leave home. We know that so many young people do it because they think they need it for their own protection, so they need to be told that it is not something they should be doing.

We also successfully pushed for laws to help police find weapons and take them off our streets. Just last week, alongside Brett and Belinda and the JBF, we had a walk-through with our local police for the first night of schoolies in Surfers Paradise to see Jack's Law, the expanded wandering operation, in action. We also went through with some of Jack's mates who were there with him in Surfers Paradise the night that he died. It was a very powerful thing to see them interact with some of those school leavers, telling them about what they experienced just a couple of streets away four years ago. In the first six months of Jack's Law over 2,900 handheld scanning operations have been conducted which have found over 350 weapons; 904 people have been charged with almost 1,600 offences. More than 31,000 people have been scanned in safe night precincts and on public transport.

The crime crisis that Queensland is experiencing is not the fault of our police. They do outstanding work with the resources they have. Most of my electorate—Arundel, Parkwood, Labrador and the northern part of Southport—is covered by the Southport Police Division. We have heard recent reports about how there are fewer staff there than we had over a decade ago, hovering somewhere around 100. I have heard stories about there being just a handful of them in the actual station at night, of officers barely being able to run the counter there to service locals. I would repeat my call for the Southport station to urgently have more police resources.

In terms of the bill before us, in June this year we called on the government to add a victim to the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. We were derided at the time, but now the government has seen some sense and taken this step, so once again the Liberal National Party is governing from opposition. This bill will: increase the membership of QSAC to no more than 14 members; enable the appointment of a person with lived experience as a victim of crime; add another person; and require that at least one member of QSAC must be a person with lived experience as a victim of crime. This is incredibly important, as the council must ensure there is sufficient representation of those impacted most by the crimes being committed, that being victims themselves. Like so many people in my electorate, victims have felt silenced by this government and that their needs are constantly being put behind the needs of offenders.

Mr Sullivan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Stafford will cease his interjections.

Mr O'CONNOR: Mr Deputy Speaker, I would have thought the member for Stafford would be more focused on his impending preselection battle than matters that happened over a decade ago, but that is okay. Well, that worked: I stopped getting interjections. That is fantastic. It is our hope that adding a victim of crime to the QSAC will be a step in the right direction towards correcting this message. All Queenslanders deserve to feel safe in their own homes and safe in their communities. Further, this bill will increase the upper limits for financial assistance payments.

Debate, on motion of Mr O'Connor, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Federal Labor Government, Infrastructure Funding



Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): I say to the House that the Deputy Premier is miles away from reality. We saw the confected outrage weeks ago when the federal Labor government announced Labor cuts to infrastructure across Queensland. We had the confected outrage; they were angry about all the Labor cuts. Then the Deputy Premier said, 'I'm going to lead a delegation to Canberra,' and that delegation happened yesterday. He left half the delegation on the tarmac, and then he spent most of the time sipping wine, having a good time, on the public dime, at the National Press Club.

He came back today and he is all excited. He is like, 'I packaged this deal up that I got at this delegation yesterday.' I thought, 'Where have I heard this before? Where have I heard of this great announcement that he is now singing that he achieved at the delegation yesterday?' Well, it was in the

federal infrastructure cuts report the Labor Party produced two weeks ago. It is already public. The federal Labor government in their own document, which I will table in a minute, said, 'The following projects will proceed through planning, with remaining funding reserved for construction ... Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line'. It said the 'Australian government funding for planning' was \$160 million and the 'Australian government funding set aside for construction' was \$1.44 billion.

Tabled paper: Extract from document, undated, detailing Queensland road infrastructure projects to receive Australian Government funding [2066].

It was already committed to and spoken about two weeks ago. He had this huge outrage two weeks ago, he went to Canberra and had a little wine on the public dime, and he has come back like this is a great announcement. Nothing has changed. This announcement was made two weeks ago by the federal government. The state Labor government are not putting one dollar into construction of the Sunshine Coast heavy passenger rail.

Mr Crisafulli: When?

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the opposition leader. When? When is the state government going to put money into the Sunshine Coast heavy passenger rail? As I said, there was outrage two weeks ago at this announcement and now he is trying to claim it as his own announcement today. It was the federal Labor party that cut the funding and projects across Queensland. With the Deputy Premier leading that delegation, I would have expected him to come back and say that projects that were actually being cut by Labor would be reintroduced and recommitted to—but, no. The only deal he got from Canberra was the deal the federal government put on the table two weeks ago. That is not a good deal for Queensland. That is a done deal already.

Then the Deputy Premier said, 'It's great that the quantum of funding is not cut to Queensland.' The minister, Catherine King, said that two weeks ago anyway. The reality is that the Labor Party are cutting funding because the Labor Party are the kings of cuts. We have Treasurer Dick, Minister Bailey and Minister Miles as the kings of cut in Queensland, but we can change it next year.

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Pause the clock.

Mr BAILEY: Once again, he is using my surname. He knows it is against the standing orders and I ask him to use correct titles.

Mr BLEIJIE: I said 'Minister Bailey' again.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. I remind all members to use correct titles. I would say, though, that 'Minister Bailey' is within the standing orders. Member, you have two seconds on the clock.

Mr BLEIJIE: Show Labor the door in '24. Show this incompetent Minister Bailey the door in '24.

(Time expired)

Gillnet Fishing



Hon. LM LINARD (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, Minister for Science and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (2.03 pm): The Great Barrier Reef is truly one of the world's most special places. The vast inshore areas, coral reefs and oceanic waters of the reef are home to thousands of species of fish, coral, marine mammals, molluscs and birds, just to name a few. Because of the reef's beauty and biodiversity, it attracts thousands of tourists every year, contributing around \$6 billion annually to the economy and supporting more than 60,000 jobs, many in regional towns and cities along the coast, like Mackay, Townsville and Cairns.

However, as many are also aware, the Great Barrier Reef is under serious threat. Unsustainable fishing practices—including the use of gillnets—are one of the three key threats to the reef's future, with climate change and run-off being the others. Our government has committed \$1 billion since 2015 towards protecting the Great Barrier Reef, including water quality improvements and stream bank remediation. However, more action is needed. That is why the Palaszczuk government, supported by the Albanese government, is phasing out gillnet fishing in the reef by mid-2027. This was first announced in June, with the details of the government's generous financial assistance package to transition affected commercial fishers out of the gillnet fishery in the Great Barrier Reef, which represents 2.6 per cent of the east coast wild caught seafood harvest, announced recently.

The \$125 million assistance package includes structural adjustment payments, gillnet buybacks, grants for licence holders to seek independent advice, and support for employees and supply chain businesses. As Bob Baldwin, chair of the Australian Fishing Trade Association, said recently, gillnets are a 'death wall'. Gillnets are placed across river mouths and indiscriminately catch a range of fish and other species—such as dugong, snubfin dolphin, turtles, hammerhead sharks and sawfish—get trapped in the nets and, because the nets are unattended, drown before fishers are able to free them. The population of all of these species is declining and some, including sawfish and hammerhead sharks, are at risk of extinction if appropriate management measures are not taken. The recent ecological risk assessment prepared for the east coast inshore fishery lists gillnets as a key driver of risk to these species. We must act now.

The Palaszczuk government has been guided by current data and advice from respected scientists and industry stakeholders. Recent studies have demonstrated populations of critically endangered species—including snubfin dolphins, dugong and sawfish—cannot sustain further human related deaths. Through the reforms we are implementing, Queensland will join New South Wales, Victoria and the Northern Territory, as well as Canada, the US and the European Union, among others, in banning gillnets from ecologically significant waters to protect endangered species.

Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services, Performance



Mr MINNIKIN (Chatsworth—LNP) (2.06 pm): We have come to the end of a parliamentary sitting year, which is also the end of the academic year for thousands and thousands of schoolkids around the state, so I thought it was only appropriate at this juncture to give a report card to the House on the actions of the member for Miller, the transport and main roads minister. Let us go through his report card for the last 12 months.

Let us start off with one that we obviously have to: Cross River Rail. The government announced the official cost blowout of \$960 million. I would say: stay tuned for that one in the coming academic years. It is going to be way, way more than that. We know that the actual cost blowout is going to be probably in the vicinity of, wait for it—we'll come back to that next year, member for Miller. Minister Bailey—the genius in relation to project time sequencing that he is—forgot to order the trains.

Let us move on to something else on the curriculum: the school zone speed cameras. The minister made a big announcement about them being introduced but, whoops, something happened on the way to Damascus and someone forgot to tell the minister that they were not actually turned on. Let us move on to driver reviver. That was shut. That would be a big cut; they were cut. They were shut down. There were delays. We go on and on.

The Coomera Connector is months and months behind schedule. As for the Beams Road open level crossing, I will probably do another 12 media TV interviews at Beams Road in the first nine months of next year. That is promised every single election by the failed transport minister, the member for Sandgate and the member for Aspley. They just simply airbrush the DL brochure from two elections ago. That is so old news.

Let us move on with the report card to the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program. That was, admittedly, only a tiny failure with his arithmetic; that was only \$2.4 billion. That was under the radar and he tried to sneak that one through. He thought he hit it through the covers but, whoops, he was busted, found out again and reported to the principal.


It goes on. We need to know more about the trains coming from South Korea and the so-called flat pack trains. Just how much of them will be actually built under the watch of the minister and, of course, his erstwhile assistant, the appropriately dressed member for Maryborough?

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member ought to be very careful about misleading the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): It is not an opportunity to debate. There is no point of order.

Mr MINNIKIN: Let's continue the report card—there is more to go through. The state emergency vehicle priority system giving ambos a green light is very important. They were actually down for months and months, and that is probably amongst a litany of big failures. We need to show this minister the door in '24.


Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line

 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (2.10 pm): What is the difference between the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and every LNP member on the Sunshine Coast? It is about \$1.4 billion. Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line funding is now confirmed and reserved for construction with an additional \$160 million available for planning and early works. I thank not only the Deputy Premier but also federal infrastructure minister Catherine King with whom I was admittedly somewhat grumpy in recent times. I also single out acting mayor of the Sunshine Coast, Rick Baberowski, for his efforts in advocating for the Sunshine Coast. Together with myself and the member for Nicklin, the Deputy Premier has prioritised Queensland and especially the Sunshine Coast in a way that the LNP never has.

Compare the pair: our federal government has put millions of dollars into a business case, along with our state government, that the federal member for Fairfax has recognised as the necessary next step. What stands out the most is that the business case costings, and now the prioritisation of the federal funding, has been initiated and actioned by Labor governments at every level. For the better part of 40 years, the Sunshine Coast has had wall-to-wall LNP representation at state and federal level while this project sat and gathered dust. The Sunshine Coast federal MPs sat idle for almost a decade under the previous government and did precisely nothing. Then at five minutes to midnight during the last election, they talked about having money in the budget for rail. The problem was they did not actually pass a budget. It is very tricky to have money in a budget that does not exist.

The comedy value does not end there. They also did not learn their lines correctly because one said that the costings were based on North Coast Connect and the other said that costings were based on Kuraby to Beenleigh. They very clearly had no clue what they were talking about with passenger rail. However, they at least recognised that a business case is needed. The LNP members in this chamber reckon that 38 kilometres of railroad is a bit like building Lego. They do not have to plan, other than the member for Maroochydore's failed commitment to link Caloundra and Maroochydore, but not to the actual rail network. Then in their last term, they did absolutely nothing. If their six dodgy corflutes cost them, say, \$100, that means that Labor has committed roughly \$1,300,999,900 more to the Sunshine Coast passenger rail than the LNP over four decades. It was up to this government—this Premier, the member for Nicklin and myself—to show the terminally lazy LNP members on the Sunshine Coast what standing up for the Sunshine Coast actually looks like.

Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (2.13 pm): I welcome news that the federal government will keep their commitment of \$1.6 billion in funding to the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line, otherwise known as CAMCOS, but the state still has not got on board with a deadline and a destination, and no commitment to taking it to Maroochydore, as they had originally promised to do. It is time the state government got on board and stopped playing petty, nasty politics and treating the people of the Sunshine Coast with no respect.


The previous LNP government allocated \$1.6 billion towards this project in their budget which was tabled in the federal parliament. The new federal government put an infrastructure freeze on and stripped out funding for the MRI, but they have committed to keeping the \$1.6 billion towards this project. I am calling on the state government to give a commitment to at least match and go further in ensuring that this project continues on to Maroochydore, that there is a deadline and there is a destination.

Maroochydore CBD is the centre of the Sunshine Coast and is also the nexus of the public transport system and services, and rail to Maroochydore is important not only for the Olympics but also for getting people off the roads and to their jobs and services. There will be at least 1,400 athletes housed in the athletes' village there and it will be very important as well to access other services during the Olympics. The state government has spent more time and money on hiding their reasons for not progressing this. There has been more business cases done on Maroochydore rail than there has been on the proposed knockdown and rebuild of the Gabba which has seen an extraordinary amount of money assigned to it without any evidence of a business case—certainly not one that has been released.

It is very important that there is a commitment to get rail to Maroochydore, to ensure that the services are met. This piece of infrastructure is necessary to get people off the roads and it will also take pressure off the Bruce Highway. While the Bruce Highway still needs upgrades, there will come a

point where people will say they want to be able to get in the realm—they are saying it now. A survey I put to the Sunshine Coast community showed more than 80 per cent of people confirmed that rail to Maroochydore was their No. 1 priority. However, the state Labor government, that originally promised to do this by 2020, are still not committing. There must be a commitment and a deadline for rail to destination Maroochydore. It is time to get on board and to build it.

Cost of Living

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.16 pm): The *Macquarie Dictionary* announced this week that 'cozzie livs' is the 2023 Australian Word of the Year. It is local slang, as we know, for 'cost of living'. I have to admit I actually have not heard anybody say 'cozzie livs' to me in a conversation, nor have I seen it anywhere in print, but I do give full marks to the *Macquarie Dictionary* for at least capturing the Zeitgeist of this inflationary age that we are living in. The cost of living is something that is very real and something that everyone is talking about. We hear people talking to us about it in our electorates. We know that people are struggling to meet the ever increasing costs of housing, petrol, groceries and utility bills.

This government is responding by supporting extensive relief measures that will help put more money into Queenslanders' pockets. We can do this because of our progressive coal royalties. These are designed to ensure Queenslanders get their fair share of the record coal profits. Those opposite us would cancel progressive coal royalties if given the chance. They are not interested in delivering a share of the profits back to Queenslanders; they are only interested in allowing coal companies to keep the profits for themselves. That would mean taking away what funding we are providing as cost-of-living relief to Queenslanders when they need it the most.


Some of the relief measures and concessions that we are providing to Queenslanders include a \$550 cost-of-living rebate on electricity bills for all Queensland households, the \$1,072 cost-of-living rebate for seniors and concession card holders, free kindy for all four-year-olds from next year, and up to \$1,000 to purchase energy efficient appliances.

That is not all. We know that many Queenslanders are struggling with housing affordability. National pressures from rising interest rates, record low rental vacancies and record migration are stopping Queenslanders from meeting their basic housing needs. What is particularly concerning is the number of people in my electorate on low incomes who are now locked out of the private rental market due to significant rent increases.

With the support of the Palaszczuk government's record investment in housing, I am fighting every day to make sure Ipswich gets its fair share of social and affordable housing. I am pleased to see construction is well underway for a social housing complex for older people in Basin Pocket. Construction is soon to start on a new social housing complex in West Ipswich. I am very pleased to announce today that construction is proposed to start next year on a new 43-unit social housing complex in Booval, right near the train station. The target cohort of tenants for this project will be women, a group which is increasingly vulnerable to homelessness.

Another group increasingly being edged out of the housing market are young first home buyers. I want to thank the Premier and the minister for making the recent announcement that we will be doubling the First Home Owner Grant from \$15,000 to \$30,000. Over the past three years, the First Home Owner Grant has helped 24,000 Queenslanders get into housing, and this will see a significant uptake in that.

School Opinion Survey; Anti-Semitism

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.19 pm): The Palaszczuk state Labor government has comprehensively failed to deliver a world-class education system for Queensland's students, parents, teachers and staff. The latest School Opinion Survey results prove this point. On page 3 of the 2023 School Opinion Survey state report, across 49 key metrics not a single measurement recorded any improvement from those of 2022. The attempts by the Labor Minister for Education to claim victory on school attendance is just smoke and mirrors. Whilst there have been marginal improvements from 2022-23, when the data is reviewed in its full context and compared to 2019—that is, before the COVID-19 pandemic—it is evident that there is still a long way to go. This includes secondary school attendance rates, which are over four percentage points below the 2019 peak of 88.5 per cent, as well as overall Queensland school attendance rates, which are still more than three percentage points off the 2019 rate. Perhaps most revealingly and deeply concerning are the results in relation to management of school behaviour.

I now wish to address recent events that have deeply affected Queenslanders, all Australians and, indeed, communities worldwide. On 7 October 2023, a heinous terrorist attack occurred in Israel, resulting in the loss of 1,200 lives, injuries to over 7,700 individuals and the taking of more than 200 hostages. This marks the largest attack on Jewish people since the Holocaust. The circumstances surrounding this incident and the Middle East are complex, and it is crucial to approach them with a commitment to accurate information and objective understanding.

The events since 7 October 2023 have given rise to incidences of anti-Semitism globally, including right here in Australia and in our state of Queensland. It is a disgrace to witness incidents of racial intolerance and hatred, such as calls for violence against Jews in Sydney, confrontations in Melbourne and the defacement of Jewish businesses. These actions run counter to core Australian values including inclusiveness, religious tolerance, the safety of all citizens and adherence to the rule of law.

As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for education, I have been disturbed to hear of incidents that have been reported in Queensland schools, with Jewish students facing targeted harassment. We cannot ignore the rise in anti-Semitic actions such as the use of inflammatory slogans at rallies and the inappropriate indoctrination of children. In one incident, a Jewish teenager was confronted by individuals who identified themselves as 'Neo-Nazis' or ' Hamas freedom fighters', and in Cairns a Jewish child was told, 'Hitler was right' and 'free Palestine'.

Our commitment to combating anti-Semitism must be unwavering. We cannot allow hate to flourish in our schools, universities and workplaces or any part of society. It is imperative that we learn from history and recognise the signs of people spreading hatred and intolerance. I call upon each and every member of the Queensland parliament to stand united against anti-Semitism. Let us foster an environment of understanding, respect and dialogue. Our shared commitment to Australian values demands nothing less.

International Nurses Day; Nurse-to-Patient Ratios



Mr KELLY (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.22 pm): International Nurses Day 2016 is a day I will long remember. It was a historic day for this parliament. We were the first in Australia, and only the fourth jurisdiction in the world, to pass safe nurse-to-patient and safe midwife-to-patient ratios. Ratios save lives. We know this because of the research done by the Queensland University of Technology and the University of Pennsylvania. The research released in 2019 estimates that 145 lives have been saved; 255 readmissions were avoided, at a cost of \$1.2 million to \$2.2 million per admission; and 29,500 hospital days were avoided, with a total saving of between \$54 million and \$81 million.

I can proudly say that I am the only nurse in this parliament who voted in support of these laws. I supported better patient safety and better working conditions for nurses and midwives. I am sad to say that not everybody was in support of this. I wanted to have a quick review of what the current shadow minister for health, the member for Mudgeeraba, said in her second reading contribution. She started by saying—

I am disappointed that, in a hasty attempt to appease the Queensland Nurses' Union, this Labor government has chosen to introduce this piece of legislation with insufficient evidence to support the need for it.


There was plenty of evidence then, and there is plenty more evidence now. I will tell you what I am disappointed in. I am disappointed that an ex-nurse would not understand instinctively that by having fewer patients to care for a nurse could do a better job. The member also questioned if we would have enough nurses to implement the new ratios. I guess the member would wonder about that. I wonder how she would have covered those ratios having sacked thousands of nurses, because that is what they did. Finally, the member said—

... I do not believe that ratios are the panacea sold to nurses by the QNU.

The reality is that we have reversed the cuts, particularly to the graduate positions; we have introduced nurse navigators; we are building new hospitals; and we created the mental health levy. It was never sold as a panacea, but it is a very important measure, amongst a range of very important measures, that we as a government have implemented. We have always acted in close consultation with the QNMU. We certainly have not called regional nurses duds.

No matter what the member for Mudgeeraba or the Leader of the Opposition might say about backing nursing ratios, we know—after the fiasco in Cairns where they voted for the Path to Treaty and backflipped a few months later—that they cannot be trusted on anything. An LNP government that takes a 'cuts-afull' approach will be a clear and present danger to safe nurse and midwife ratios. Only Labor backs safe nurse and midwife ratios, because we know that ratios save lives.

Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services, Performance

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.25 pm): Today we finally had confirmation, with the release of the Auditor-General's report titled *Deploying police resources*, that this police minister is not up to the job. Make no mistake: this report is damning. It is one of the most damning reports I have ever seen. This report should be ringing alarm bells right across Queensland. This report clearly shows that this police minister is not up to the job.

I say at the outset that I support our police officers, who are doing a great job, but they are doing it under the most difficult and challenging of circumstances. Crime is the No. 1 issue in this state right now, and our Police Service needs leadership. They need resources, they need support and, more importantly, they need a minister with his finger on the pulse. What did the report find? It states—

QPS does not have a complete picture of all demand for its services.

...

QPS does not have a strategic approach to workforce planning.

At estimates I asked: how much did the service delivery program cost to implement? The signature program that was brought in by this minister—how much? I was given a figure of \$8.7 million. The report has \$25.9 million—three times the amount. Of more concern—

It has no planned alternative to addressing the service delivery issues this program was designed to solve.

There is nothing to take its place. What else does it say? The report states—

QPS does not undertake statewide forecasting and does not have a comprehensive picture of its changing and emerging demand.


These statements ring alarm bells. It goes on—

QPS ... does not meet its response time targets set for high-priority calls.

Here is the one that did me in: the QPS have dropped the target for responding to code 1 and code 2 calls from 85 per cent to 80 per cent after they missed their target in 2021-22. Gee, I wonder why they did that. It would not be to pull the wool over our eyes by any chance?

Here is a staggering number. The QPS failed to respond to over 86,594 calls requiring a police response in the 2021-22 year. They are on their knees, and they are on their knees because of this government and the ineptitude of this police minister. There is only one solution. The first person out the door in '24 needs to be the police minister.

Maryborough Electorate

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (2.28 pm): Ho, ho, ho! Santa came early to the Maryborough electorate last Wednesday, 22 November. There was no grinch like the member for Chatsworth—only happiness and presents for the whole electorate when I was there with the minister. I publicly thank the minister and the Premier for making sure these jobs stayed local. We are not building trains overseas. You will hear those opposites talk about flat packs. Today the member for Chatsworth—the man who was going to give us 'tough love'—was talking through his hat, as we say in the Maryborough electorate. He had no idea what he was talking about. He is welcome to come up and talk to the people of Maryborough, because there are no flat pack trains being built at Torbanlea in the Maryborough electorate.


The great news is that Hyundai Rotem are opening a factory in Maryborough, a \$13 million investment which will create local jobs and local skills that we can now only dream of. Who has delivered this? It has been the Palaszczuk Labor government. Who is reinvesting in manufacturing in regional Queensland? It has been the Palaszczuk Labor government. It is just like Santa Claus coming through with the Santa sleigh.

We saw the member for Miller up there giving out presents to everyone the other day. It was fantastic to see the look on people's faces. Honourable members should walk through my city and see how happy the people are. They know that the future is in the Palaszczuk Labor government's hands. We hear them say, 'Show Labor the door.' People are saying, 'We're going to show you the door of government again.' That is what they are telling me in Maryborough, 'We want you back through the door. We do not want them in.' People say that because they know what is going to happen if those opposite get in. The train contract will be on a Qantas flight overseas. Bang, they will be all over there. It will be closed down. It will be shut down like before and they will try to rewrite history and blame everyone but themselves.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has reinvested in regional Queensland right around the state. If honourable members travel from Cairns to the Gold Coast they will see it. One of the things I will say is, as I said, Christmas has come early for the electorate. We have had some really great support from the Premier, the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Transport with the Tiaro bypass and the Burrum Heads-Pialba Road upgrade. This government has gone to Canberra and has rattled the cage in Canberra to keep these projects going. What did we hear from that side? We heard nothing! The difference is that the Palaszczuk government stands up for Queenslanders. They stand up for Queenslanders. They create jobs for Queenslanders, particularly in the Maryborough electorate.

I would like to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (2.31 pm): When Queenslanders reflect on the Palaszczuk government and its actions this year, they will see a government with the wrong priorities and a government in chaos and crisis. This chaotic culture has infected all the way through ministerial ranks and has impacted this government's ability to properly manage our energy network and lead our very important resources industry. The reliability—or should I say the unreliability—of Queensland's electricity supply remains a major issue affecting Queenslanders.


A lack of maintenance on state owned power plants is an ongoing issue. It is one that even the Labor aligned Mining and Energy Union have expressed concerns about. Queenslanders are also still waiting on an independent report by Sean Brady into the explosion that occurred at Callide well over two years ago. Where is this report and when will it be released in full and to the public? We are still waiting for the Callide Power Station to be back at full capacity. We have heard the warnings from industry experts, including AEMO, about blackouts over the summer peak. Time will tell as to whether generation will cope with the additional demand that a hot summer naturally requires.

This week we have heard even more about the government's budget blowouts. It seems almost every project this government touches blows out. We do not need to look any further than the Minister for Transport to see that. It is this government's abysmal record overseeing major projects that is particularly concerning. This is especially so when it comes to future investment, particularly from the private sector. How can business have any confidence to partner with this government when they show a complete inability to deliver any project on time and on budget?

Speaking of future investment, investment certainly remains a major issue for the resource sector in the state. The Palaszczuk government continues to make announcements without consultation that send shock waves through the industry. Instead of supporting the mining industry, Minister Scott Stewart continues to echo the attacks of Treasurer Cameron Dick on coal companies and their representatives. When speaking of the coalmining industry all too often he only speaks of coal royalty increases. This language is not what new projects need given the importance of critical minerals and exploration as Queensland works towards new energy sources and trade opportunities. The opportunity for our state in this space is enormous but it needs a government that will actually work with industry to achieve that.

In 2024 there is no doubt that the government will unleash the mother of all scare campaigns. It is all they have, given they cannot rest on their record. My priority remains working with industry as we formulate the policies that we will take to the election in under one year.

Mundingburra Electorate

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.34 pm): It is Disability Action Week and what a week it has been. Yesterday I attended the Access Ignites: it's good business event here at the parliamentary precinct with Minister Crawford. I had the opportunity to meet some of those with a disability smashing

through the barriers they have encountered when it comes to obtaining employment or starting a small business. I met an amazing young man, Clay Lewis, who has started his very own small business right here in Brisbane.

Ms Pease: In Lytton.

Mr WALKER: In Lytton? Absolutely. He is a nice young fellow. He started a business providing pressure cleaning for his growing client base. He absolutely loves what he does and he has grown in confidence. I have been informed that people have seen an overall change in his wellbeing for the better. He is also a huge fan of supercars and visits Townsville each year to see the supercars in action. Clay is an absolute champion and I wish Clay a very merry Christmas and all the best for the future.

I call on all employers who are looking for keen, passionate and motivated workers to please consider those who have a disability and reach out to the local employment agencies that will help find someone to meet their business needs. It is a smart move and they will not be disappointed.

Mr Speaker, as you know, we have a fantastic education department here in Queensland. I want to thank all those teachers, teacher aides and school support staff who do administration, repairs, cleaning and mowing of all the facilities across the state. I thank them for all that they do for our young people and their families. I want to congratulate all those who have graduated this year. I wish them all the very best for the future and a very merry Christmas and safe 2024.

I also want to publicly thank all our frontline service personnel who do exceptional work serving Queenslanders each and every day, especially over the festive season. Our doctors, nurses, correctional officers, police, paramedics, fires, State Emergency Services, rural fires and those who staff the emergency services call centres across the state. Queenslanders know they are there to help them in their time of need. I thank them and I wish them a very merry Christmas and safe 2024.

Finally, I want to thank my office team, Bella and Tish; and I wish you, Mr Speaker, and everyone in the House a very Merry Christmas and a safe 2024.

Mossman Sugar Mill



Mr PERRETT (Gympie—LNP) (2.37 pm): Last week Mossman Sugar Mill went into liquidation. This is a serious development for not just the canegrowers, their workers and families but also the entire Douglas shire. The mill is a central piece of agricultural infrastructure in the Douglas shire employing around 150 workers and supplied by 85 growers. After tourism, sugar is the region's second biggest industry. Any closure would be dire for the region. Astonishingly, there has only been silence from the Premier, the local member for Cook, the Deputy Premier and even the agriculture minister.

On Friday I met and spoke to the mayor, Councillor Michael Kerr, and local canegrower representatives Matt Watson, Scott Fasana, Glen Fasano, Jack Murday and Evelyn Matthews, who is also a member of the Douglas Chamber of Commerce. Growers are rushing to harvest the cane before the wet even arrives. After previous assurances that the mill would operate in the 2024 season, farmers had made commitments, planted crops and secured contracts. Everything is now at risk.

The council understands the grave consequences of this development and already has developed an action plan. The plan involves biophysical and economic considerations designed to give farmers confidence in growing viable alternative crops. It looks at updated mapping, advice on potential yields, water licences, identifying viable opportunities, unallocated ground and surface water for irrigation, market analysis for suitable crops, opportunities for farm-scale business cases, regional chain and value-adding opportunities, and business cases on infrastructure. The mayor wrote to the Premier speaking support. He has heard nothing. Councillor Kerr advised the Premier the region needs immediate assistance to investigate and recommend viable diversification options for immediate implementation, assistance with funding infrastructure such as a silo for grain storage, support with crisis funding to facilitate growers to meet their 2024 contractual obligations and funding a sustainable long-term diversification plan that considers the region's strength and biodiversity. This plan could include carbon sequestration, rainforest and reef science and conservation, renewable energy, smart green economy, sustainable agritourism, research and development, and regenerative tourism projects.


Going into administration will create significant economic and social implications for the region. The mill is critical to the local sugarcane industry, supporting more than 300 jobs and contributing \$26 million to the local economy. Its closure would not only lead to significant direct job losses and

devastate the local cane growing industry; it would devastate the township. Workers, local family businesses which support the mill, the cane industry and businesses in the town will be impacted. As Councillor Kerr said—

If this all collapses in a heap, we are going to lose the population, we're going to lose facilities, and lose businesses, it will be a disaster.


It might be a 22-hour drive from Brisbane, but they deserve much more than silence from Brisbane.

Cairns Electorate

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (2.40 pm): This week we heard from both the Premier and the Minister for Tourism that last week was a very big week in Cairns at the newly refurbished and expanded \$176 million Cairns Convention Centre. I want to touch on Destination IQ, which is our focus on Indigenous tourism which was held on the Wednesday of last week, and DestinationQ, which was held on the Thursday. Destination IQ truly was an absolutely fantastic event with over 300 participants in what is a growing and very popular event. I want to congratulate Cameron Costello, Rhonda Appo, Shae Davis and QTIC's Indigenous Champions Network for putting together a fantastic event. I want to acknowledge their work. I also want to acknowledge DestinationQ, with over 700 operators turning up for that on the Thursday. I want to acknowledge Elsa Dalessio and Brett Fraser for the work that QTIC does and TTNQ's Mark Olsen and his team. They continue to make a fantastic contribution, as does the team at Tourism and Events Queensland under the new CEO, Patricia O'Callaghan. She is doing an absolutely fantastic job.

I also wanted to note that last week there was a visit by the opposition leader. It was very brief; it was very quick. I thought that that might be an opportunity to have a quick look through the 'Right wing priorities for a few' document. I scurried through the document and found two references to tourism—two references to tourism and that was it. I then looked at the Towards Tourism 2032 document. This document was put together by tourism expert Liz Savage who worked in conjunction with Andrew McEvoy, who has headed up the South Australian Tourism Commission and Tourism Australia. This was a 12-month consultation with the tourism industry. I compared that document to the 'Right wing priorities for a few' document. The Towards Tourism 2032 document has extensive and detailed analysis, a budget and an action plan. The industry has worked together and there has been extensive consultation, so after comparing the two I thought, 'That is typical. The fraud continues.' Whilst the minister was announcing significant investments in new funding for building bush tourism and double funding for the growing tourism fund, the opposition leader just turned up, said hello and walked away. The fraud continues.

Port Hinchinbrook Development


 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (2.43 pm): I rise to update the House on the Port Hinchinbrook development in North Queensland in the Hinchinbrook electorate. After six years of hard work, we have been able to achieve multiple successes in order to resolve some of the long-term problems with the failed development. Through the local government, the Cassowary Coast Regional Council, and the state government we have been able to secure the roads and the sewerage treatment plant through compulsory acquisition through the state. Putting that infrastructure back in the hands of council has been an important step forward for normalisation of the development. Funds from the state government of \$6.4 million went towards the sewerage treatment plant and the roads, and that was to acquire the roads as well. The federal government has also chipped in \$6 million. That is solely to go towards the sewerage treatment plant. Construction for the Cardwell sewerage treatment plant has commenced, but with the rising costs of construction and labour costs have blown out substantially which will see a \$6 million shortfall. We are talking with the state now to find ways to fund that shortfall so that residents within Port Hinchinbrook will not have to pay \$3,000 a year for sewerage infrastructure charges.

The residents of Port Hinchinbrook are still without streetlighting. We have been talking with the Cassowary Coast and Ergon to come up with a figure to replace the streetlighting. Just short of \$600,000 is needed through whatever grant program we can entertain. We have been talking with the state government and the minister around that and I look forward to a commitment soon.

Up to 70 per cent of the land-based problems in Port Hinchinbrook have been solved through the normalisation process, and now it is time to shift our focus to the water-based issues. Currently the Cassowary Coast Regional Council has access to \$1.5 million of federal funding to be spent on

emergency dredging and opening up One Mile Creek—or, as it is better known, the 'grand canal of Port Hinchinbrook'—and it now has the responsibility of delivering that project. We know that that emergency dredging project has the support of the Department of Environment and Science and the state, but moving forward we need to come up with a long-term dredging plan for the Port Hinchinbrook marina and One Mile Creek. It is time now for all levels of government—federal, state and local government—to come together to devise a long-term dredging plan, and it is not the first time something like this has been done. In Cairns at Yorkeys Knob at the Bluewater Marina there is a model that works very well. It is a user-pays system. Everyone from the people who own marina bays and blocks all the way through to residents and the council chip in. The commercial operators chip in as well. I look forward to meeting with the Deputy Premier at some stage to put our ideas forward because this is going to need a whole-of-government approach. Multiple departments will need to get involved to solve this long-term dredging problem.

Liberal National Party, Performance


 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (2.46 pm): Queenslanders can trust the Palaszczuk Labor government to continue to deliver the jobs and services they need to enjoy our great Queensland lifestyle. We are the engine room of the nation. We have created record numbers of jobs and record investments in health, in education, in housing and in transport, backed by record numbers of frontline staff. We are here for Queenslanders when they need it most, with the nation's biggest cost-of-living relief package. All of that is at risk under the LNP, and we know that from its right-wing priorities document that it put out only a couple of weeks ago, attempting to provide a future vision for Queensland, and I have to say it is a nightmare. It is a dystopian vision. It is a pamphlet that is trying to masquerade as a policy document.

There are no details. There is no substance to this document—not one dollar towards direct cost-of-living relief. There are no details or investments in health, in housing, in transport. It is clear that even though this document has only been out for a couple of weeks it is already a failure, and that is because it is not actually focused on Queenslanders; it is focused on the LNP. That is why those opposite have been parading around with it tucked under their arms like dutiful little LNP lemmings—walking around clutching it like a security blanket that has wrapped up their hopes and dreams of returning to government in 2024. Unfortunately, nobody outside of the House has probably seen it. Nobody outside of the House probably knows about it, although I do wonder where they might take it outside of the House. Maybe when they wake up in the middle of the night and need to go to the bathroom they will tuck it under their arm and take it with them.

Mr Harper: Is it toilet reading material?

Mr McCALLUM: I take that interjection from the member for Thuringowa. Those opposite have been lining up one after the other this week and finishing off all of their speeches with a glib slogan, but Queenslanders will not elect a slogan. Queenslanders want policies, not pamphlets. Queenslanders want to see a contest of ideas when it comes to the 2024 election, but you cannot have a contest when the LNP has no ideas.

Public-Private Partnerships


 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (2.49 pm): I rise to speak on the impact of public-private partnerships on the democratic values and processes of government in Queensland. Increasingly we are seeing the state's public sector managers and politicians looking to private corporations to provide a vast array of infrastructure and services that were formerly the province of government. Public-private partnership arrangements between government and the private sector have undermined democratic public institutions because the commercial relationships are inherently secretive, unaccountable and often very risky.

Further, public administrative values such as responsibility of staff to elected officials, accountability to the public of elected officials, transparency, public consultation, open government and parliament's 'power of the purse' have increasingly been supplanted by concepts such as investor confidence, commercial confidentiality, stability for investors, proprietary ownership of information and assets, commercial sensitivity, trade secrets, protection of shareholders and competitive procurement rules. This language change reflects a fundamental shift in the nature of our Westminster-based system of responsible government.

Over the past decade we have seen countless examples of the ways PPPs are eroding our democratic public institutions. In 2017, an investigation was undertaken by the Griffith Business School to test the extent of Australian state performance audits into PPPs by Australia's auditors-general. Of the 11 categories of PPPs only four—road, rail, health and correctional—have had performance audits done in three jurisdictions: New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia. Over a 22-year period, only 16—12.6 per cent—individual PPP projects have been audited by an auditor-general in Australia. Most have therefore not been subject to any independent oversight. New South Wales has performance audited eight out of a total of 30 PPP projects, Victoria has audited seven of a total of 49 projects, and Western Australia one out of a total of 12 projects. Significantly, no performance audits have been conducted in Queensland, despite the large number of PPPs the state government has entered into and their enormous cost to the Queensland taxpayer. In New South Wales five of the performance audits relate to six toll roads, three of these were requested by the New South Wales parliament. Although there is a legislative prohibition on auditors-general commenting on government policy, one New South Wales auditor-general, in two separate audits, questioned the government's assumption that private toll roads resulted in effective public policy outcomes.

Public-private partnerships present unique challenges to governments and auditors-general. The record of Australian auditors-general to date has been patchy. In Queensland, no performance audit on these arrangements has been done at all. I think it is time parliament called on the Auditor-General to conduct one here in Queensland.


Wynnum Fringe

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.52 pm): Dare I say two words: Wynnum Fringe. What a great success it has been, with over 200 performers across all of the venues, which include the Raine & Horne Wynnum Opera House, the Downtown Toyota Piano Lounge, the BMD Festival, Barton's Backstage Bar, the Bank of Queensland Wonderland Spiegeltent, the Quandamooka First Nations Zone and Jayco's Lunchbox. Twenty thousand tickets have been sold already and that is not including the people who have come to enjoy the free performances like listening to Doctor DJ down at the piano lounge who, might I say, is fantastic. It also did not include the 5,000-plus people who joined me on Sunday for the Bay Pride event.

Spectators lined the street to cheer on all of the people who were supporting inclusiveness, kindness and love. Residents lined the Esplanade and had street parties and parties on their verandas and cheered on those 5,000 people who stood up in support of our entire community—unlike the LNP powerbrokers who chose to have a protest, which was shameful. I have spoken in the past about the nasty flyers that were put out depicting terrible images. They sadly attached my name to these things. In the day and age that we live in now where we are an inclusive, kind community, hopefully across all of Australia—certainly down in my electorate—people do not accept this attitude. That was seen in spades. There was so much love, unity and kindness on display at the Bay Pride parade and I am really proud that I participated in that event. I am proud of the mums and dads, grandmas, aunties, grandads, little kids and everyone who came out to enjoy that wonderful activity.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my staff, Jo, Nikki and Hugh, for the great work that they do looking after me and also all the wonderful frontline staff at Gundu Pa, our teachers, our staff at the QCESA facility, the QAS, the fire station, corrections, Queensland Transport and Queensland Rail. I am really excited about the Big Build that is going on in my electorate which includes the Lindum accessibility upgrade, Darling Point Special School and Manly State School. This is all thanks to the progressive coal royalties which we know will probably go if this mob over here are ever elected. The BCC sadly have indicated that they will not be continuing their funding for the Lindum road network upgrades, just like the pamphlet that does not mention anything about arts and culture or women in sport.


Domestic and Family Violence

 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (2.55 pm): From 25 November through to 10 December we acknowledge the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, an initiative by the United Nations, an initiative that is undertaken and carried out by many organisations across this state, including locally my Zonta clubs of Mackay and the Whitsundays. I acknowledge the volunteers and members of this club for their contribution in the 16 days of activism in advocating against gender-based violence. Members of the community will note across our local community, both in Mackay and Airlie Beach in the Whitsundays, the orange ladies that have been placed in not-for-profit businesses as well as private businesses. We thank them for their support and their advocacy.

What is sad and disgusting is that 56 women have been killed in Australia this year—that is more than one a week; seven just this month—as a result of violence. Twenty-eight have allegedly been killed at the hands of their male intimate partner or ex intimate partner. The fact that we have a project and a site counting dead women in Australia is shameful. It is upon everyone in this House, in particular the men in this House, to raise their voices in defence of gender-based violence against women.

On 1 December 2014, after being appointed by the LNP as the co-chair of the taskforce responsible for the *Not now, not ever* report, Dame Quentin Bryce said, ‘Four decades of courageous social work led by women has not made headway against Australia’s domestic violence problem, suggesting the key driver of change should be men and police.’ Here we are almost a decade later. The independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence was a recommendation by the McMurdo report, to which many women and men across this state contributed. Its report was publicly released on 21 November 2022, just over a year ago, and still we are awaiting the police minister’s statements to assure victims of gender-based violence that all recommendations have been adopted and implemented. It is upon the government to ensure that those recommendations are upheld. There were time frames associated with those recommendations. This is about saying not now, not ever. Zonta says no and we say no. I call on the minister to be held to account.

Ambulance Service

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (2.58 pm): On Monday I nearly choked on my cornflakes when I was reading the *Courier-Mail* article in which the LNP and the Leader of the Opposition were carrying on about meal overtime for paramedics. I thought I would share with the House my experience as a negotiator on an enterprise bargaining team with my union, whom I have been proudly associated with for 33 years, then United Voice, now the United Workers Union.

During those negotiations—which were deplorable, by the way—we would fly down from regional Queensland to represent our members and the negotiating team from the government would not even turn up. They were trying to break the back of the union. What they tried to remove with their offer—and their offer was deplorable—was meal overtime. Paramedics in this state deserve meal overtime. On many occasions in my 30-year career, when I had just purchased a meal—it might be from Subway or somewhere else—I was asked to go to a code 1 emergency case. As all paramedics in this state do, I always put the patient first.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr HARPER: That is typical of the LNP. I hear the whingeing and whining from the other side. They also tried to take away afternoon and night penalties as well as weekend penalties. That was utterly rejected by our members from across Queensland to the point where we joined with the firies from the United Firefighters Union to stand in front of this place. We rallied in our thousands. Not one LNP member—and plenty of them sat around the cabinet table, member for wherever you are but not for long—had the intestinal fortitude to come down and face angry ambos and firies who were being stripped of their entitlements by the LNP. I can tell the House that they will do it again. It is in their DNA. The LNP only know how to sack, cut and sell. What they did to our emergency services was terrible.

Given that it is the last sitting day and nearly Christmas, I want to send a message to our hardworking emergency services personnel, ambos, police, rural firies, SES volunteers, nurses and all of those who will be working over Christmas. They absolutely deserve their penalties and they absolutely deserve our thanks for looking after Queenslanders. Summer is coming and we do not know what is ahead of us, but we thank them in advance from the bottom of our hearts. With the indulgence of the House, I wish everyone a merry Christmas. I am looking forward to seeing everyone back here in 2024.

STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Resumed from 16 November (see p. 3641), on motion of Mr Whiting—

That the House take note of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee Report No. 39, 57th Parliament, *Examination of Auditor-General Report 16: 2021-22: Contract management for new infrastructure*, tabled on 1 March 2023.



Mr HART (Burleigh—LNP) (3.01 pm): I want to speak to the committee report. To understand the gravity of what the Auditor-General found, it is worth reading from the transcript of our discussion with him. The Auditor-General stated—

The government's key guiding document for managing risks in planning and delivering infrastructure projects is the Capital Works Management Framework. We found that this does not reflect contemporary practice and does not provide a clear and standardised approach for managing infrastructure contracts, and many entities do not use it.

I would suggest that the department of transport is one of those departments that do not use it. The Auditor-General continued—

The departments have developed some internal guidelines, processes and systems for managing infrastructure contracts; however, they do not adequately align with the framework to the extent that the framework remains relevant.

He went on to say that departments had to change project scope and cost after they had already awarded the contracts and that is the major issue on which this government keeps falling down. The department of transport, through Minister 'Blowout' Bailey, continuously has projects blow out.

Mr McCALLUM: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I do not believe that the member was using correct titles.

Mr HART: I withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): You have the call, member for Burleigh.

Mr HART: On the Gold Coast, the light rail project has blown out from \$750 million to \$1.2 billion. It is still being built and we have not seen a final figure yet. I expect that it will blow out even more, which will make light rail stage 4 uneconomical to build. That is because the contract management framework is not being followed.

We have heard Minister Bailey talking about the M1 upgrades, where we have had another blowout under this incompetent minister. He blames the federal government. He says that the federal government is not meeting its 50-50 contribution to the M1. When we had a federal Liberal government the minister wanted an 80-20 split, but now he is happy to accept a 50-50 split. That is because he is working with his comrade mates.

We have seen a blowout in the train project that is associated with Cross River Rail. The trains are going to be built in Maryborough, supposedly. The cost of that project has gone from \$7.1 billion to \$9.5 billion. It will absolutely be a case of flat pack trains being brought in from Korea and assembled in this state. How do I know that?

Mr SAUNDERS: Madam Deputy Speaker, the member is misleading the House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr HART: I will contradict the member for Maryborough. I asked a question of the acting director-general of the Department of Transport and Main Roads about the buses that are being built in Burleigh. I have been to that factory where they build the buses. The buses come in flat packs. They bring in a chassis that is cut in half and they build a frame around it.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maryborough, order!

Mr HART: I asked the acting director-general if it was likely to be the same case with trains coming from Korea.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maryborough, order!

Mr HART: The answer was, 'That's how we manufacture things in Australia nowadays. We bring things in from overseas and they are built almost completely overseas.' The trains will be Korean trains.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maryborough, you are now warned under the standing orders.

Mr HART: They will be Korean trains. They will not be manufactured in Maryborough at all.

Mr Krause: They could have been made in Ipswich.


Mr HART: In fact, they could have made them in Ipswich; I take that interjection.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Maryborough, you were given a warning. I now ask you to leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Maryborough withdrew from the chamber at 3.06 pm.

Mr HART: The trains could have been built in Ipswich but, unfortunately, the government takes Ipswich for granted. The Koreans are building a sheet metal factory in Maryborough to build the outside of the flat pack trains that come in from Korea. Under this government, we see continuous blowouts in projects because they cannot manage infrastructure. That is well known. Wait until we see the real cost of Cross River Rail. That will be terrible. It will be shocking. The only way we can save this state is to show Labor the door in '24.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (3.07 pm): I rise to speak on the State Development and Regional Industries Committee report examining the Auditor-General's report titled *Contract management for new infrastructure*. The Auditor-General investigated six projects worth \$1.4 billion. The office found, in September 2021, two years ago, there were more than \$127 million in contract variations on those six projects, which equates to 11 per cent of their value. After finding poor management contributed to delays and unexpected costs, the Auditor-General made 11 recommendations about government management frameworks, managing contract performance and good practice.

Waste is the result of poor contract management. Waste is a feature of how this government conducts business. Waste from its inability to manage infrastructure building and cost blowouts underpins the current dispute between the Queensland and federal governments. The federal government cancelled many infrastructure projects because of cost blowouts. The state delivers those projects. It is the state's responsibility to manage the projects efficiently and prudently. Unfortunately, it is in Labor's DNA. We well remember the \$500 million wasted by the Beattie government on the failed Traveston dam fiasco. That practice continues under this Labor government.

Gympie has seen numerous examples of waste from sheer pigheadedness and incapable performance by political and media fixers and a lack of consultation. There was the five-year saga of two ministers refusing to lease an empty and unwanted TAFE building to the University of the Sunshine Coast. The building sat empty and was left to deteriorate even though an available tenant was willing to pay for, upgrade and use it.

A 22-kilometre stretch of the Bruce Highway on the northern outskirts of Gympie has been patched, dug up, repatched and now patched again. In 2020, six months after the completion of a \$17 million job, the road was dug up and repaired again. They said that they did not know the condition of the underlying pavement. There would have been a metre-high pile of archives, going back 50 years, detailing a mishmash of repairs. It would be one of the most dug up, patched and repatched stretches of the highway. Three years later, it has happened again.

In August, the department started work to fix what it called the 'underlying geotechnical issues' that had resulted in frequent potholing, rutting and other problems over a five-kilometre stretch. Following my question to the transport minister, we learned that it would involve another \$4.5 million and three months of work. When the Auditor conducted his examination, the government was planning \$52.2 billion of infrastructure spending over four years. The Auditor said the capital works management framework is the whole-of-government framework for managing infrastructure projects. It should provide entities across the public sector with the best and most up-to-date guidance. Instead, it is over 20 years old and has not been properly updated. It is not fit for purpose. It is concerning the Auditor found that the contract management frameworks were outdated, have gaps, are not always effectively applied, that contract risk and issues were not appropriately managed and that the performance of contractors was not assessed. It also found the limitations of their current guidance and support sometimes leads to ineffective practices and noncompliance with relevant frameworks. These limitations, often combined with time pressures, also contributed to limited consultation, planning oversights and a lack of performance management.

As the Auditor said, these weaknesses lead to limited consultation. Frequently I receive complaints from constituents about limited consultation on projects. The recent overnight reduction in the speed limit on Tin Can Bay Road to 80 kilometres an hour does not appear to have happened with much consultation. Instead of upgrading the road, this appears to be the government's solution to fixing major deficiencies. The latest dispute with the federal government shows cost blowouts not only impact

the project but also deny communities other much needed projects. State government slogans to 'build big' are meaningless when the budget capital statements show it has not made any major investment in the infrastructure we need. We need investment in our local hospital, police resources, social housing, roads, bridges, high-quality sporting facilities, funding for multipurpose entertainment and sporting facilities, flood-proofing transport corridors and heating the pool at the Gympie Aquatic Recreation Centre.

The government's incompetence and obsession with political fixes and its self-inflicted culture of crisis and chaos means that Gympie misses out. Meanwhile, the government's list of infrastructure projects which have missed planning targets, cost blowouts and time overruns continues to grow. As the Auditor-General found, effective contract management is fundamental to reducing the risk of cost and time overruns and ensuring public sector entities achieve value for money and the projects' intended benefits.

Motion agreed to.

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr KING (Kurwongbah—ALP) (3.12 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Transport and Resources Committee Report No. 31, 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland island resorts*, tabled on 17 March 2023.

The Transport and Resources Committee resolved to hold an inquiry into Great Barrier Reef island resorts after becoming aware of the stories that we had been hearing about failed development. It is not just about the abandoned and damaged infrastructure that litters some of our coastal islands; it is also about the impact that development—or the lack of development—has on everyone's right to access and enjoy these amazing natural spaces. We travelled to hear from Queenslanders about how they were affected when developers failed to deliver on the promises they make when they first buy or propose to build an island resort.

We were very fortunate in travelling to see some of these island developments firsthand. We held eight public hearings. We went to Cairns, Airlie Beach, Mackay and Yeppoon. We had three hearings in Brisbane. In what I believe was a first, we held a hearing in a private residence on Keswick Island. I would like to thank the Gilbert family for their hospitality and Col Wilson and the rest of the residents for their honesty and patience. I have to say that I am just a bit—no, a lot—jealous of the paradise that they call home. It is a beautiful place.

I want to thank all of the witnesses who appeared before our committee and the individuals and organisations who made written submissions. I would like to thank our Transport and Resources Committee secretariat staff and departmental officers. I thank Amanda, who filled in as committee secretary on that away trip—it was not an easy looking after us for that difficult week—and our Hansard reporter. After a long week away, we were hit by the Qantas Friday evening curse where our 6 pm flight was finally cancelled at 11 pm, but I will not go into that any further.


We made 18 recommendations, most of which, I am pleased to say, have been supported or supported in principle. Time permitting, I will touch on a few of those. Some of the problems that we identified included the confusion and red tape around three levels of government and how they interact with each. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, GBRMPA, will say one thing but that appears to stifle plans made under other authorities. Recommendation 17 of the committee supported the idea of some sort of one-stop shop in these tripartite situations so that residents and affected people have one place to sort out these issues.

We heard accusations that some leaseholders were buying up land with no intention to follow through on development, otherwise called land banking. We also made a recommendation on that. I see that there has been enforcement action for some leaseholders at Double Island and Great Keppel. We heard anecdotally from witnesses that the traditional model of the large resorts appears not to be as popular. Tourists can visit Bali much more cheaply than they can visit big resorts. A lot of tourists want more environmentally sustainable options as well. Hamilton Island is a stand-out exception—the Oatley family has had roaring success. There is space for both types.

Some resorts that have been subject to the ravages of Queensland's version of Mother Nature have bounced back whereas others have deemed it not economical to rebuild. It was devastating to see resorts left to rot. Great Keppel Island stood out in particular. It is lucky that the area has a fantastic

local member in Brittany Lauga, who has never given up on seeing things progress. The situation on Keswick Island, as described by locals, was by far the most emotive. They told us that over the years they felt intimidated by Oasis Forest. They told us of being shadowed around the island by security and other matters—even having their Christmas tree cut down.

There is a barge that has been out of operation for a lengthy period. This has necessitated groceries and supplies being shipped over on a dive service and transferred to a rubber dinghy to get to the barge ramp. That is how we travelled to the island with all the Hansard gear. It is precarious, to say the least. A jetty would be nice. I understand that that is being worked on now. We tried again and again to get Oasis Forest before the committee. They sent planners and everyone else but no-one who could refute these allegations. They even removed a plane from the island. We thought having a plane to leave the island in an emergency was a sensible safety measure. I was pleased to see that after our report was tabled the plane was back. Talks are underway for a marina or jetty. I encourage locals there to keep up the fight. It is a beautiful piece of paradise in which they live. They should be able to enjoy it without intimidation. I think this report was a fair representation of what was put before us. I commend it to the House.

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (3.17 pm): I rise to speak on the report of the Transport and Resources Committee's inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland's island resorts. My interest in the islands started a long time ago. I remember many years ago when I was only a young fellow that a mate and I went up to Cairns. I worked different jobs in various areas around Cairns. Then I got a job as a builder's labourer on Lizard Island. I was on Lizard Island for four months. I actually turned 21 working as a builder's labourer on Lizard Island. I have not been back. I must go back some day.

This is an inquiry that the LNP has fought for and was long overdue. This inquiry follows years of complaints from residents living on and visiting many Queensland islands. It also follows widespread criticism from tourism providers who know what an asset these island resorts can and should be.

I acknowledge the committee's efforts under the leadership of the chair, the member for Kurwongbah, and the deputy chair, the member for Gregory. Also on the committee are: James Martin, Les Walker, Trevor Watts—and I featured for a little while as well. The research secretary at the time was Dr Amanda Beem. The inquiry was one in which I was very interested and very pleased to be part of. We in this place are often critical of committee reports. This is an example of what can be produced. It is a very good committee report with 18 very good recommendations. For those members of the House who have not read this report, I would encourage them to do so because it would answer most of their questions.

As I mentioned, the government should be doing everything it can to showcase our island tourism offering to the world. They are some of the greatest assets that Queensland has. Many tourists, both local and international, are looking for an ecotourism experience, and the government should be planning for and backing this growing market. It is a boom that our state could reap the rewards of and it would underpin decades of jobs and investment in Queensland's regional communities and our important tourism industry. Instead, as the report has outlined, the state of many Queensland islands has descended into rack and ruin. For eight years the Palaszczuk government has allowed these islands to be run into the ground. The content of the report and the number of recommendations show that this inquiry was well overdue.


This issue and the complexity of the management of these islands has been raised with me many times in my role as shadow minister for natural resources. The member for Whitsunday, Amanda Camm, invited me to see firsthand the access and leasing problems that residents were experiencing on Keswick Island. I am sure the member for Whitsunday will update the House on the progress or otherwise that has happened there since. It was an unforgettable trip in more ways than one. The seas were very rough that day indeed.

The other area where this hit home to me was on Double Island. When I was on one of my visits to Cairns I was invited to beautiful Palm Cove to meet some local residents who were very upset with the degeneration of the Double Island Resort. Without going into a lot of detail, there had been a lot of lease breaches. There was decay in the dwellings there. There were weed issues. There were environmental issues. Under no circumstances should that have been allowed and tolerated. I understand that action is happening in that space. When the minister comes in he will probably update the House on where that stands, but that takes us to the next part of this whole program—that is, what happens next?

The model for islands has changed over the years. Ecotourism is definitely a booming area. Whether that is a good fit for Double Island remains to be seen, but we need to be open to that and facilitate that a lot better. As the member for Kurwongbah said, having a one-stop shop is vitally important because there are so many overlaps, whether it be natural resources, the environment, local councils or GBRMPA. It needs to be better streamlined. There is also the issue of cyclones and the damage and destruction to buildings and who takes ownership of cleaning it up.

I cannot finish without saying that in North Queensland we are very fortunate to have two very good candidates in Bree James in Barron River and Yolonde Entsch in Cairns.

(Time expired)

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (3.22 pm): I rise to speak to report No. 31 in the 57th Parliament of the Transport and Resources Committee, dated March 2023. Firstly, I want to thank the Transport and Resources Committee members: our able chair Shane King, member for Kurwongbah; deputy chair Lachlan Millar, member for Gregory; Bryson Head, member for Callide; James Martin, member for Stretton; Trevor Watts, member for Toowoomba North; and Pat Weir, member for Condamine. The excellent support that we continually receive from the secretariat is sincerely appreciated. As the chair said, it was a real experience getting home. It took us about seven hours just to get out of Rockhampton airport. I think it was around midnight when I got out of there. We had been there since three o'clock. It took nine hours to get home. The whole team and the secretariat really did it tough that day, so thank you to the whole team.

It was quite fascinating being involved in this committee report, undertaking inspections and meeting witnesses who gave evidence. After doing my apprenticeship on Hayman Island, building the new terraced resort on the foreshore around the lagoon and seeing the work that goes into building resorts in terms of getting building materials on to an island, maintaining a workforce and commissioning such a large piece of infrastructure on the Great Barrier Reef, I know firsthand what goes into it and making it work. Then in my role as a member of parliament for the people of Mundingburra, going on an inspection tour of these facilities and talking to witnesses, I found that the state of some of these resorts is quite horrendous. The point made by many, be they local government or experts in the field of the environment, was how do we clean up these resorts and how do we move forward.

I heard one of the members trying to blame the Labor Party. We can go right back to Joh's day when he approved some of these amazing resorts in some very sensitive areas. We need to be mindful that we are a lot smarter today when it comes to resorts on the Great Barrier Reef. That is why we went there to get information firsthand to make sure that we can get the best possible outcomes moving forward.

As I said, this inquiry was an eye-opener. I want to thank the team on Hamilton Island for our tour. We got to see some amazing infrastructure—from the water treatment for the water supply to the sewage treatment and how they protect the reef. Not only do they look after their assets; they know that the Great Barrier Reef is the jewel in the crown for them to attract tourists to their destination.

They have invested a lot of money. We looked at the airport, the baggage handling and how the planes come and go. We were told about the stresses on the team—how they get the baggage in and out—and the security issues that they come across from time to time. Their staff adapt from looking after aeroplanes to serving drinks to maintaining facilities. These people have many different skills that keep the island in pristine condition.

I really want to thank the staff, the management team and the Oatley family for what they do on Hamilton Island. It is a real asset for the tourism sector on the Barrier Reef. What is more interesting is how they have bounced back from COVID. That was a tough effort on their part. I thank the Minister for Tourism for the work he has done in the background to make sure that tourism is bouncing back.

I want to thank all of the witnesses, including local government people who came along and gave us information about how town planning works, about rates and about how state, local and federal governments need to interact. However, there are a lot of gaps there and I am sure we will address those in due course. I support all 18 recommendations.

In closing, I want to thank the people on Keswick Island for their great hospitality. It was tough getting us on and off the island with all our gear. They did a great job in a little rubber dingy. I thank the chair, yet again, for a great report.



Ms CAMM (Whitsunday—LNP) (3.27 pm): I am very pleased to contribute to the report on the inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland island resorts delivered by the committee. I want to thank and commend the hard work of the committee. In particular, I want to make note of the member for Condamine, along with the member for Miller, whom I approached when I was first elected to this parliament about the issues in my local communities, starting with Keswick Island. When I was formerly deputy mayor of Mackay, I knew the challenges that they had been advocating to overcome for over many years. That became very clearly apparent during Cyclone Debbie when they were really forgotten by many. Then there was a change of ownership and what that meant for their lack of accessibility to services, to community and to the fundamentals that we have on the mainland.

I want to acknowledge the chair, the member for Kurwongbah, for the way he went about leading this committee, as well as all members of the committee. I was privileged to make a submission and give evidence to the committee. I was able to welcome them to my community. I represent 241 marine islands in the Whitsunday electorate, of which only 135 are named and 74 are situated as part of the Whitsunday Island group.

I want to pay tribute to and recognise the hard advocacy of: Julie Willis; Craig Gilberd; Greg Chappell; KIPA, the Keswick Island Progress Association; the Basil Bay Residents Association; the Whitsunday conservation group; and all of those who undertook an advocacy campaign of 'reclaim Keswick Island', which spanned across this entire nation when people came to understand the deprivation of rights that the residents on Keswick Island were experiencing—for them not to be able to land an aircraft, for them not to have access to their boat moorings, for them not to have safe access. Some of the people who have chosen to retire and invest their entire life savings into what is a little piece of paradise frankly went through hell for many years. At all levels of government—local, state and federal—there was very little interaction. What the committee uncovered in this inquiry demonstrates how this House and the committee process can work together to deliver key recommendations and the accountability those residents need. I will leave it to other members of this House to address other parts of the state.

I was formerly deputy mayor of Mackay Regional Council, which had experience of Brampton Island being granted a development extension under delegation which the council was not even aware of for an additional six years. We saw land banking by international companies, but because they are under leases and they fall under Foreign Investment Review Board thresholds, nobody showed accountability and there was very limited oversight. Today I want to acknowledge government's announcement of \$3 million for ecotourism on Hook, Long and Keswick islands in my electorate. It is desperately needed. If some of the things we saw on those islands occurred on the mainland, people would be sent to jail. They would be given notices. To see turtle nests torn up on the beaches of Keswick Island by the head lessee was heartbreaking to say the least, let alone for the residents. For many, because it is out of sight it is out of mind, so I want to congratulate KIPA for their ongoing advocacy. I first raised issues around the head lessee which date back to the deed of agreement in 2008. Keswick Island was borne out of a planning court decision in 1994. Some of the legacy of those head lessee agreements caused enormous issues when there was no proper oversight.

I do want to acknowledge the member for Condamine and the member for Maroochydore, who travelled with the committee. We thank them for their hospitality. It was a rough ride. I did not know if the member for Maroochydore and the member for Condamine would make it. When the weather turns bad people do not understand that boats cannot return to the mainland. We were able to pull off a helicopter trip—thank goodness that, because of my islands, my electorate allowance allows that—and that was the only way we could get off the island. It demonstrated to us that anyone on that island who needed medical attention or access is very limited in what they can obtain. Once again I thank the committee and the secretariat. Some of these parts of my electorate are not considered remote and rural, but they really are remote.




Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Tourism, Innovation and Sport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Olympics and Paralympics Sport and Engagement) (3.32 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate of this committee report in my role as minister for tourism. I want to thank the committee for its very good work in looking closely at the challenges that face these Great Barrier Reef islands in the context of the very, very different set of arrangements—that are quite rightfully in place—around how they are managed, whether that has lived through the era in which they were developed and the range of what I would now regard as quite interesting choices that were made by governments of the day in permitting the nature of some of that development and how that has then left some of these communities and locations and facilities. We know that, as is the case in all industries, tastes

change. As a consequence demands change, and we have very different settings that have been designed around one particular model and mode of operation which do not necessarily carry into the current situation or, indeed, necessarily cater for the future.

The reality is that, when we go back to the great era of the creation of resorts on these Great Barrier Reef islands in the 1970s and early 1980s, it was an era where they were designed around the mass attendance of families and couples. The fact is that they are islands off the coast, but these days the irony is that they played a very similar role in terms of the nature of the economy and the nature of the market that is now taken up by the cruise ships that ply our coast and are well serviced by our provincial sittings and our wonderful cruise terminal at the Port of Brisbane. As a consequence, the market has completely fallen out. In comparison to current models, they are too expensive for people to want to take that sort of holiday. We saw the decline of some very famous names and brands and a very sharp change in the nature of the model of so many others. We have seen the famous Hamilton Island become a very different place to what it was a generation ago. It is still highly successful but it markets to a much higher value, higher cost part of the market. We have seen others that are failing and degraded, and we have real issues that need to be cleaned up. I know they are matters that the Minister for Resources is very concentrated on. Equally, we do know there is a great appetite for ecotourism experiences. There are very different models of infrastructure delivery needed to service those people who want to take advantage of visiting some of the most beautiful and extraordinary locations in the world. That is where very different models of operation are the future of these islands. We have to make sure that we have the right arrangements to support that, and that is certainly what the report says.

I want to acknowledge that the member for Whitsunday has thanked the government for the support that has gone into some of the big issues that I know will continue to be a big challenge for these islands, particularly post some of those cyclone impacts, and that was around accessibility. Under the Tourism Activation Fund we have the Marine Infrastructure Package, and that was developed and made available through my department for islands and operators to bid for. I am very pleased that last week we were able to announce three Whitsunday islands—Hook, Long and Keswick—are receiving \$1 million each to upgrade or build jetties and pontoons, making for easier connectivity and accessibility to those islands for both international and domestic visitors—while also, I appreciate, making it better for residents.

I will come to my final point in relation to residents. I understand that we have to cater for that and we have to deal with those who are there, but that is one of those mistakes I was talking about. These places should be focused on our great tourism industry; not on being real estate deals like they were by so many of the white shoe brigade in the 1980s.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.37 pm): I would like to make a small contribution to the Inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland's island resorts. First of all, I would like to put on record my thanks to the member for Condamine and the member for Whitsunday for bringing this to our attention. As deputy chair of the Transport and Resources Committee, this is something that I know both of those members were very keen for us to inquire into. Secondly, I would thank the chair of the Transport and Resources Committee for what he has done and being able to steer this inquiry the right way.

I will be honest with you, Madam Deputy Speaker: this is probably one of the best inquiries I have ever seen in this House—to give us an opportunity to try and protect what was once our absolute jewel in the crown for the tourism industry. I remember as a young bloke when we went to South Molle Island and other islands in the Whitsundays. Back then they were in their heyday. There was Hamilton Island, which Keith Williams built, Daydream Island and those other islands. Right now, today, those islands are not what they used to be. We have a real issue here when we are trying to find a tourism offering for overseas markets to come to our tourism industry.

I suppose members are thinking: why is the member for Gregory so keen on these islands? He is out west. I have a dream to match our outback tourism industry with the Great Barrier Reef. We need to give our international tourists a reef and beef tour. They want the real reef, which is in the Whitsundays, Cairns, Townsville and all of that area along the Great Barrier Reef. Outback tourism wants to take those people for a couple of days and put them in the real outback.

One issue I have always had—and I am not taking anything away from South-East Queensland—is that when people come in from overseas they go to the Gold Coast, they go to Yatala to the Outback Spectacular—

Ms Pugh: And the pies.

Mr MILLAR: And the Yatala pies; I take that interjection. We have such an incredible opportunity to give overseas tourists—whether they are from South-East Asia, Japan, Germany or the US—that real Queensland experience which is organic—

Mr Head: They just need to come to Callide for that.

Mr MILLAR: They can go to Callide too, but I want them to come to Longreach and to Winton to experience that as well.


What stood out in this inquiry was the neglect of those islands by people who currently have the leases over them. I am really proud of the recommendations that were brought forward and put into this report. Recommendation 1 states—

The Department of Resources should take immediate action to cancel tourism leases where lessees have been determined by departmental audit within the last three years to be non-compliant with lease conditions, subject to the requirements of natural justice.

I think that is extremely important. It is a use it or lose it opportunity. If they do not want to continue to upgrade those islands, then they need to lose them. I will give an example, and I will also be up-front, honest and transparent. I went to Keswick Island and one of the main people there was a bloke called Col Wilson. Col used to be my news editor at the ABC in Mackay. He is a good mate of mine, but what he said to me was absolutely true.

For us to get to Keswick Island, we had to catch the *Wildcat*. I am a typical bloke from out bush in the outback; I am not great on the sea. We got to the Mackay Harbour and we used a wonderful company and got on a boat called the Mackay *Wildcat*. It was a beautiful boat but probably a little bit small for me. I think we had 20-knot winds heading over to Keswick Island and then we had to get off. There was no barge there for us to get off so we had to get off into a tender and go across in a dinghy to Keswick Island. While that was not good for me, I was thinking about elderly people or someone in a medical emergency or someone who needs to get to Mackay very quickly. That needs to be fixed.

I want to thank the people of Keswick Island. It is the most beautiful island I have ever seen. If you ever want to see an island which has that beautiful residential approach to it, it is Keswick Island. I certainly hope the minister will take notice of these recommendations in the report to fix these islands so we can continue tourism in Queensland.

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (3.42 pm): I rise to speak to the Transport and Resources Committee's inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland's island resorts. We know these assets are well loved by all Queenslanders. Our islands are natural assets that we want Queenslanders to be able to enjoy as part of our great lifestyle. As a government we are committed to the responsible development of our island resorts for the jobs and business opportunities they create in regional Queensland.

On 16 June this year I tabled the government's response to the committee's recommendations. The government's response supports seven of the committee's recommendations, supports nine recommendations in principle and does not support two recommendations. Non-performing tourism resorts leases were brought to my attention almost the moment I was appointed as the Minister for Resources. The Department of Resources continues to work with lessees and key stakeholders to facilitate redevelopment and rejuvenate our island resorts. Work was well and truly underway by my department to look at non-operational island resort leases before this inquiry began.

My department has been taking action, despite what those opposite might have you believe. Staff have been out in the field auditing a number of non-operational island resorts. The audits have provided a detailed understanding of the level of compliance and development on the islands and the condition of the infrastructure and land. We will continue this work and I expect action will be taken when appropriate.


My preference is always that the department work collaboratively with leaseholders to ensure compliance with their conditions. That is a huge task, with more than 18,000 leases across our state, including many cattle and primary producing leases that many of those opposite would be aware of. I take into account what the member for Gregory said but I will issue this bit of advice: be careful what you wish for. If we apply the use it or lose it approach, that would also apply to pastoral leases, and I can say that there are many around the state that are noncompliant. We are working with those stakeholders to make sure they can become compliant.

Where it is needed, strong action will be taken and other island leaseholders who are noncompliant with their lease conditions may, subject to natural justice requirements, be subject to forfeiture action. For the benefit of the House, this has already happened. In April this year the leases

held by Great Keppel Island Holdings—a subsidiary of Tower Holdings—were revoked. This was done because the lessee of Great Keppel Island had not met its financial obligations with respect to the leases, which is why action was taken. I know the member for Keppel welcomed this action.

As a government, we have also commenced action in the Land Court seeking the forfeiture of Double Island near Cairns. An application was filed in October with the Land Court to commence forfeiture action against the operators of Double Island off the Far North Queensland coast. The lessee, Fortune Island Holding Company, was notified earlier this year of the Queensland government's intention to begin forfeiture action. This is a prized asset which I know the member for Barron River and the member for Cairns, as well as the community, want to see open to the public. That work is continuing and is important. Further, the committee's report has sharpened the focus of the agency on compliance for non-operating island resorts, with compliance audits and further compliance measures commencing. I will say this too: these resorts are operated by private investors and not the Queensland government.

We know Queensland is one of the best destinations in the world, and we want people to be able to experience that. Ensuring the right experiences are available as holiday-makers' tastes change is important too. The priority is to work with lessees and key stakeholders to facilitate redevelopment and rejuvenate island resorts in the Great Barrier Reef so the burden is not left to the taxpayer. We will continue to support the development of our islands for the great lifestyle they support.

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (3.46 pm): I rise to talk about the inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland island resorts that was conducted by the Transport and Resources Committee. This was the first inquiry that I was a part of as a new member in this House and it was certainly a good one to embark on as my first inquiry. When some people heard I was going on an island resorts inquiry, they thought 'Gee, you've landed a good gig becoming the member for Callide, Bryson.' A couple of my colleagues said that they had been members of this House for an extended time and had not been on a committee inquiry anything like that. It was certainly a very packed trip, with eight hearings over a short period. There was a lot of travel and a lot of time in a bus.

As was said by the member for Gregory and other members, there was some transport across the ocean, which was not exactly favourable if you are not good at sea. The three-metre-odd swell we had going across to Keswick Island is not something I will forget anytime soon. I might enjoy my fishing and I might not be too bad on the water, but when a boat is rolling around like that one was it can get to the very best of us. It was certainly an experience getting in the little tender to go across to Keswick Island, as was trying to cart the Hansard gear and everything else to have a public hearing on an island at a private residence. What we learned by doing that was certainly very worthwhile, and the residents on Keswick Island very much appreciated the opportunity to get a lot of their concerns on the record.


I note that the member for Whitsunday had been raising a lot of those concerns for a very long time not only in this House but previously when she was the deputy mayor in that region. That just speaks to the advocacy from the member for Whitsunday. The member for Condamine, as shadow minister for resources, was also fighting for things to be done on these island resorts for an extended period of time.

There were hearings conducted as part of that committee trip, and following that, the committee made 18 recommendations in the report. I want to talk to a couple of them. Recommendation 1 was that the Department of Resources should take immediate action to cancel tourism leases where lessees have been determined by the departmental audit within the last three years to be noncompliant with lease conditions. This recommendation highlighted as well that we should not have had to have this inquiry in order to get a lot of action that has happened since from the Department of Resources. There are a lot of laws in place that could have been followed up on and there is a lot of compliance action that the department could have taken. However, in typical form, the government did not want to act until they were dragged kicking and screaming to do it. At the very least, thanks to the great advocacy from the likes of the member for Whitsunday, we have seen some results but there is certainly a long way to go.

In response to recommendation 5 from the committee, the government noted that the Land Act had already allowed significant penalties and fines to be applied for noncompliance with lease conditions. That is in the government's response to some of these recommendations. Again, there is a lot there that the government could have been doing, but they chose to wait for a public committee inquiry before doing something. I say to the government: just start doing it. You are in government, you have ministers there, so you can start making decisions and get things done for the sake of Queensland.

Keppel was a part of the world we went to as well. We flew into Rocky, and we have heard comments around the cancelled flights from Rocky. I am lucky; I had driven to Rocky, so I got in my car at Rockhampton and headed for home while all my colleagues were stuck there trying to get a flight out that night. If the people of Keppel and Rockhampton want a true advocate for them when it comes to issues such as the islands, all they need to do is support Nigel Hutton and Donna Kirkland in the state election in 2024 because they will fight hard for their communities and they will make sure that the government follows through and delivers for the island resorts up the coast. If we did this committee inquiry again, we should be considering the impact of fire ants on island resorts and upon tourism in Queensland.

(Time expired)

 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (3.51 pm): I rise to speak on the Transport and Resources Committee report No. 31 on the inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland's island resorts. A number of parties within Queensland have expressed their concerns at the state of some of Queensland's offshore islands, in particular those which were once busy and thriving, but which now sit idle or dilapidated. Others have experienced protracted difficulties in resolving disputes between leaseholders and sublease holders, especially when the lease is on-sold from one party to another party, and a process that we saw sometimes coincided with promises of upgrades to docks or boat ramps, whatever it might be, but which never eventuated.

Considering the importance of tourism and the amazing natural beauty of our offshore islands, the goal of the inquiry was to look at the whole regulatory framework that exists for Great Barrier Reef island resorts, which obviously contribute so much to Queensland tourism and our economy, and also regional communities. In particular, it looked into the existing regulatory constraints on island resorts: the role of island resorts in attracting new and return visitors to Queensland and the Great Barrier Reef; historical operational status and existing constraints that impact economic development opportunities for island resorts; how the determination of native title and the aspiration of traditional owners have been incorporated into the operations; infrastructure access arrangements and other challenges for leaseholders to develop or redevelop islands for tourists, residential or public purposes; and the coexistence with the protected area estate both onshore and within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park area. It also looked at the contribution of ownership and governance models and an examination of how these tenure arrangements could enable appropriate development that supports strong social, environmental, economic and cultural outcomes; best support subtenancies to meet contemporary requirements for commercial and residential occupancy; and also to allow for open and transparent dispute resolution, as well as supporting an appropriate process and service standard for transfer of interests in leases and subleases.

The committee, as members have already heard, travelled extensively and spoke to many Queenslanders about Queensland's fantastic island resorts. Many aspects of the report have been raised today. One aspect that I want to particularly focus on is the issue of subleases. Some of the Great Barrier Reef islands host permanent residents or businesses in sublease arrangements—that is, instead of purchasing freehold land or purchasing into a body corporate, known as community property, individuals or businesses on some islands can purchase a sublease from the head leaseholder. Essentially, there is a private contract between the parties. It does not have the same status or protections that Queenslanders would commonly be used to with freehold land or purchasing into a body corporate, a townhouse or an apartment, things that many Queenslanders would already be very used to. This has clearly led to some protracted and difficult problems because subleases have little to no control over the standard of services and common-use infrastructure of property that is owned and provided for by the leaseholders. The head lessee has a contract with the state and then the sublessee has a contract with the head lessee, but the sublessee does not have a contract with the state.

In respect to the legal relationship of the state and the sublease holders, the state, through the Department of Resources, really only has this legal relationship with the head leaseholder and sublease holders have a private contract, which is a bit different from owning, as I mentioned, freehold land or a share in a common property. These contracts are private contracts, so they are not administered by the department; furthermore, it is my strong opinion that they should not be. We heard from witnesses who were in protracted disputes with head leaseholders. While some of the behaviour that we heard from some of the head leaseholders was very concerning, it became clear that what the residents wanted was the department to intervene to enforce terms of their private contracts that they say were promised. Essentially they wanted the department to act as a—

(Time expired)



Mr WATTS (Toowoomba North—LNP) (3.56 pm): I rise to make a brief contribution to the report into the inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland's island resorts. First, let me say that this was brought to our attention by many residents and people involved in either living on the islands or providing services to the islands. We worked for a while to get an inquiry up. There was a bit of pushback in the early days, but I have to commend the chair of the committee as he eventually negotiated with the minister so that we could get this report underway, and I think the report is a very fair and balanced report. There are a lot of recommendations in there, and I would recommend people to look at it.

This part of the world is amongst some of the most beautiful places you could see, but there are massive currents, there are difficulties with access, it is a tough place to live and it is difficult to get a tourism resort up. It all might look very good if you are looking on YouTube or if you are surfing the net, but, in reality, if the weather is bad and you are a resident on one of these islands and something goes wrong or there is a medical emergency, you can be in a lot of trouble. We heard that when we went to Keswick Island. A couple of people have spoken about the ferry we took over—the *Wildcat*; it is a bit of a bumpy ride. It was a pretty good day, but it was a bit bumpy. I certainly would not want to be doing that to do my grocery shop once a fortnight as some of those residents do. The current that was dragging through between the two islands and the fact that the pontoon had been damaged and was pulled up and there was no way to get there apart from on the tender along with everything else, it is hopeless. In a medical emergency or if something goes wrong with somebody on those islands, they are in serious trouble. It is good that the recommendations are there to deal with some of these issues.

The regulatory framework that the developers are operating under is very complex. There are multiple layers of government—local, state and federal—because of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. We should certainly try to find ways through that so that we can encourage tourism in a sustainable and environmentally-friendly, cautious way. People who choose to live on these islands should have the ability to do that and not be excluded from the normal things that a Queensland citizen would expect to be available.

Debate, on motion of Mr Watts, adjourned.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ASSISTANCE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 3926, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.



Mr O'CONNOR (Bonney—LNP) (4.01 pm), continuing: This bill will: 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 domestic violence as a category B act of violence for the purpose of special assistance payments. This increase is something I strongly support. From the outset, it is imperative that Victim Assist has the resources it needs to be able to deliver this effectively. From speaking to victims of crime in my community it is clear to me that, in many cases, they do not have the luxury of waiting. These people are struggling with the trauma of the crime committed against them and they deserve a government which takes responsibility.

I acknowledge Bravehearts, which is based in my electorate, at Arundel. They do an incredible job in child protection and in addressing some of the most horrific acts people perpetrate against children. They contributed to this inquiry with a submission in support of the bill. They noted that it implements recommendations from the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce and from the inquiry into the Queensland Police Service's response to domestic and family violence. They also noted that this will help with cost-of-living and service access issues. I do not think there will be time in my contribution to go into the DNA lab failings that the amendments will be addressing, but the acting shadow Attorney-General did an outstanding job laying out that timeline. I suspect that the member for Whitsunday, the shadow minister, will cover that in detail.

I conclude by saying this bill is a step in the right direction, but for victims of crime in my community the work is far from done. The only way to have genuine action to resolve the crime crisis gripping Queensland is to show Labor the door in '24.



Hon. DE FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business, Minister for Training and Skills Development and Minister for Youth Justice) (4.02 pm): I rise today to support the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, which reflects our government's ongoing commitment to listening to the voices of victims and taking decisive action to address their needs. I acknowledge the many victims I have spoken to: previously as the minister for the prevention of domestic and family violence, as a local member for parliament and, certainly, in my role as youth justice minister. I think all of us are aware that, regardless of what crime you have experienced, it is always a deeply traumatic experience. Regardless of whether someone has been through your house and rifled through your possessions or whether you have lost a loved one through a homicide—the most awful, traumatic and terrible of crimes—it is deeply traumatic and, for some people, very difficult to ever move on from.

When we hear about victims of domestic violence, we know that often there has been a sustained pattern of behaviour. It is beholden on all of us to provide whatever support we possibly can. One of the ways we can do this is with financial assistance, but there will have to be many other ways as well. This government has instigated significant inquiries: 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. These inquiries have all talked about the need for increasing the level of financial assistance and for including new categories of people—secondary victims—to recognise that also is a deeply traumatic experience. We have before us what some of those increases will be. There has been a general acceptance that that has been an important step.

I cannot speak about this bill without mentioning the Independent Ministerial Advisory Council, which the Attorney-General announced today. I have high hopes for that council, because victims must have a voice and this is a voice that will go directly to the decision-makers in government. I thank John Robertson and Beck O'Connor, who will be excellent chairs. I know that there were an enormous number of people who applied, and I acknowledge all of those who put themselves forward for that role—some with lived experience, some who are working in that space. I think the composition of the council is truly excellent. I look forward to receiving their recommendations. We have seen from the work of the select committee that they have some purpose in terms of pursuing the rights of victims and the direction government should go. I think that advice will be excellent.

I take issue with some of the speeches I have heard from the LNP. I have been fortunate to have not been in the chamber for all of them. These are the people who cut the funding for Victim Assist Queensland. These are the people who abolished the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. There has been a lot of talk about domestic violence. These are the people who cut funding totalling \$259 million to the DV sector—to organisations like Bravehearts, DVConnect, the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre and the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence. They cut funding to the organisations that were there to support victims.

Then they have the cheek to put up a three-word slogan, and a 13-word youth justice policy and pretend to victims of youth crime that it will be the salve for everything. If I was a victim of youth crime and some politician came to me saying, 'These three things will fix everything,' I would be insulted. It is time the LNP came up with the goods and showed respect to victims by showing what they will do to address this big issue for victims. I commend the bill to the House.



Ms CAMM (Whitsunday—LNP) (4.08 pm): Respect for victims certainly was extended by members on this side of the House. I made a contribution to this House after being contacted by a young woman who had been raped by two men. The DNA sample that was taken and sent to the DNA lab showed no DNA, not even her own. Dr Kirsty Wright listened to the contribution I made. She contacted me and offered her services as somebody independent. She has since offered those services to multiple victims of rape across this state—a victim from Toowoomba, a victim from Townsville and a victim from the Gold Coast. I will not be lectured to by those opposite who say that this side of the House does not listen to victims. In fact, had it not been for this side of the House, there would not have been a commission of inquiry into the DNA lab. Subsequent reports after the final report was handed down meant there needed to be a reopening of the inquiry.

The government needs to listen when the opposition stands up and speaks about serious matters. It needs to listen when the member for Nanango asks questions in the House; when the shadow Attorney-General, the member for Clayfield, asks questions in the House; when the opposition leader asks questions in the House. It should have listened when I stood and asked questions in the House of the Attorney-General and the Minister for Women, who frankly sat silent when it came to

victims of rape and victims of heinous crimes across this state where the justice system failed them. They were denied justice because of the lack of oversight and this government's failings over the last eight years.

We know what the findings of the commission of inquiry were. We recognise that there have been failings from both sides of politics over the course of the last 15 years. We understand that. The opposition leader was able to stand up and take accountability for the time we were in government, but nobody opposite has. Now we will continue to call for a standing commission of inquiry for victims of crime, who are still out there suffering post-traumatic stress, who are wondering whether their retesting will deliver them justice, who want oversight and who have no confidence—zero confidence—in the current process because nobody has been held to account.


In this contribution I also want to recognise the braveness of Vicki Blackburn, the mother of Shandee Blackburn, from the Mackay community, part of which I represent. I know Vicki and we were able to recognise and remember Shandee earlier this year. The Leader of the Opposition came and made a contribution, and thanks go to Hedley Thomas for his investigative reporting. Had he not done that, this government would never have been held to account for what would be one of the most significant instances of maladministration in this nation's history. Those opposite should be ashamed not just for today and not just for years past, but for what will probably be the next decade of a failure to deliver justice to so many across this state. To those victims of crime I say: we stand with you and we will continue to call for accountability, transparency and a commitment to ensure that justice is served.

There are rapists walking free. Potentially there are people behind bars who should not be there. However, first and foremost, there are victims who are terrified—terrified because they know their perpetrators are out there and they know that justice has not been delivered. We have a Police Service that knew something was not right, continued to speak up and were not supported.

I would like to also acknowledge that part of this bill that recategorises the acts of domestic violence for special assistance payments and my earlier contribution around the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence which, sadly, feels like it is increasing. It is a sad day when we have to actually debate, discuss and support the need to increase funding because the rate of heinous crimes committed is continuing to increase and so more needs to be done.

In closing, I want to acknowledge all of the work done by members of both committees that considered the bill. I know some of this work is very confronting and challenging, as things often are across my portfolio. I will say that with over 103,000 samples of DNA that are required to be retested potentially impacting over 37,000 cases, this side of the House will not stop. We will continue to call for a standing commission of inquiry. Just like we have seen before, time and time again we will see the government succumb because of the pressure from the negative press and because of ministers not wanting to meet with victims. They have not wanted to meet with some of the rape victims I have met.

The opposition will continue to stand with Queenslanders. We will continue to stand up for the right priorities for Queenslanders. We will do that with integrity and a sense of justice. We will stand up for hope over fear.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.14 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the bill before the House. I begin by thanking the committee for their hard work on this sensitive bill. In particular, I note the lived experience of our good friend the member for Cooper and the experience that she brings to this issue. I always say—and other members have noted—that parliament is always enriched by having members with varied life experiences, and this bill has benefited greatly from the member for Cooper's experience. That said, all of the committee members worked diligently along with the secretariat to bring this very important bill before the parliament. I know my community will be very supportive for reasons I will now share.

I would like to share some observations from a family in my community with whom I met many years ago, early in my first term. A young woman had previously been a victim of rape in her own home and she was struggling greatly in the aftermath. Her mental health was incredibly impacted and it was no exaggeration to say that, for her, some days getting out of bed was a monumental achievement.

I did not originally meet with this young lady; I met with her mother, who was deeply worried for her wellbeing and so came to see me. One of the things I remember all these years later from the things her mum said to me is that, because the crime occurred in their home, the colour of the walls in the room where the rape occurred were triggering and upsetting to the young lady because it reminded her of the rape. Essentially, lying down in bed to go to sleep at night triggered her memory of the events. I

thought what a terrible experience for this young woman to have to relive every night just as she is trying to go to sleep. I thought for a moment about how I would feel in the same scenario and I have to say it made absolute sense to me when her mother explained it to me like that.

Although this family of course did receive funding at the time from Victim Assist, there were many things that needed to be paid for. That funding did not extend to items like this in this particular case because they felt other things were more important. As a result, the mum felt she would need to pay for these things herself so they could have those additional mental health supports, which she needed for years going forward.

With the extra money that is provided for in this bill, families like this are going to have additional funds for therapy and other requirements. It is going to enable them not to have to dedicate their own financial resources to recovering from these awful and heinous crimes.

I note that currently the act can provide for items like internal painting or replacing a piece of furniture like a bed in specific circumstances like these or that it could be included for consideration in a submission for funds if that particular item may be of therapeutic value to the victim. I note that these additional funds as provided for in the bill will be supportive of that. I think of this family when I hear about that particular part of the legislation. I am so very pleased about it.

As I said, that particular aspect is something that would not particularly have occurred to me prior to speaking with this amazing mum, who was and is an amazing advocate for her family. I still see this family often out and about in the community. I am so pleased to share with the House that this brave young lady is making a wonderful recovery. I will also say that both the current and the former attorney-general and their teams listened carefully to the issues that this family raised and I thank them both very much for that.

Being a victim of a crime is an isolating experience that people can only truly understand if they have been through it. For that reason I am very grateful for the member for Cooper and her ongoing wisdom around issues like this. I often find myself seeking her counsel on these issues. I believe that this is a fine bill that is going to have strong support in my community. I commend the bill to the House.



Mr WATTS (Toowoomba North—LNP) (4.19 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Firstly, I highlight the fact that we support the victims of crime getting this assistance and this help. However, it is really disappointing that there are tens of thousands more victims under this government than previously, so there are many more people being affected by crime than Queensland used to see.

A government member interjected.

Mr WATTS: It is easy to say that there are more people in Queensland, but the population in my community has grown only by a little bit but the amount of crime has grown extraordinarily.

Before I get into other elements of the bill, I refer to the DNA issue and the commission of inquiry. We absolutely need a commission of inquiry. One of the most confronting things that has happened to me as a member of parliament is to have a victim of rape sit down in front of you and explain their set of circumstances, all of the various testing and statement taking and the process they have had to go through only to be told that there was no DNA found and then to find out that, as we escalated that and spoke to other experts, in fact there was DNA available and there was an ability to chase down the perpetrators of this heinous crime that would have been missed because of the maladministration of this government for the last nine years of that particular department. A commission of inquiry is fundamental to bring justice to the thousands of victims who have samples sitting there that need to be tested and that need to be put through the system. We need to get the people who committed these crimes whose DNA is sitting there out of our community. They need to be put through the justice system so they do not create more victims. I definitely think that we need a commission of inquiry on DNA.

Let me get to the main part of the bill, and there are a couple of things that I really want to talk about. Some victims that I talk to are really struggling with the timeliness of when support comes, particularly around mental health support. I had an elderly gentleman stop me the other day; he is in his 70s. After his daughter witnessed an attack on him and a car theft, she is really suffering and needs support, and to be told that that support is months away is just not good enough. The perpetrators of a crime can get a lawyer pretty quickly on the state's purse. We need to ensure that victims in Queensland—the tens of thousands of more victims that have been caused by this government's incompetence and inability to stop the crime crisis—get the timely support that they need.

In terms of the dollars, of course it needs to be increased. We see inflation running out of control under a federal and a state Labor government, so therefore the amounts that have been allocated previously are just not enough. We have more victims and we have inflation going up, so of course this needed to be addressed and I support the addressing of that. However, in terms of the crime crisis, there are other victims out there who are somewhat unseen. If you are a small and family business owner and you are having crimes committed against your business, this is costing you money. This is a difficult thing to put up with. Not only do you have the trauma of someone putting a machete in your face and taking your hard-earned cash, but you then have to front up tomorrow and try to run the business again.

It is the same for car theft in particular. Toowoomba is a great service community to many people who live west of it. People come into town to do their shopping, and they might do it for a school semester if their kids are at boarding school or whatever. With the properties around Toowoomba there has been an awful lot of theft going on on farms, but when people have their vehicles stolen this has a major effect on their ability to shop, their ability to go to work, their ability to take the kids to school, their ability to function in a part of the state where public transport is, at best, well below the average that people in the south-east corner would see. There are not really many options for people in my community.

When people are a victim of crime, I think it is very important that they get access to compensation, and I will talk about DV because it is very important. We have seen the destruction in our community and what it will do to families and extended families and how it affects a community. Those impacts are very real, so for a victim to be able to access compensation of whatever quantum is a start to try and help repair some of the trauma and damage that they have gone through.

For me when I look at this bill the real tragedy is that we have more victims than we should have. If our justice system was working correctly, if we had not played around with the various aspects that were in place that related to making sure perpetrators could not get out and go on the merry-go-round that we have seen and if we had the correct type of rehabilitation and early intervention in place, we would be seeing victim numbers go down. Sadly, from a budgetary point of view and from a real human cost we are seeing the numbers increase by tens of thousands and we are then seeing the dollars increase by millions.

A government member interjected.

Mr WATTS: Yes, that is right: tens of thousands. I will go to the stats, because there are those opposite who do not believe me. The 2021-22 crime report published by the Queensland Government Statisticians Office said there were 64,540 victims of offences against the person recorded by the Queensland Police Service, noting a 49.2 per cent increase in total recorded victims. The number reported in 2020-21 was 43,260. For the member who was doubting the tens of thousands, if you take 43,260 victims away from 64,540, you will see that there are tens of thousands more victims at—

Mr Power interjected.

Mr WATTS: These were not victims? Because they happened in the past, apparently they were not victims of crime.

Mr Power: No, that's not true. You're misleading the House.


Mr WATTS: Then there is a process if I am misleading the House and you should follow it rather than sit here and interrupt someone—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member, direct your comments through the chair.

Mr WATTS: Madam Deputy Speaker, I apologise. I am trying to bring a voice to the victims of crime. When the victims of crime wanted to talk to the Premier, there was going to be a big seminar held in Toowoomba. They were going to hire the Empire Theatre and have people come and put questions to the Premier. Unfortunately, the Premier did not want to listen to the victims of Toowoomba. There was something in the diary. I do not know whether it was a red carpet or a theatre opening or a movie or whatever it was, but what I do know is that the victims in Toowoomba did not have their voices heard by this Premier. She did not come up to Toowoomba and talk to them, so the victims of Toowoomba were ignored.

We were made promises in that meeting and we were told why things could not happen, and then even the ministers who did come up found themselves being corrected just a couple of days later with a policy and a direction change, because all of a sudden—I do not know—maybe it was the

government's taxpayer funded polling that indicated that maybe it would be a good idea to listen to the victims of crime. We have been listening to the victims of crime and what they have told us is that they are planning to show Labor the door in 2024.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (4.30 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Crime is a concern for all communities. There is no decent person who likes crime or being a victim of crime. As we all appreciate, one crime is one crime too many. I hear those on the other side of the House from time to time saying crime must stop. That never happened under their watch. After working in corrective services and youth detention facilities for a total of 23 years, I have not seen a correctional facility become smaller or the number of offenders in custody reduce. In fact, history has shown that Queensland and other states just keep building more facilities to lock up more offenders. That means there are more victims of crime out there. That is terrible for those victims and the wider community. We need to make sure that victims get all the support they need. This bill is about making sure we give victims the support they need. That is why we need to keep working on addressing the offending behaviour of both juveniles and adult offenders. We need to reduce crime and with that we will reduce the number of victims of crime in this state. That is extremely important. We need to use every approach and resource available to address offending and criminal behaviour. Diverting young offenders away from a life of crime will help reduce the number of victims and the broader impacts on our community.

Victims of crime are not just the ones who are directly impacted by the criminal act. We know there are many others who witness the offending behaviour who become victims along with the victim's family and friends who see the impacts due to their exposure to crime. A perfect world is one with no illegal drugs, organised crime, domestic violence, murders, juvenile crime, rapes, stabbings—the list goes on. Over the centuries there has always been crime at different levels, and this has been due to many different factors at the time. That means law-abiding citizens, through no fault of their own, have been exposed to crime which has left serious impacts on them, their families and the broader community. This side of the House will not walk away from victims of crime. Under the watch of the LNP there was domestic violence, murders, juvenile crime, stolen cars, illegal drugs and there were victims of crime. Those opposite slashed the budget to support victims of crime by over \$259 million. As I said, one crime is one crime too many. The same can be said about victims of crime: one victim of crime is one too many.

Those opposite did very little for victims of crime. In fact, they did less for victims of crime. They slashed funding for victims of crime, as I said, by \$259 million. You do not hear them saying sorry or taking ownership for their blunders and their chaos during the small period of time they were in government. They abused the people of Queensland and created more victims. The Queensland taxpayers know what it is like to have to pay for the poor behaviour of those opposite. Let us refresh their memories, shall we?

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Order, members! Member for Buderim, order!

Mr WALKER: Thank you for the abuse. I am becoming a victim again. The member for Kawana, as the former attorney-general under the Campbell Newman government—the worst attorney-general in Queensland's history—in fact cost Queensland taxpayers over \$620,000. Due to his silly, unprofessional and egotistical attitude as the attorney-general of this state he defamed a Gold Coast lawyer. This lawyer became a victim of the poor behaviour of the member for Kawana, and Queensland taxpayers had to pay up with an out-of-court settlement of \$520,000 to the poor victim who had to put up with the member for Kawana and a \$100,000 legal bill had to be picked up the taxpayer. He does not come in here and apologise. Not one of those opposite say sorry. Again, the taxpayers are victims of those opposite. They did not hesitate to spend taxpayer money to save his skin. However, he slashed the budget to victims of crime. Those opposite stand up, mightier than thou, saying how much they support victims of crime. Pinocchio is alive.

The Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 provides assistance to victims of violent crime. VoCAA established the financial assistance scheme which seeks to help victims of acts of violence to recover by providing financial assistance, which includes—as well as paying the bill for the member for Kawana—both primary victims and related victims. It also increases the maximum amount of assistance for victims, except funeral expenses which have not increased since 2009 when VoCAA commenced. Funeral assistance was boosted in 2017 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 increases in payments, reflecting the increases in financial pressures and increases in the cost of services, and will seek to address broader reviews, such as the review of the financial assistance scheme by KPMG. Amendments to the financial assistance scheme will increase the maximum amount of assistance available to primary victims—up to \$120,000. The amendments will also increase a range of payments, including: the maximum amount of financial assistance paid as distress payments to related victims—up to \$15,000. I notice it has gone very quiet on the other side because we have the answers. We are supporting the victims, not costing them legal fees, not paying in closed session to make sure that we do not get the wrong headline. We are making sure we are looking after victims. That is why those opposite are quiet. The amendments will also increase a range of other payments, such as the maximum financial assistance available for funeral expenses—up to \$15,000. The following are amounts for special assistance payments provided to eligible victims—


Opposition members interjected.

Mr WALKER: Deputy Speaker, I feel like I am being harassed. I am becoming a victim by their immature behaviour.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I take your point. There is too much cross-chamber quarrelling, chatter and interjections.

Mr WALKER: I will continue: category A, \$15,000, including attempted murder and rape; category B, including sexual offences and grievous bodily harm, \$9,000; category C, including serious assault and robbery, \$6,000; category D, including assault and stalking, \$3,000; parent secondary victims up to \$75,000; witness secondary victims—more serious acts of violence—up to \$75,000; witness secondary victims—less serious acts of violence—up to \$20,000; related victims up to \$75,000; and a recategorisation of domestic and family violence—boom, boom! The bill seeks to provide greater support specific to victims of acts of domestic and family violence. The bill will recategorise acts of domestic and family violence from category D to category B of the financial assistance scheme. This will mean that the special assistance payment for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence will increase from \$1,000 to \$9,000—a 900 per cent increase. The list goes on.

I close by saying that, besides supporting the bill, those opposite must be scooping the bottom of the pool when they have the worst attorney-general in history now the deputy leader of their party. Queensland has very little to look forward to from that side. They have the worst attorney-general in history now the deputy going after the member for Broadwater's job, and God help us if he ever gets that.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (4.39 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. It is a pity that these payments are not indexed, because then we would not have to come into this place to increase the payments in line with inflation. We recognise that an increase is needed. There is more crime and more people are being affected by that crime. However, in terms of addressing crime and invoking the word 'crime' in this House in the context of what is going on in Queensland, I think it is pretty benign and underwhelming that we are debating this bill and not what should be discussed, which is real solutions to fixing crime. Of course you cannot argue against the bill. We want to compensate victims, especially victims of violent crime. However, this feels like we are putting the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. While no-one is going to argue against having the ambulance there, let's talk about fixing crime in the first place.


For seven years the KAP has been coming into this place to try to present a solution. An earlier speaker said that we need to look at every solution. The KAP keeps putting forward a solution, which is an alternative sentencing method. We want to see remote sentencing, where there is a legislative instrument for the magistrate to say, 'Buddy, this is the third time that we've seen you and we don't want to see you for another 12 months. You're not going to have a party in Cleveland with your cousins and your mates and the rest of your gang. You're going to a remote camp at Urandangi and we won't see you for 12 months. Good luck with that. There'll be only 10 or 20 of you there, not 100 or 150, so enjoy that. You'll learn some skills while you're out there. You'll actually learn something'—which has not been effective anywhere else. There is a solution.

When members say that we need to look at every solution, I hope that is true, but pardon me for thinking it is a bit insincere, because for seven years in this place we have been talking about that and it has not even been trialled. There are solutions. It is disappointing that we are talking about something that has an element of putting the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. It is as if we are coming in after the fact and saying, 'We're here to help,' but we only throw money at the issue. We would much prefer to spend our time debating how we can look to the start of the problem and fix it from there.

Another thing that I reflected on when looking at this bill is where we draw the line in terms of the threshold on violent crime and who is affected. Unless you are living with your head in the sand, we all know about it. We must all be experiencing an increased level of activity from constituents coming into our offices and saying, 'I've never seen anything like this.' Someone may say, 'My grandmother's been hit five times now because she always keeps cash around the house. We've put up all the screens but they keep hitting her house and terrorising her, and it's hell.' I hear nightmare stories from people who come into my office all the time and I assume all members are hearing similar stories. I have a family member down here who sleeps at her sister's house when her husband is away for a week because she is too scared to stay in her own house. I have heard that the residents of a Brisbane street are hiring security guards because they are scared to be at home. This is unprecedented. We have never heard such things before.

I am not interested in whose fault this is, whether it was this side of the House or that. Let's talk about some real new, fresh answers in this place and stop talking about what has been done. Sure, we have to help victims of crime, but we need to spend more time talking about alternative solutions and doing something fresh and different and offering that to the people of Queensland. We can do something bold. We have heard a thousand times that it must be evidence based. I am not sure how you ever do something new if there is no evidence. You have to run a pilot study or scheme to provide some evidence before you can do something. That is what we have heard about relocation sentencing in the past few years. For many years in this place we heard that the whole crime thing was a media beat-up, but no-one is able to say that anymore.

This is a good thing to do. It is nice to have more money for victims. However, can we please do something serious about reducing the incidence of crime? A couple of months ago, kids were terrorising Mount Isa. They stole a car and spent about eight to 10 hours smashing cars throughout the town. They ran through the schools, trying to run down kids. The level of violence keeps increasing, which is impacting the livability of our city. That has been happening in North Queensland for many years, but now the heat of it is starting to be felt here, which coincidentally is when the government starts acting upon it. We have been living with this for many years, it impacts us and we need it fixed.

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (4.44 pm): I rise to give my contribution on the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. It is always interesting to hear the member for Mundingburra speak about how he is a victim of crime. That is a really funny place to start, I think. I wonder if he actually put in an application for one of these payments. That is something that I would like to find out at some stage. I am sure that the people of Queensland would like to understand that as well.

This bill seeks to amend the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 to increase the financial assistance available to victims of crime. No-one in this House wants to see more victims of crime. We would like to see the root causes addressed. We would like to understand the reasons people are committing more crimes. We would like to understand why more perpetrators feel they can create more victims. Then we can try to fix some of the problems.

I understand what the bill is trying to achieve. It is quite clear. With the rising cost of living and inflation, a victim of crime needs a larger lump sum payment to try to deal with the horrendous crime that has happened to them, whatever it is. The bill seeks to raise the amount of money that is awarded, and I will speak to that now. There are a couple of increases, but I will not go through the whole list. The payment to a primary victim of crime will go from \$75,000 up to \$120,000, which is a significant jump. Distress payments to a related victim will go from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

However, I see nothing new in the bill when it comes to addressing the needs of other people who have been affected by crime. Many people in Townsville in particular have been affected by property crime: they have had their car stolen, their house broken into, their screen door smashed, their doorhandle ripped off with a set of Stillsons or the front window of their business smashed in. All of that costs money. That is costing Queenslanders money every day of the week. While we do not want to see more money shelled out of the public coffers by the state government, we do want crime addressed. We want it nipped in the bud. However, the fact is that until that happens someone has to pay for it. I

can tell the House who is paying for it right now: mum-and-dad business owners. To replace a smashed storefront window costs about \$1,800. That would be okay if it was smashed once every 10 years; however, some businesses are losing a front window once every two weeks. Those people have been forgotten and they are victims of crime. They are victims of this state Labor government, which has failed to bring youth crime in particular under control.

In this House we hear about victims of crime all the time. I am sure everyone in this place has heard a firsthand account from a victim of crime. We want to ensure we address that. The KAP wants to see youth crime at least dealt with properly in this state. Right now it is a revolving-door scenario. We do not want to see that continue, but it is continuing under this state Labor government. We acknowledge that a couple of little things have been done to tinker around the edges, such as making sure some of those kids do not get out early or are locked up for longer. That is fantastic for the kids who want to be in jail or detention for longer. Cleveland Youth Detention Centre is a holiday camp. You have to create a situation where the people who commit crime are deterred from doing it again. That is the idea of punishment. That is the idea of punishing someone who has done the wrong thing. I know that people will say we have to rehabilitate prisoners and I agree. You have to rehabilitate prisoners and you have to rehabilitate youth offenders, but it ain't working. The programs they are put through are not working. What is done when they get out is not working. It might work for a couple of the fringe offenders, but the hard-nut recidivist offenders are looking for something else.

That is why the KAP will continue to advocate for relocation sentencing. It is good policy. It would be the end of the road for some youth offenders. They would find themselves on a relocation sentencing site in a remote location for 12 months. That mandatory sentencing would make sure they go through intensive programs. It would make sure they go through schooling. It would make sure they go through the programs that straighten their rudder and get them back on the right track.


If people think that putting them through the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre right now is working, a 95 per cent recidivism rate is not a good scorecard. We have had a number of people say, 'Oh, but it needs to be evidence based.' How do we gather evidence if we do not at least have a trial? I beg the state government to give this a go before we create more victims in Queensland.

I also refer to the submission from Alison Smith of the LGAQ. Her quote is more about the businesses to which I was referring earlier. She states—

We note the Bill does not specifically cover small businesses as victims of violent crime, however our members advise this is also a pressing issue within their communities.

Councils have suggested a review into the impact of crime on small businesses to develop and implement compensatory and supportive strategies that identified need and gaps in current structure.

I agree wholeheartedly. There are Queenslanders out there who need a helping hand with this. It is up to the state government to bring crime under control. If it cannot bring it under control and if it is not going to make people liable, at least compensate victims. Help these people out. We have victims being carjacked at knifepoint. We have victims finding perpetrators walking in their houses in the middle of the night. These victims need to be helped. We have kids mowing down people in stolen cars, causing all sorts of grievous bodily harm. These kids need to be held to account and victims need to be compensated. I commend the bill to the House.


 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.51 pm): In rising to speak on the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I acknowledge the contributions of my colleagues, particularly around the issues involving failures in the forensic lab and the absolute scandal involving DNA testing. This has added to the burden of so many victims of crime, some of whom have not yet received justice because of this extraordinary failure. This failure happened under Labor and did not receive attention when it was first raised publicly. In fact, we know that this Labor government repeatedly denied there was a problem and accused the LNP and others who raised this publicly of politicking. It has been shown that what we were raising was correct. Tragically, many cases are yet to be resolved. Potentially over 100,000 samples have to be retested for 37,000 cases. That is extraordinary. We must not forget those who have been put through the additional hell of being revictimised by a justice system that has failed them. This is the most extraordinary failure of a forensic lab. The system has broken down on multiple fronts. There is still a need for a full royal commission or a full commission of inquiry to properly assess this.

While I welcome the increasing amounts of compensation and reimbursement in this bill for victims of crime, we want to see fewer victims. We know that there has been an outbreak of crime in our state. There has also been a failure to recruit more police officers and the government has


weakened our laws. I make this final point, as I know debate will shortly be guillotined with the end of the sittings: this failure at the DNA lab has to be one of the worst in the world. There are too many people who already have been through an absolute nightmare or who are no longer alive. Their families seek justice and have a right to receive justice. Until we have a full royal commission or a full commission of inquiry that is able to get to the bottom of who was at fault, how this failure happened and how we can ensure it does not happen again, then justice will not be served. The very brief second commission of inquiry made one finding—

Given that the scope of this COI has not enabled a full examination of the roles of any of the individuals 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 full accountability for the decision ... and its consequences lies.

That statement fuels our absolute commitment to ensuring that justice must be served. We will not see that until there is a full commission of inquiry that gets to the bottom of this.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (4.55 pm): One good thing is that at least this bill talks about the victims of crime. For the past seven years the KAP has been at multiple rallies in Cairns, Townsville, Brisbane, the Atherton Tablelands hearing the different stories of cars being stolen and burnt, houses broken into, bashings, businesses being destroyed and businesses burnt. As people travel down to Cairns they will see at this roundabout a stolen car and at the next intersection a stolen car and smashed. These are never-ending signs that we are seeing. One good thing in this bill is that at least it is supporting victims. It does not go far enough. It needs to go a lot further. When we have juveniles committing crimes to get into detention centres, something is wrong with the system.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): 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) (4.56 pm), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. As I indicated in my second reading speech, the bill 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 victims on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council.

This financial assistance will provide greater support for victims to recover from an act of violence and cover expenses for counselling, medical and legal expenses, travel expenses, loss of earnings and expenses for other circumstances such as relocation costs or costs of securing a victim's place of residence or business. Importantly, the bill recategorises domestic violence as a category B act of violence to provide greater support specific to victims of acts of domestic and family violence. In real terms, victim-survivors of domestic and family violence will be able to apply for a special assistance payment of \$9,000, up from the current \$1,000. This better recognises the serious and detrimental effect of domestic violence on victim-survivors. We know how significant this change will be for victim-survivors. Indeed, Beck O'Connor, Chief Executive Officer of DV Connect, welcomed this reform, stating—

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.

The bill also amends the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 to increase the membership of the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council to enhance the representation of victims. As I noted in my second reading speech, the council already benefits from the contributions of members with lived experience; however, this reform will formalise the inclusion of those voices. I further clarify that I said in my second reading speech—and possibly in the introduction speech of this bill—that QSAC has had victim advocate representatives, but we did hear from the member for Cooper that the previous Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council also had victims advocate representatives. I know that whenever the current Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council is doing a review it sets up consultative groups that have people with lived experience in relation to those specific reviews, because no one person, as we know, can speak on behalf of all victims. They have been doing that since they were established under this government.

I want to thank members for their overwhelming support for this bill. I note that much of the debate was outside the scope of the bill; however, I will take time to address some of the matters raised during the course of this debate. There was much said about increases in crime, increases in the number of victims and increases in the number of victims applying for assistance. We know that the Palaszcuk

government has a track record of significant reforms and investment, especially in the domestic and family violence space, with the establishment of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce and in the ongoing implementation of the findings of the *Hear her voice* reports.

We have listened to victim-survivors. We have listened to the views of stakeholders. We have been informed by evidence-based approaches to best reform our systems to protect those victim-survivors and to hold perpetrators to account. The Palaszczuk government has introduced legislation to criminalise coercive control. We have also invested in the support of victim-survivors and in the education about domestic and violence in our community, as well as in the education of our next generation through the Respect program in our schools.

We know that with increased awareness and education comes change in our community—change in attitudes towards domestic and family violence, and recognition of what domestic and family violence is. With these changing attitudes in our communities and the empowerment of victim-survivors, it is unsurprising that this comes with an increase in reporting. I want to acknowledge that. There have been many members in this chamber during this debate who have talked about the increase in crime and the increase in the number of victims seeking support.

It was this government that actually increased Victim Assist to include domestic and family violence for the first time. We then further changed the definition to include non-physical violence—so psychological and financial harm—and to broaden the scope of domestic and family violence knowing that that was going to significantly increase the number of people coming forward for assistance. The member for Toowoomba North talked about crimes against the person going up. Yes, because we have more domestic and family violence victims coming forward and more sexual assault victims coming forward—

Ms Grace: And we want to encourage that.

Mrs D'ATH:—and I want more of that. I want them coming forward and feeling like the justice system is going to support them. I want them to come forward and report those crimes. That in no way takes away from the fact that crime is happening and there are consequences for victims from that crime. We acknowledge that. When you are going to talk about an increase in crime, let's recognise the good work that we are doing in this parliament to actually give victims the confidence to come forward and report those crimes and to support them. With this change in attitude also comes an increase in the number of offences recorded, an increase in the number of victims recorded and in the number of applications for support by those victims.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for Nanango, you will be in your chair if you want to participate in the debate.

Mrs D'ATH: This is a good thing. It is the strong policies and reform by the Palaszczuk government which have empowered victims to come forward. In fact, we are hoping that even more victims come forward as a result of the work of the Interim Victims' Commissioner, who is actively raising awareness of the support available to victims and helping victims to seek financial assistance available to them in their time of need. No doubt the publicity on these proposed amendments in the bill will result in even more people becoming aware of the financial assistance scheme and subsequently more people making applications.

Turning to Victim Assist Queensland itself, VAQ is continuously working on ways to efficiently manage the application and assessment process to better support victims. Significant work has been undertaken to reduce the time for assessing applications. This has resulted in an increase in the number of applications being decided each month and a corresponding decrease in wait times.

On 21 February 2023, the Palaszczuk government announced an additional \$9 million investment over four years to support critical responses to address the impact of violence associated with youth crime, including an additional \$5.4 million and seven additional positions to Victim Assist Queensland for timely financial assistance to victims, a review of the financial assistance scheme and an additional \$3 million of funding for the victim services funding program to address service gaps of non-government organisations that help victims of crime.

We heard from the member for Nanango about how those opposite had called for the reforms concerning the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. We heard that those opposite had been 'leading from opposition' on that front—which is interesting when you look at the history. The

independent Sentencing Advisory Council commenced operation in December 2010 following the passage of the Penalties and Sentences (Sentencing Advisory Council) Amendment Act 2010. The council was dissolved in 2012 by the LNP, along with youth justice conferencing. It was in 2016 that the Palaszczuk government reinstated the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council.

I briefly acknowledge the member for Southport who, in his contribution, acknowledged that crime is complex and that offenders themselves can often be victims of crime. There is no quick fix. He also acknowledged the benefit of youth justice conferencing to learn what those complex issues are. I was very sad that there was no acknowledgement that youth justice conferencing was abolished under the opposition, as were a lot of other diversionary programs that existed through the courts.

I turn now to the amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000. As foreshadowed in my second reading speech, I will move amendments during consideration in detail to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act to modify the powers and destruction requirements for suspects' DNA material. The amendments extend the time that some DNA material may be retained to ensure there is sufficient time for DNA samples to be analysed and used to identify or eliminate suspects and to ensure all relevant material can be considered in the historical case reviews recommended by the DNA commissions of inquiry. Members opposite have asked why these amendments are being progressed urgently. Others have said they took too long to come. The government has responded rapidly to address this issue through urgent amendments to ensure serious criminal cases are not adversely impacted by delays.

I must also respond to the frankly outrageous claim by the member for Nanango that 'victims will never see offenders brought to account because of the failings of the Palaszczuk government'. The failings of the state DNA lab are well documented, and they stretch many years into the past. The Sofronoff inquiry lays out in great detail the decisions and failures that occurred in that lab under both Labor and LNP governments. The Sofronoff inquiry called out managers of that lab for their deliberately dishonest dealings with the Queensland Police Service, their lies to senior public servants in the Department of Health and their lies to ministers, including myself, to try to obscure their failings. The attempts by members opposite to rewrite history for the sake of cheap political pointscore is simply disgraceful. If you want to talk about history, let's take a look at paragraphs 54 and 55 of the Sofronoff report, which state—

54. In 2005, a new director was appointed, Mr Greg Shaw. He had previous management experience in the private pathology laboratory sector. He restructured the laboratories so that the chemistry laboratories, including the DNA laboratory, came under a single manager. The organisation thus established was called Forensic and Scientific Services. He attempted to gain a substantial increase in scientific staff but this attempt was negated by a Cabinet decision of 2012 to reduce staff instead. The chemistry sections lost 27% of their staff. Mr Shaw retired in 2015. His position was re-named Executive Director and his replacement was Mr Paul Csoban.
55. Mr Golding was the Managing Scientist at the laboratory between 2007 and 2013. He refers to the 2012 staff cuts as the "dark days". A security officer noticed that henceforth the staff car park would be empty by 6 pm. Previously, staff would think nothing of working all hours to get the job done.

Throughout the debate, we have heard repeated suggestions from members opposite that no-one has been held accountable and calls to establish a standing commission of inquiry. Firstly, let me be clear: transparency and accountability were at the core of the commissions of inquiry. The Palaszczuk government has committed to implementing all recommendations from the inquiries.

As the Minister for Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women confirmed yesterday, three employees with managerial roles who had serious adverse findings made against them in the Sofronoff inquiry final report have now been separated from Queensland Health. Additionally, these matters were referred to the CCC by Mr Sofronoff, and I note the comments of the chair of the CCC at last Friday's public PCCC meeting that the matter remains ongoing. I would like to reiterate that safeguards have been put in place to ensure strong oversight of forensic services as they work through DNA testing and historical case reviews.

The interim advisory board for Forensic Science Queensland, co-chaired by eminent retired judges Julie Dick SC and Mr Sofronoff, is providing oversight of Forensic Science Queensland until the legislative framework for Forensic Science Queensland, or FSQ, is in place. The interim advisory board includes wide representation from criminal justice system stakeholders, both prosecution and defence, and victim support representation.

The amendments to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act are critical to ensuring justice for victims of crime. These amendments ensure more time for justice to be delivered. They seek to ensure that DNA material from a suspect does not have to be destroyed before it can be analysed and compared. They seek to ensure that historical case reviews are comprehensive and as expedient as

possible. This government understands the challenges we have seen in our forensic services system. We are committed to addressing issues identified by the commissions of inquiry and the testing backlog, and we have already invested tremendously in that process.

In conclusion, I once again thank all honourable members for their contributions during the debate. As I stated earlier, the bill forms part of the government's ongoing commitment to support victims of crime and their families and will provide immediate support for victims while broader reforms are underway. I note the point from members of the Katter party that we should not be concentrating on this; we should be concentrating on prevention. We can do all of that. We can support victims and concentrate on prevention, early intervention and diversion to reduce crime in this state—and we have to do all of that.

I would like to again thank the Community Support and Services 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 would like to reiterate the sentiment of the committee and thank Victim Assist Queensland, the Queensland Police Service, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Interim Victims' Commissioner and non-government organisations that provide vital support, advice and assistance to vulnerable Queenslanders and their families who are victims of violent crime. I want to acknowledge the comments made in this chamber on both sides about the great work the Interim Victims' Commissioner is already doing.

The impacts of crime can be devastating for individuals, families and the community. What we are doing in this House today is one more step to support victims when they need it most and to help with their recovery. The Palaszczuk government stands with victims, and I do want to acknowledge those in this chamber who have talked about their own personal stories as victims of crime. We have all had different experiences. I doubt there are many people who have not had a car stolen or their house broken into. I have been broken into twice when I was home, and one of those times was when my children were very young. It was quite scary to know that someone had been in my house while my kids were asleep. They did not take the cars when they ran out, but they took the keys so they could come back. That is a horrifying thought. Interestingly, that happened before we came into government in 2008. It happened when the Newman government was—

Ms Grace: Same here.

Mrs D'ATH: Crime was happening before we came into government as well, I know. It is an interesting concept that those opposite never acknowledge. We hear the voices of victim-survivors, and we will continue to listen and be guided by their experiences to help shape future reforms. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 4, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clauses—



Mrs D'ATH (5.12 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title.

Leave granted.

Mrs D'ATH: I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 4

Page 4, after line 21—

insert—

Part 2A **Amendment of Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000**

4A **Act amended**

This part amends the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000*.

4B **Amendment of s 490 (When DNA sample taken from suspected person and results must be destroyed)**

Section 490—

insert—

(6) This section applies subject to sections 490A and 490B.

4C Insertion of new ss 490A and 490B

After section 490—

insert—

490A Modified destruction timeframes for analysing particular DNA samples

- (1) This section applies in relation to a DNA sample and the results of a DNA analysis of the sample if—
 - (a) the sample is taken from a person suspected of having committed an indictable offence; and
 - (b) the sample is taken during the period—
 - (i) starting at the beginning of the day on 13 June 2022; and
 - (ii) ending at the end of the day on 13 June 2025.
- (2) Section 490(1)(d) applies in relation to the DNA sample and results as if—
 - (a) the reference to a proceeding for the indictable offence not starting within 1 year after the sample is taken were a reference to the proceeding not starting within 3 years after the sample is taken; and
 - (b) the reference to destroying the sample and results within a reasonably practicable time after the end of 1 year from the day the sample is taken were a reference to destroying the sample and results within a reasonably practicable time after the end of 3 years from the day the sample is taken.
- (3) A reference in this Act or another Act to section 490 includes a reference to section 490 as modified by this section, if the context permits.

490B Modified powers and destruction requirements for review of particular DNA samples

- (1) This section applies in relation to a DNA sample and the results of a DNA analysis of the sample if—
 - (a) the sample was taken from a person suspected of having committed an indictable offence (the **relevant offence**); and
 - (b) the sample was taken during the period—
 - (i) starting at the beginning of the day on 1 January 2007; and
 - (ii) ending at the end of the day on 12 June 2022; and
 - (c) immediately before the review period started, the DNA sample and results—
 - (i) were required to be destroyed under section 490; but
 - (ii) had not been destroyed as required.
- (2) The DNA sample and results—
 - (a) are not required to be destroyed other than under this section; and
 - (b) may be dealt with under this chapter as if they were not required to be destroyed other than under this section.
- (3) The DNA sample and results must be destroyed within a reasonably practicable time after—
 - (a) if a circumstance mentioned in section 490(1)(a), (b) or (c) occurs in relation to the relevant offence after the review period starts—the end of 1 year from the day mentioned in the paragraph for the circumstance; or
 - (b) if a proceeding for the relevant offence is not started before the end of the review period—the day the review period ends.
- (4) However, subsection (3) does not apply if, after the review period starts, an excluding circumstance occurs in relation to the DNA sample.
- (5) The results may be destroyed in the way mentioned in section 490(5).
- (6) A reference in this Act or another Act to section 490 includes a reference to this section, if the context permits.
- (7) In this section—

excluding circumstance, in relation to the DNA sample, means a circumstance mentioned in section 490(2), (3) or (4) that would have disappplied section 490(1) if that section had applied in relation to the sample.

review period means the period—

- (a) starting on the commencement; and
- (b) ending on the day that is 3 years after the commencement.

4D Amendment of ch 24, hdg (Repeals and transitional provisions)

Chapter 24, heading, 'Repeals'—

*omit, insert—***Repeal, validation****4E Insertion of new ch 24, pt 25**

Chapter 24—

*insert—***Part 25 Validation provision for Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023****898 Validation for particular DNA samples affected by modifying sections**

(1) This section applies if—

(a) on the commencement, a modifying section applies in relation to a DNA sample and the results of a DNA analysis of the sample; and

(b) immediately before the commencement, the sample and results were required to be destroyed under former section 490(1).

(2) The keeping of the DNA sample and results is declared to be, and to always have been, as valid and lawful as if the modifying section had been in force when destruction of the sample and results would otherwise have been required under former section 490(1).

(3) Also, the use of the DNA sample and results in evidence or for any other purpose related to starting, continuing or discontinuing a proceeding for an indictable offence is declared to be, and to always have been, as valid and lawful as if the modifying section had been in force when destruction of the sample and results would otherwise have been required under former section 490(1).

(4) In this section—

former section 490(1), in relation to the DNA sample and results, means section 490(1) as it applied in relation to the sample and results from time to time before the commencement.**modifying section** means section 490A or 490B.

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

Tabled paper: Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [2067].

Tabled paper: Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Yvette D'Ath's amendments [2068].

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I rise to talk to the amendments that have been circulated by the Attorney-General outside the long title of the bill. Whilst I covered this quite extensively in the debate, questions still arise that have not been answered by the Attorney, so I am seeking the answers to some of the questions that I raised in relation to retesting and time frames. Whilst I acknowledge the importance of the increased time frame to three years—that is vitally important—it was interesting to note that the latest report said it would take four years, yet the Attorney has chosen to only extend the testing time frame to three years. My question is: given the four years of funding the government has put towards the implementation of those recommendations, including that retesting, why was the extension made for only three years? That was my first question.

The other thing I and many victims would like to know is: how many samples have been identified as being retained in contravention of the current act? Obviously we were only debating today. This act will only be moved as of today, so how many of those samples have been identified as being retained? Also, how many samples have been destroyed for relevant cases? How will the government ensure that those victims with destroyed DNA ever get justice? Those are questions that I put in my speech during the second reading debate, and they have not been answered in the Attorney-General's reply.

The other thing I want to note is that the Minister for Health has said that staff have been held accountable. The Attorney just reiterated that. However, no-one has taken responsibility for Project 13. No-one from the upper echelons of government has taken accountability for this catastrophic failure. Are we to expect that three staff members really did all of this harm and no-one more senior than those staff members is going to be held accountable by the Palaszczuk government?

Mrs D'ATH: If more senior people were aware of it, I assume they would have brought it to the attention of the LNP when they were in government as well. The fact is that we were all misled by these staff. This goes back to 2007, as the member knows.

In relation to the question around three years, can I say that these amendments are being moved as a matter of urgency. In doing so, it was not a minor issue that samples were to be destroyed after 12 months. In trying to get the balance right, we made sure that it was a reasonable period of time; however, we are mindful of the consequences for those who are alleged offenders as well as victims. Consequently, if it is needed, that three years can be extended by this parliament, but we believe that we need to let that process go to see how it flows.

As for how many historical samples have been identified, so far no historical DNA samples have been identified. The only historical records that have been identified to date are hard copy records of analysis. This includes, for example, notes of DNA analyses that were performed on DNA samples and electropherograms, which are output graphs from DNA analysis processes that show a person's DNA profile. The amendments require these records to be destroyed after three years if no proceedings for an indictable offence have been started.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time allocated for this stage of the bill having 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 amendments circulated by the minister in charge of the bill.

Question put—That the Attorney-General's amendment No. 1 be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Question put—That clauses 5 to 14, as read, stand part of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 14, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

Question put—That the Attorney-General's amendment No. 2 be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment as circulated—

2 Long title

Long title, after '*Penalties and Sentences Act 1992*'—

insert—

, the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committee, Reporting Dates and Referral of Auditor-General's Reports



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (5.18 pm): I seek to advise the House of the determinations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly at its meeting today. The committee has resolved, pursuant to standing order 136, that: the Health and Environment Committee report on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) by 8 March 2024; the Community Support and Services Committee report on the Emergency Services Reform Amendment Bill, the Marine Rescue Queensland Bill and the State Emergency Service Bill by 15 March 2024; the Education, Employment and Training Committee report on the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 23 February 2024; the Economics and Governance Committee report on the Pharmacy Business Ownership Bill by 8 March 2024; the State Development and Regional Industries

Committee report on the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill by 1 February 2024; and the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee report on the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill and the Forensic Science Queensland Bill by 19 February 2024.

The committee has resolved, pursuant to standing order 194B, that the Auditor-General's *Report 3: 2023-24—2023 status of Auditor-General's recommendations* be referred to the Economics and Governance Committee and the Auditor-General's *Report 4: 2023-24—Deploying police resources* be referred to the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Presentation of Petition



Mr SPEAKER: I wish to let honourable members know that, due to a software issue, an e-petition that should have been presented this morning is only now able to be presented. I call the Deputy Clerk to present the petition.

PETITION

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

Mackay Hospital and Health Service, CQ Rescue Helipad

Ms Camm, from 1,089 petitioners, requesting the House to ensure Mackay Hospital and Health Service liaises with stakeholders to locate the CQ Rescue Helipad on site, or close access to emergency, during the construction of the hospital expansion or until the new onsite helipad is completed [\[2069\]](#).

Petition received.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (5.20 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 13 February 2024.

Valedictory



Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (5.20 pm): As another year closes, we look back and once again marvel at this incredible state of Queensland. We have emerged from COVID with the strongest economy of the eastern states—lower debt, lower taxes, low unemployment, higher economic growth and a balanced budget. Just as we promised, our strong health response has led to a strong economy—in fact, the strongest in the nation. Just as we do in times of flood and fire, we have shared that strength with the people of this state just when they needed it most.

Queenslanders are used to withstanding the worst nature can throw at us, but 2023 brought us some challenges—whether it is the high cost of simply living or paying the rent or affording the usual groceries. The causes of these pressures came from outside our borders, from the war in Ukraine and from interest rate rises, but Queensland was able to offer vital relief. In fact, our government was able to offer more cost-of-living relief than anywhere else in Australia: \$550 off every household electricity bill; \$1,072 off the bills for battlers and pensioners; half-price car rego and half-price boat rego for pensioners; cheaper energy-efficient appliances; free TAFE, including free qualifications in nursing; free swimming lessons; \$150 vouchers so children can play sport; doubling the First Home Owner Grant to \$30,000; and, starting in just 32 days, free kindy, saving Queensland families \$4,600 a year.

Queensland's economy goes from strength to strength. Ours is not the either/or state. At the same time as we offered the biggest cost-of-living relief, we were also able to embark on Australia's biggest build, providing the roads, schools and hospitals that this growing state needs. It includes 3,000 new hospital beds, three new hospitals, seven satellite hospitals, 11 expanded hospitals, 13,500 affordable and social homes, Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3, the Coomera Connector, the Second Bruce, four new schools with another two on the way and a new cancer hospital, just to name a few.

We are determined to deliver even more. Our government is investing more on infrastructure in Queensland than the federal government is spending on the whole of Australia. We build them because our state needs them—not at some time in the future but now. We also continue to stand beside the victims of crime, with historic laws addressing coercive control, a ban on knives, increased financial and other support, as well as an all-party parliamentary committee examining ways we can continue to improve. It includes the announcement today of the Independent Ministerial Advisory Council made up of those with lived experience to further guide our government response to this very complicated issue.

Queensland is a big state; we are a growing state. It feels like only yesterday that we welcomed the birth of a 3.7-kilo bouncing baby girl. Elizabeth Lynne Mackenzie was our five millionth Queenslander. Elizabeth turns five next year. In that five years almost 500,000 more people have made Queensland their home. Like Elizabeth's parents, most have arrived from interstate searching for a better life. They are choosing us for the good jobs, the better services and the great lifestyle our state provides.

There are 286,000 more jobs in Queensland today than there were before the pandemic, and regional unemployment is at historic lows. Our \$89 billion Big Build spends more on regional Queensland than in Brisbane, including our Energy and Jobs Plan and the transformative CopperString project, which is opening up \$500 billion worth of critical minerals. These are minerals like copper and vanadium that the world needs for clean energy production and batteries, and we will manufacture these products right here in regional Queensland.

Ours is not only a one-city state. Our regional cities and towns are huge drivers of our economic success. We recognised the importance of our regions by having parliament sit in Cairns, where we passed historic treaty legislation. We held four rounds of regional community forums to listen to the people living in our regions. Nothing gives me more pleasure than to travel across the length and breadth of this state and meet the people who make it great, as I did in the recent bushfires.

In those final days of October, Queenslanders battled more than 1,000 bushfires that burned from the border to the cape. Dozens of homes were lost, but nearly 400 were saved. Once again, it is the everyday courage of Queenslanders that comes shining through time and time again. I visited the evacuation centre in Dalby and met volunteers who came from as far away as Moreton Bay to help. In Tara I met Shane, Will, Ricky and Christine and saw for myself their tremendous losses. At the end of that week, we also cheered the arrival—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left, it has been convention that we hear the valedictory speeches with courtesy. I will be affording the same courtesy to the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms PALASZCZUK: At the end of that week, we also cheered the arrival of 20 caravans and mobile homes to provide a roof over people's heads. I saw our department of communities swing into action and provide more than 2,000 people nearly half a million dollars in immediate disaster assistance. I saw the arrival of scores of volunteer firefighters from interstate and overseas to give our own brave fires and the reserves a much needed rest.

Perhaps the best example of the spirit of our people was the man I met in Tara as I was leaving. He walked up to me and asked if I would like to see a picture of his house. He told me that the police knocked on his door just in time, as his house was engulfed in fire. I asked him if there was anything I could do to help. He said, 'Well, there is one thing. I need a new pair of thongs'—such is the mark of our remarkable Queenslanders that they do not ask for anything, really. They just get on with it. I want to pay tribute to everyone who helped during these troublesome times. That Friday it rained, and I doubt there has been a more welcome sound all year.

This year, 2023, has been a time to reflect on the contribution of some truly great Queenslanders, like Vaughan Johnson OAM, the great lion of the bush—some might say the great lion of the National Party. Vaughan was famous for his crushing handshake and an unshakeable love for regional Queensland. He served for 25 years in this place and afterwards as drought commissioner, instrumental in helping to deliver the wild dog fence that has brought the resurgence of the sheep industry around Longreach.

We remember Mike Ahern, the 32nd premier of Queensland, a man of conviction and backbone who implemented the findings of the Fitzgerald inquiry despite its cost to him and his party. It was my deep honour to host his family here at a lunch at Parliament House.

We also remember Bill Hayden. Bill was a former Queensland policeman, member for Oxley and at one time the only Labor MP left north of Coolangatta. Almost singlehandedly he rebuilt the Labor Party, introduced Medibank and the single mothers pension, and sacrificed his own ambitions to see Bob Hawke become our prime minister. Bill was a friend to me and to Queensland, and it was my deep honour to be able to visit Bill in his final days at the Ipswich Hospital. I want to thank all of the staff at the Ipswich Hospital for the care they gave to Bill.

We also remember Charles 'Chuck' Feeney, the American philanthropist and entrepreneur who became an honorary Queensland Great in 2019 after donating more than \$350 million to our state's world-class research institutions.

In a reminder of the extraordinary bravery of ordinary Queenslanders, we paid tribute to Fire and Rescue Service firefighter Izabella 'Izzy' Nash, who lost her life protecting the lives of others, as well as three contractors whose plane crashed during the October bushfires. All are examples of what public service truly means.

No-one should shoulder the responsibilities of being Premier without an exceptional team around them. I am grateful to work alongside members of my cabinet and caucus—a talented, dedicated, hardworking, diverse group of men and women. None of them are shy. All fight for their communities.

I want to thank my Deputy Premier, Steven Miles, fighting for Queensland, going down to Canberra, but also for tackling the complex issues of housing and growth. It is an honour to work alongside the Deputy Premier. I also want to thank the Treasurer and Minister for Trade, Cameron Dick. The Treasurer has provided the budget framework that has set up our economy for greatness into the decades ahead. I also want to acknowledge my leadership team—the Minister for Education, Grace Grace, and Leader of the House, Yvette D'Ath—for their support, friendship and advice. You always need friends in politics.

Being a minister or an assistant minister is a very hard and difficult job. I thank every one of my team and all of my caucus members. Many of these people work day in and day out, and they are away from their family and friends, but they stand up for their communities, they deliver for their communities and they fight for their communities. At the end of the day, community service and public service is about putting others ahead of yourself, and that is what everyone on this government side does—they put others ahead of themselves—and that often also means being away from their family on weekends and travelling. Sometimes you can wake up and a couple of years have gone and you have missed all of those graduations and time with your family and friends. Everyone should give their family and friends a big hug this Christmas. Queensland is a big state. We rely on good local representation. I pay tribute to all of our mayors and local councils.

I say a big thank you to all of our electorate officers, as well as a big thank you to all of their families for sharing them with us. I want to pay tribute to Linda Paton, my electorate officer, who just retired. I thank the director-general of my department, Rachel Hunter, and other directors-general of all departments across government for their dedication. I thank the committed staff of my Office of Premier, led by Jim Murphy and deputy chiefs John, Tam and Chris. A lot is expected of those in the Premier's office and I am thankful for each and every one. I expect hard work and I expect high standards.

An unsung element of public service includes the important job done by the media. I thank the members of the parliamentary media gallery and the president, Marlina Whop. Never has our community been more in need of good journalism. I hope all of you have a nice, uninterrupted break over Christmas.

I would like to extend my well wishes to the Leader of the Opposition and those opposite, along with members of the crossbench. I truly believe that in government we work best when we work together. It is important to remind ourselves that we all want what is best for Queensland; we just disagree on the best ways to get there. It is worth reminding everyone that many of our key pieces of legislation are passed with bipartisan support.

To our frontline public servants right across Queensland—the teachers, doctors, nurses, fires, paramedics, teacher aides, cleaners, wardies—and everybody who makes up our Public Service, thank you for the work that you do. I want to let you know how much your work is appreciated and valued by our government. Many will be working over Christmas and the new year. We want to thank them in advance for the sacrifice they will be making, working away from their families when a lot of us will be spending time with ours.

Our thanks also goes to those who support us here at Parliament House from, of course, Mr Speaker of the House, who does a very fine job, the Deputy Speaker, and the Clerk of the Parliament, Neil Laurie. We know that the role of the Speaker is a difficult one. Neil Laurie also, as Clerk, clocks up 20 years of service this year—an enormous achievement. I also want to thank Deputy Clerk Michael Ries; the First Clerk Assistants throughout the year, Bernice Watson, Amanda Honeyman, Stephanie Galbraith and Jo Mathers; and all of the other clerks at the table for the work that they do.

While I am talking of the table in this chamber, I also give thanks to Angie and all of the parliamentary attendants, who provide such wonderful support to everyone in the chamber. There is always a flurry of paper flying everywhere, especially during question time.

I would also like to especially thank Annie Taguada, our Acting Chief Hansard Reporter; Monique Harmer, Director of Property and Facility Services, who I am advised was instrumental in managing the logistics of the regional sittings of parliament in Cairns—what a huge effort; Janet Prowse, Director of Information Services and Parliamentary Librarian; Craig Atkinson, Director of Corporate Services and Electorate Office Liaison; Nadine Davidson-Wall, Team Leader—Communications and Marketing; Travis Hall, Records Coordinator; Diane Hone, Manager of People and Culture; Peter Morris, Kelly Baker, Robyn Moore, Mark Richardson, James Rasmussen, Cecelia Ryan, and Michael Watkin, the Sergeant-at-Arms in charge of security and attendant services, who has again done a great job this year.

On a very personal note, I show my appreciation for the skills of Executive Chef Anthony Naylor and his outstanding team. We all know how important good food is at Parliament House.

I would also like to pass on thanks for the efforts and service of those who retired from or left the employment of the Parliamentary Service this year. In particular, I mention Cathy Laverne, who retired only a few weeks ago. I am told that Cathy had approximately 18 years of service with the Queensland parliament as an electorate officer working for three different members—Dr Lesley Clark, Steve Wettenhall and the current member for Cairns, Michael Healy, in two different electorates—Barron River and Cairns. On behalf of the House, Cathy, I wish you all the best for the future.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Parliamentary Counsel, Tony Keyes, and all the officers of the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel for the important function they perform in carefully drafting the government's legislative proposals, together with those put forward by non-government members of this House. I would also like to thank my own family for their support.

In conclusion, greatness beckons this wonderful state of Queensland. Sometimes that greatness is easy to see, like winning yet again this year's State of Origin or when we hosted the most watched and joyous sporting event in the nation's history, the FIFA Women's World Cup and the mighty Matildas. They really were our Matildas, with a record 10 Queenslanders on the 23-strong squad. Already 4,000 Queensland schoolchildren have tried out for selection in the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. To meet some of these children is to be inspired, as we were when the legacy plan was launched alongside 10-year-old Mia. Mia Wilkinson, who is a little girl, lost both hands and feet to sepsis. Mia is training already for the Paralympic Games. When we think of 2032, we should think of Mia proudly running on her blades, with her friends and family cheering her on, along with all of the other Queensland kids. We know that the world is going to fall in love with our state for all the reasons we love it already and create a new golden era of prosperity.

May the coming season bring peace, health and happiness to all the 5,500,000 of us lucky enough to live in this wonderful place called Queensland, where it is beautiful one day and perfect the next.



Mr CRISAFULLI (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.37 pm): I join the Premier and the crossbench in wishing everybody a merry Christmas and all the best for the upcoming year. Christmas is always a very special time and at times a difficult time. To those people who will be welcoming their first child over Christmas, to those who will be celebrating their last Christmas with somebody, for those who will be having a really joyous time, for those who will be experiencing extreme hardship, for those who will be relaxing, for those who will be working, Christmas will be different things to different people. I want to join the Premier in offering to everybody who is working over the break, whilst we have a break, our sincere gratitude, particularly to those people who work for the state of Queensland, whether they be police, firies, ambos, paramedics, whether they are people in the hospital system, whether they are people serving their community across all manner of fronts. We thank them very much for their contribution.

There are some staff of long service that I would like to acknowledge today: Michael Ries, the Deputy Clerk, notches up 15 years; Amanda Benn in Hansard, 20 years; Janine Hurley in Hansard, 20 years; Leah Ilott, the bills officer, 20 years; Tracey Lindfield, 20 years; Roylene Mills, 30 years; and, the Premier is right, Neil Laurie has 20 years as Clerk, but he is 30 years in the parliament. I actually have a photo from when Neil started. If you do not mind, Mr Speaker, I will use a prop. I table that photo as well—a younger, fresher looking Neil Laurie.

Tabled paper: Photograph of Mr Neil Laurie, Clerk of the Parliament [\[2070\]](#).

I also acknowledge Sue Hanlon, the EO in Oodgeroo, who has contributed 50 years of service to the public—an amazing effort.

I want to thank the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk, the table staff and the attendants. They do a mighty job and have had to work through renovations in this place, which is never easy. To all of you: thank you very much. To all of the people who work to make sure that our jobs are more achievable—those who clean, who cook, the security, the gardeners: this place is run by people who are very proud to work here, and so they should be. It is a special building and a special institution and we thank them for the valuable role that they play.

Mr Speaker, thank you for your friendship over the year. Thank you for the way that you conduct yourself in and out of the House. Thank you for today, for not warning at least two of my frontbenchers. They were both very grateful for that today. Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thanks for the courtesy that you always extend to us and the way that you reach out to all of us here in the opposition.

To my team, starting with the deputy leader: Jarrod, thanks for your strength, your friendship and your tenacity. You are one of the hardest workers in this building, and I am very proud and very grateful to have you as my deputy. To the Manager of Opposition Business, who runs an excellent show—somebody who sets a great tone, someone who is a great friend and someone who is universally respected across the political divide: thank you, Andrew, for what you do.

To every one of my team and to everyone in this parliament: you all play a valuable role in your communities as leaders and in this building. I thank you all very much for what you do. To the member for Clayfield, who is currently recovering and watching this broadcast: we wish you all the best in your recovery.

I mention the families of all of the MPs—I obviously want to thank my family in particular—and every single person in this building. The sacrifice that your friends and family—your partner and your children—make to enable you to serve is huge. We often do not spend enough time to pause and reflect on that. The hours, the travel, the constant demand and the fact that we are always on duty means that our families can often take a back seat. We should use this time of year to make sure we thank them for the role they play in enabling us to serve this great state.


To the media—to Marlina Whop as president of the gallery but to every single person who works in the gallery: in a fragmented media market, the role of people who come to the parliament and report on it is more important than ever. In an era when people consume their news from different sources, to have people who are trusted across different platforms—traditional, modern, right across the spectrum—is so vital in making sure this institution works the way that it should.

To the staff in the opposition office—small in number but big in workload: thank you all very much for what you do. To my electorate office staff in Broadwater: thanks very much for the role you play in serving our beautiful community. I am very grateful for that.

Premier, to your team and to you: I wish you all the best. I hope that you have a good break and I hope that you have some time with your loved ones. To everyone in the opposition—to everybody who opposes us—on the other side of the chamber: we share different philosophical views, but we all love the state and we all love our community. This is an important time of year for us to down tools and to down swords and to treat each other as the humans that we are. We can resume hostilities next year in the pursuit of a better Queensland, but tonight is not that night. Tonight is a night to thank everybody in this building.

Finally, to Queenslanders: in my final contribution last year I mentioned that the year ahead would be tough and it would be challenging, and that has been the case. It has been challenging for a number of reasons—challenging financially and challenging because of what Mother Nature throws at this state—but we always finish the year as a strong state and with a sense of hope and optimism for the year ahead. Every Queenslander should know that sitting in this building are 93 people, every one of

them different and every one of them representing a different community. Every one of them comes to this table with a different set of values that got us here, but not one person walks through those doors without wanting to make their little piece of the state a little bit better and the state of Queensland a little bit better. We have an important role in this state and in this nation and we are blessed to have it. This is a great time of year for us to all reflect in each other's company and to wish Queensland all the best for 2024.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (5.45 pm): It is again a privilege to represent the crossbench in summarising a year that saw both celebrations and frustrations but, importantly, deep gratitude. Happily for all in the chamber I will stick with the celebrations, as our frustrations are well documented and well aired in this chamber, though I may add ruminations. The diversity of those of us across the back is not only geographical but also in social representation, covering 28 per cent of Queensland. In spite of this, we did agree and have a united, joint statement. There are other things that we have agreed on. Of course, members know our views about the committee system et cetera. All I need to say is that we will never give up on those.

There were many events outside of this chamber's role that have reiterated the importance of unity and for a diversity of viewpoints to be respected. The divisions being created in our country by events overseas are deeply saddening. As a multicultural society, we must be united in our efforts for peace. Healing is needed, as is a reminder of who we are, what we strive for and what we aspire to.

This year saw six bills by the crossbench introduced or debated. This again demonstrated diversity—from climate change transition, inclusionary strategy, family school costs all the way to liquid fuel supply, bush education and blue card bills. With the Youth Justice Reform Select Committee, there is opportunity to obtain bipartisan agreement in our efforts for greater safety across Queensland. We thank the government for this.

There were projects delivered for our electorates and some protests, but I will stick with what was delivered. The replacement of Six Mile Creek Bridge No. 7 in Noosa is nearly complete, which is fantastic, and many projects that have been hard fought for, such as the Pomona campus hall, are very appreciated.

In Katter country there has been a much needed CT scanner for Ingham hospital, the completion of the Atherton Hospital and the launch of their relocation sentencing policy. CopperString has been a welcome addition—not so the gillnet fishing bans or the speeding fines. That was not on the Santa wish list!

For the Greens electorates of Maiwar and South Brisbane: interim funding for school upgrades, a pedestrian crossing and the start of the Montague Road Corridor is good news; however, there was no early Santa visit, with little progress on a new site for the inner-west primary school.

For Mirani there is a pipeline for Mount Morgan. Member for Mirani, I think the bulk of the money went your way with the pipeline, Rookwood Weir being up and running and Mount Morgan producing gold and jobs soon. I hope that you share some of that gold with the rest of us! Some areas along the Bruce Highway were sealed, although I did see on his Santa wish list that you want to do some repurposing of the old Sarina hospital for accommodation. I am sure that if you have been a good boy, Santa may deliver that.

We celebrate our incredible electorates and all within and send our deep gratitude to them. I also congratulate them on the work they all do for our communities. I thank our fabulous frontliners in both the private and public sectors, from our nurses, teachers, police and QPWS rangers all the way through to our retail and hospitality workers, plumbers and carers. The list goes on and on. Thank you.

I especially call out our government agencies. I have deep appreciation for your efforts throughout the year, because it has been a tough one. To our not-for-profits and community organisations and all of our volunteers: there are no words to express how we feel about you. There is provision of so much—whether sports for our kids, support for those experiencing hardships or saving lives. We could not exist without you and every day you put others first, often at great detriment or danger to yourselves, all without pay and at times not a lot of thanks. I know that every MP would agree: you are gold.

To the Premier, all ministers, departmental and agency staff, our gratitude goes to you all. There are many challenges along the way and frustrations can lead to your inboxes overflowing. I am not sure whether we need to apologise for that, but we are persistent. Our weeks in parliament are made special by the incredible parliamentary teams from chamber attendants, IT, catering, security and


housekeeping through to maintenance, Hansard, our secretariats and library research teams. Your smiles, friendly and efficient service and efforts for us are deeply appreciated. We especially love the cheery and at times creepy decorations, cafe creations and our gardens, which are beautiful. When you actually go out there, they are very much the calm in the storm.

To our Speaker, all deputies and acting speakers, I say thank you for all that you do. There were moments that we as MPs made your job extremely difficult and may we do better in the lead-up to the election in demonstrating to Queenslanders that we can voice our opinions whilst being respectful to the chair and each other.

To our Clerk, that you continue again to not lose a hair through the annexe renovation, our contesting of the standing orders, conventions and determinations, all the way to our efforts to make change is truly testament to who you are. Your endless knowledge and advice—we cannot imagine how we could ever do without that.

To our own staff I say that we and our electorates appreciate you every day even if you do not hear these words enough. No, that does not mean you get out of doing the 10,000 step challenge next year. It just means those who missed out this year will need to join us in 2024.

To all MPs on both sides and your staff, families and electorates, we send hearty wishes for a wonderful Christmas with ongoing recovery for those who have experienced disasters and loss. Know that we think of your communities at these traumatic times and ask that Santa brings all you could ask for including no fires and some rain. Thank you for the friendships and coffee conversations and, even in the heat of a debate, the lighter moments. It was really lovely earlier to hear much laughter in here. It is nice. Going to those lighter moments, including the lighting of the tree which I know you are itching to get to, I say merry Christmas, everyone. See you in 2024.

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, it is always difficult being the fourth person speaking in a political room, so I will no doubt be covering some of the same territory. However, it would be remiss of me not to do so particularly regarding our Parliamentary Service staff.

Before the Houses rises for the final time in 2023, I wish to add my remarks. This year over 72,000 people visited the parliament. Of course, this was a particularly special year in the life of the 57th Parliament because the entire parliament once again moved to Far North Queensland for a sitting week in May. There can be no understating the magnitude of such an operation, which takes months of planning by the Parliamentary Service and the government. In addition to the entire parliament moving to Far North Queensland, parts of the Public Service also relocated to support the operations of government. I thank everyone involved in this undertaking and make special mention of Coral-Leah Kemp from my office for her enormous contribution as project manager.

There were over 3,600 visitors to the temporary parliamentary precinct in Cairns including members of the general public as well as school students from across the Far North Queensland region. This was the sixth regional sitting of the Queensland parliament and included a full parliamentary sitting week, junior Indigenous youth parliament, a regional youth parliament, a schools visit program and various community events. Thanks also go to Her Excellency the Governor, who was able to join the people of the far north at the event shortly after representing Queensland at the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

In making these closing remarks there are a few people I wish to thank. Firstly, I thank members of this House for accommodating a difficult year for me on a personal level. The year 2023 was a very challenging year for me on many fronts and I would like to say that the messages of support I received from all sides of the House were both welcome and appreciated. Secondly, I thank the member for Greenslopes and Deputy Speaker, Joe Kelly, for providing the House with very admirable service whilst Acting Speaker during my absence earlier this year. As I have mentioned previously, the speakership involves more than presiding in the chamber. The Deputy Speaker also performed the administrative and diplomatic duties as part of the role and represented this parliament at a very high standard.

Thirdly, I place on record my thanks for the work of the Panel of Temporary Speakers: the members for Burleigh, Cook, Cooper, Scenic Rim, Southern Downs and Stretton. I will also include an acting Temporary Speaker in the member for Mundingburra. Occupying the position of Speaker, Deputy Speaker or Temporary Speaker is a privilege to all of us who hold those roles. I am confident that each office holder feels the same way.

As all honourable members would agree, this parliament is well and truly served by staff of the Parliamentary Service based at the precinct, the electorate office staff who perform a great number of services to their communities and members, and ministerial staff who assist their ministers with the

operation of government. There are some special mentions amongst the parliamentary and electorate staff that need to be made. There was 50 years of service marked by Sue Hanlon in the Parliamentary Service as electorate officer at Redlands, Cleveland and Oodgeroo. Thelma Humphris, currently at the Keppel electorate office, has accumulated approximately 35 years of service with the Queensland parliament working with four members in the electorates of Rockhampton and North Rockhampton. Thelma also worked as a federal member's electorate officer in the seat of Capricornia.

Renee Easten, committee secretary, commenced leave in October after approximately 25 years service prior to completing her service in March 2024. Kevena Franklin, who has approximately 30 years service with the Queensland parliament, commenced work in 1992 at the Toowoomba South electorate office and retired in 2015. However, she was enticed out of retirement and resumed working in the Toowoomba South electorate office for the current member. As we have already heard, Cathy Lovern, the electorate officer at Cairns, retired in October after approximately 18 years service with the Queensland parliament working for three different members in two different electorates, Barron River and Cairns.

Of course, we cannot forget the departure earlier this year of George Hasanakos, former Speaker's executive officer, who I am pleased to announce to the House, if you have not heard, has recently become father to baby Henry together with his partner Casey-Ann. I congratulate them both and again thank George for his service to the parliament.

Honourable members, as you would be aware, earlier this year Minister Crawford, in his then capacity as Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, presented a gift of a broken tipped spear to the parliament, which is a strong symbol of reconciliation. In the words of the minister, the broken tipped spear is a potent symbol of Australia's first recorded act of reconciliation. I thank the Guugu Yimithirr people for this generous gift. The spear was displayed in the chamber at this year's regional sitting and also during the Eric Deeral Indigenous youth parliament. It is now on permanent display on level 5 of the Parliamentary Annexe. I welcome this important symbol to the Parliamentary precinct.

As members are aware, Queensland hosted this year's CPA Australia and Pacific Region Conference a few weeks ago. The theme of the conference was Representation for the Future: Young people and parliaments. Needless to say, there were very wide-ranging contributions made by delegates from experiences of entering parliament as a young person to lowering the voting age to 16 and comparisons of youth parliament programs. A great deal of effort went into organising this conference and I would like to say thank you to the First Clerk Assistant (Committees), Bernice Watson, for her work in overseeing the management and delivery of the conference while also participating as a delegate. I wish to make special mention of Tamara Vitale, who was vital to the overall coordination, together with all of the working group who made invaluable contributions to the success of the conference.

Honourable members, recently the Parliamentary Service was joined by Beryl Friday as our new First People's Liaison Officer. Beryl is a Nyungkal woman of the Kuku Yalanji nation. Today this is known as the area from Mossman up to the Daintree. She is also a descendant of the Olkola from Cape York, the Birri Gubba from Bowen and the Whitsundays, and the Anaiwan nations around Armidale. Beryl is a former professional netballer and previously worked for the Brisbane Broncos. We are lucky to have an experienced and driven person to work at our parliament in our First Nations liaison role. Please everyone can you welcome Beryl.

I also give thanks to those people who are in charge of the operation of the parliament. I want to record my gratitude to the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition and their respective leadership teams for their constructive approach to the parliamentary process. In particular, I thank the Leader of the House and the Manager of Opposition Business for the important contributions they make each sitting day to ensure the smooth running of the House. I would also like to thank the Committee of the Legislative Assembly that I chair for its counsel and support for the operation of the chamber. Obviously, a great thanks goes to the whips, who report the votes and let us know if laws have been passed.

I also wish to thank the committee chairs and deputy chairs for the work they do and, indeed, all members who perform duties on committees. All of us who serve or at some time have served on committees understand the often considerable workload and the pressure to meet the deadlines set by the House can come into their own. Where would we be without our hardworking committee secretariats? I want to acknowledge their enormous amount of hard work.

The Clerk, Neil Laurie, and the Deputy Clerk, Michael Ries, both very ably supported by their experienced teams, including by Sandy and Andrea—double trouble—in their offices, continue to deliver a great service to the Queensland parliament. In the Clerk's case, we have heard that he has reached his 20th anniversary in that position, but of course in total he has served this parliament for three decades as Deputy Clerk and Clerk. In fact, Neil is now the longest serving Clerk of any house of parliament in Australia. As all members would agree, the clerks at the table who provide advice and manage procedure during our sittings are invaluable in their roles and we could not do what we do without them. Also vital to the work of the chamber is the Table Office, led this year by Stephanie Galbraith and Jo Mathers. I thank them for their work.

I also wish to thank our Sergeant-at-Arms, Mr Michael Watkin, and the precinct security team for their work. As I have mentioned in the House before, the security staff at parliament are the first responders to emergencies that occur from time to time and do us all proud in performing this role so well. I also wish to thank our parliamentary attendants, led by Angie Jones and Cliff Ku.

Our corporate services team deserve praise for managing the business aspects of the precinct and coordination with electorate offices. Thank you to the large team led by our Director of Corporate Services and Electorate Officer Liaison, Craig Atkinson. I want to thank the functions and catering team for the service they provide to all members and for the service they will provide to us this evening. I thank Executive Chef Anthony Naylor, our head chef and the catering services team led by Kelly Baker. Thanks to the cafe team, led by Tracey Lindfield, and the barista with the encyclopaedic memory who does over 200 orders on a sitting day, Andrew Roberts.

Our Parliamentary Library, information services and IT teams really help to keep the functioning of the parliament going. Where would we be without our emails to stay so connected with our constituents? I do not know. Sometimes we wish we could be disconnected, but that is a story for another day. I wish to thank Janet Prowse for her leadership of these vital teams.

Additionally, I want to thank Lindsay Watson and Michael Hermann for their work on overseeing our chamber and committee broadcast system. I also wish to thank our communications and marketing team—Nadine Davidson-Wall and Ainsley Brosing—for their efforts supporting the work of the parliament. Many thanks to the committee secretaries and committee office staff members, led by Bernice Watson in her day job when she is not running CPA conferences.

I also place on record, as has been mentioned, my thanks to the property and precinct services team, led by its director, Monique Harmer. During the Annexe renovations, the majority of which is scheduled to be completed in the first half of next year, Monique and the property and precinct services team have assisted members and multiple work groups across the Parliamentary Service to continue to have access to work space and facilities.

On behalf of all members, I wish to record our gratitude for the work of all the gardeners, cleaning and maintenance staff on this precinct. Particular mention must go to the care and attention given to the parliament's edible garden and replacement of the family of chickens that are now currently enjoying their new Legislative 'Eggsembly' in time for Christmas.

I want to thank the parliamentary education team, including Rebecca Quinnell, Maria Mead, Kate Philipson and Kirsten Murray, for their efforts in bringing parliament to students right across the state. In particular, the education activities that formed part of the regional sitting were a very large part of the team's work this year. Our youth parliaments are great events that help build community engagement and civic education for young Queenslanders about democratic institutions. Our education team deserve much credit for their efforts.

Thanks again go to the media gallery and its president, Marlina Whop, for reporting the proceedings of the House and the important service they provide to the people of Queensland.

Now to a few personal thanks. I wish to thank Mulgrave electorate staff Kylie Bock, Heidi Osterburg and, formerly, Bec Spencer for their work this year for the people of my electorate. I also want to thank my Speaker's office staff—Coral-Leah Kemp, who I mentioned earlier around the regional sitting, and Stephen Gay, who joined my office during this year.

As always, I thank my family: my parents, Warren and Linda, and my children for their support as both the local member and in my role as Speaker. I am grateful for my son, Tristan—who is now taller than me—and my wonderful daughters, Layla and Kobi, for becoming such great young women and for what they do to enrich my life.

The sitting year is at an end and now we turn our attention to the end-of-year festivities. I want to invite all members and parliamentary, ministerial and opposition staff to join the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and me at the front of the parliament for the lighting of the Christmas tree followed by the longstanding tradition of Speaker's refreshments. I also encourage all members to take part in the usual practice of thanking our hardworking staff by performing the role of serving the refreshments at some stage throughout the evening.

Wherever you may be in Queensland or beyond, I extend the parliament's best wishes for a safe and secure holiday season. From my family to yours, I wish all members and everybody in the parliamentary community a merry Christmas and a happy new year. I look forward to seeing you all in 2024.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT



Hon. YM D'ATH (Redcliffe—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.04 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6.04 pm.

ATTENDANCE

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