



# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

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## FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

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## WEDNESDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2024

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The Legislative Assembly met at 9.30 am.

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



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

### PRIVILEGE

#### Speaker's Ruling, Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 29 November 2023 the member for Burleigh wrote to me alleging that the member for Hill deliberately misled the House on 28 November 2023. The matter relates to a statement made by the member for Hill during a debate on the disallowance motion of the Fisheries Legislation (Spanish Mackerel and Bar Rockcod) Amendment Declaration. Specifically, the member for Hill stated—

The member for Traeger introduced the Food (Labelling of Seafood) Amendment Bill into the Queensland parliament two years ago, yet the state Labor government and the LNP both voted against it.

The member for Burleigh argued that this statement was deliberately misleading as *Hansard* reveals that all 31 members of the LNP present at the division voted in favour of the Food (Labelling of Seafood) Amendment Bill at the second reading on 25 October 2022. *Hansard* also records that the member for Hill was present at the time and voted in favour of the second reading.

I sought further information from the member about the allegation made against him in accordance with standing order 269(5). The member submitted that his statement was misleading, that he made an error of judgement by basing his comments on his personal recollections of the debate and not checking the voting figures in *Hansard*; however, he did not intend to mislead the House.

Standing order 269(4) requires that, in considering whether such a matter should be referred to the Ethics Committee, I should take account of the degree of importance of the matter which has been raised and whether an adequate apology or explanation has been made in respect of the matter. I note that on 13 February 2024 the member for Hill made an apology and this is recorded at page 18 of the *Record of Proceedings*. Accordingly, I consider the member has made an adequate apology. Therefore, I will not be referring the matter for further consideration of the House via the Ethics Committee. I table the correspondence in relation to this matter.

*Tabled paper:* Correspondence relating to an alleged contempt and misleading of the House by the member for Hill, Mr Shane Knuth MP [\[179\]](#).

### SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

#### Members for Surfers Paradise and Hill, Acknowledgement



**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on 7 February 2004, the members for Surfers Paradise and Hill were first elected to the Queensland parliament. I recognise and note their 20 years of service in a variety of roles over that time. I am sure all members will join me in congratulating the members for Surfers Paradise and Hill on their milestone anniversaries.

#### 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 Ashwell State School in the electorate of Ipswich West and Toogoolawa School in the electorate of Coomera.

## PETITION

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


### **Bramston Beach, Green Waste Facility**

**Mr Knuth**, from 130 petitioners, requesting the House to provide a green waste facility in close proximity to Bramston Beach [\[178\]](#).

Petition received.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### **Homes for Queenslanders**


 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Premier) (9.35 am): On the day I was sworn in as Premier I said I would work for Queenslanders every single day. On that day I said the best way we can set Queensland up for success long into the future is by providing intergenerational prosperity. We want to help parents give their kids more opportunities than they had. We know that safe, secure, affordable housing is the most important foundation to make that happen. It does not matter how good the school is, if a student is worried about where they are sleeping that night they are not going to learn. They will fall behind and probably start misbehaving. When a family has to keep moving because the rent is constantly going up, we are not giving young Queenslanders the best start in life.

Last week the hardworking housing minister and I announced Homes for Queenslanders, our whole-of-system housing plan with a \$3 billion investment to back it in. This is the single largest investment in Queensland's housing system ever. It is a comprehensive plan to build more homes faster, to support renters, to help first home owners, to boost our social housing big build and to work towards the end of homelessness. Our goal is unashamedly ambitious: one million new homes by 2046, including 53,500 new social homes.

Last week Minister Scanlon and I visited a social housing development in Alderley that is well on the way to being completed. There we met all the hardworking tradies who are showing up every day to get the job done. Tradies like Matt and Matt, two apprentice carpenters, who are cutting their teeth on the job site that will change Queenslanders' lives. Growing the construction workforce, Queensland's Big Build will need a bigger workforce and the residential building sector is already struggling to find enough skilled labour. To solve the problem, our \$11 million Queensland Construction Workforce Fund will aim to expand free apprenticeships for under-25s and encourage the employment of priority trades within the construction sector. We know we will rely heavily on our very own QBuild to meet our housing targets and I know Minister Scanlon is looking forward to meeting some of those apprentices here at parliament today.

We are also investing in infrastructure to accelerate home construction and build more homes faster, including a \$350 million fund to incentivise infill development. We are supporting Queensland renters with a \$160 million Renters Relief Package and we are banning rent bidding. To help first home owners into the market, we have doubled our First Home Owner Grant to \$30,000 and we are investing in more measures helping regional and First Nations Queenslanders buy their first home. We are working towards ending homelessness, investing \$390 million for a 20 per cent uplift in funding for homelessness services that support our most vulnerable. On top of our five-pillar plan, we will back the federal government's Help to Buy scheme by introducing legislation into the Queensland parliament this year. Housing should not be a political football and I will be seeking bipartisan support in Queensland for this initiative because unfortunately we have not seen that at a national level. Homes for Queenslanders builds on our progress and charts a course towards ensuring every Queenslanders has a safe place that they can call home.

### **Energy Industry**

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.39 am): When it comes to decarbonising an economy, Queensland leads the nation. The Miles Labor government will remove more carbon than any other state or territory and, most importantly, we will lead that transition with public ownership at its core. The workers who string the lines and connect renewables to our grid will not be working to generate profits for foreign multinational companies; they will work for the people of Queensland. Queenslanders are proud of the public ownership of their assets—and they should be proud. Just this summer we saw the best energy field crews anywhere in the world in action. Those crews work tirelessly from Coolangatta to Cooktown.


They reconnected power to 240,000 homes and businesses in some of the most difficult situations imaginable. Today I want to pay tribute to those workers. I met with many of them following those natural disasters. They worked around the clock, in oppressive conditions, to get the lights back on. All Queenslanders should be proud of their efforts.

In 2015, Queenslanders decided not to privatise our power assets and Queenslanders continue to receive the benefits of that decision. Just look at Victoria where, yesterday, a privatised, badly maintained power system knocked half a million households into darkness. Our decision to keep our assets in public ownership means our energy system can lead our transition in an orderly, sustainable way and deliver cheaper power throughout.

Our government's investment is on the table with \$19 billion in our last budget alone to transform our state's energy system. There is only one reason we can afford to do this: progressive coal royalties. Only a government that unreservedly supports progressive coal royalties can deliver this generational energy transformation for Queensland through the forward estimates and beyond. We are determined to decarbonise our role in the global steel industry to keep those royalties flowing for years to come.

Last week, expressions of interest opened for the Queensland government's Low Emissions Investment Partnerships program. The LEIP program is focusing on driving down emissions in Queensland's metallurgical coal industry. More than half a billion dollars from our progressive coal royalties will be spent helping coalmines scale up decarbonisation with initiatives such as alternative fuels and capturing fugitive emissions from coalmines. It is just another example of how our progressive coal royalties are delivering for Queenslanders. Only the Miles Labor government will deliver clean energy opportunities for Queenslanders because we put Queenslanders first.

### Energy Industry


 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Clean Economy Jobs) (9.41 am): Decarbonising Queensland is one of the most significant commitments our state has ever made. It is a commitment to more jobs and more investment for all Queenslanders. It is a commitment to protecting existing jobs and creating new ones. The new laws announced by the Premier today will ensure our plans are achievable and that they are affordable. If you are a miner in Mackay or a welder in Warwick, we will secure your job, your kids' jobs and their kids' jobs.

This is not ideology. This is common sense. Global consumers want this. Investors want this. Our climate needs this. We need real climate action. Australia is warming 40 per cent faster than the global average and that means Queenslanders are on the front line. Queenslanders feel it. After floods and after fires, they curse and they call for action. We are acting because we are listening and we are on their side.

Yesterday in this House members mentioned concerned Queenslanders—parents and grandparents such as Jessica and Christine who have fears for their grandkids' future. Our message to those Queenslanders is that we hear you and we will act. We will decarbonise Queensland the right way to ensure good jobs, to lower the cost of living and to ensure that this change works for Queenslanders. We will help industries grow whilst they decarbonise, just as we have done with the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. We will collaborate with Queenslanders on clear pathways with robust models and real experts, not vested interests. We are committed to clear time frames and to transparency, not to an over-reliance on offsets, the market or non-credible technologies.

We will work with farmers. We will work with workers themselves and with their unions, business, communities and governments at all levels. The Miles Labor government will set a strong framework for growth. We will make great things happen for Queenslanders; real action to protect the reef, our beaches, our farms and, frankly, the Queensland experience. We call on those opposite to support this commitment, to support the new laws, to forgo their vested interests and to secure Queensland's way of life and opportunities for generations to come.

### Clean Economy Jobs Bill

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation) (9.44 am): The Clean Economy Jobs Bill to be introduced by the Premier is a bold and ambitious demonstration of our refreshed government's deep commitment to taking action on climate change. A failure to address climate change puts our environment, jobs, economy and lifestyle at risk. We are already bearing the cost of more unpredictable weather resulting in coastal erosion, bleaching events and habitat and species loss. Left unchecked, it will also risk jobs

across multiple industries and further exacerbate the cost of living, such as through insurance premiums or the cost of food and fuel. We must continue to take bold steps now to respond to this threat for the benefit of future generations of Queenslanders.

One of the most important actions we can take to respond to climate change is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Clean Economy Jobs Bill enshrines in law ambitious new emissions reduction targets: a 30 per cent reduction on the 2005 levels of emissions by 2030, which we are on the cusp of achieving from avoided land clearing; and a target of a 75 per cent reduction by 2035 and a commitment to net zero emissions by 2050. The Miles government will develop a forward work program to establish how we will achieve the new interim target. It will build upon the significant work already undertaken by our government to date. The Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan is central to taking forward the decarbonisation of our energy system and will also help capitalise on the opportunities arising from the global energy transition, bringing new industries and jobs to the state.

Queensland has been at the forefront of working with landowners to capitalise on a growing demand for carbon offsets. The Land Restoration Fund is both delivering premium credits to industry and working to protect and enhance biodiversity across our beautiful state. The LRF is putting nature, people, lives and livelihoods at the heart of climate action. Our half a billion dollar LRF is growing Queensland's carbon farming industry, generating new jobs and income streams for rural and regional communities and delivering valuable environmental and social outcomes.

We are working with the mining industry to help reduce their carbon emissions. All new mines are now required to produce decarbonisation plans. The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation is also delivering a decarbonisation strategic technology roadmap that aims to engage local startups and entrepreneurs to adapt new technologies for decarbonisation challenges.

Importantly, today's Clean Economy Jobs Bill signals to international investors that Queensland is serious about emissions reduction, that we are serious about investment in renewable energy and that we aim to be not only a national but also a global player. Global investment in the energy transition hit US\$1.8 trillion in 2023, which was up 17 per cent on the previous year and a new record.

This landmark commitment unleashes Queensland's potential as an investment destination, capitalising on our abundant sun, wind and land, interconnection to the Australia grid and exports to the region. Accelerating climate action will help protect our natural environment, our jobs and lifestyle. It will contribute to our economy while increasing efforts to conserve the environment upon which we all depend. I am proud to be the environment minister in a government that is willing to take decisive action to respond to the threat of climate change and leave a legacy for all Queenslanders.

### North Queensland, Biorefinery



**Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.48 am): The Miles Labor government is leading the charge when it comes to creating a cleaner greener future for Queensland and the world. We are investing in renewable energy, we are investing in our regions and we are placing Queensland at the forefront of new and developing industries.

Key to this transformation is the Queensland new-industry development strategy. The strategy identifies six industries essential for a decarbonised world including the bioeconomy, which covers products such as sustainable aviation fuel. With airlines publicly committing to net zero emissions by 2050, the demand for sustainable aviation fuel is only increasing. The industry is expected to be worth around \$23 billion in 2030. Right now, that fuel is only produced overseas. However, we saw an opportunity for Queensland and we are grabbing it with both hands.

I am proud to update the House that plans for a multimillion dollar biorefinery in North Queensland have taken a step forward. This week, Jet Zero Australia and LanzaJet announced the execution of a licence and engineering agreement that will accelerate the development of this product using LanzaJet's technology that uses sugarcane by-product to create jet fuel.

This follows the completion of a feasibility study for the facility that is expected to create about 1,000 construction jobs and 100 refinery jobs and produce more than 100 million litres of fuel a year. It will bring opportunities not only for the aviation industry but also for agriculture, defence and tourism with the production of renewable diesel. I am proud that the Miles government invested \$760,000 in that feasibility study alongside aviation giants Qantas and Airbus. It is a win for the economy and a win for the people of North Queensland. I know that all three Townsville members support this new industry and that the member for Townsville has met with Jet Zero and has been a big advocate for this project.



Our vision is that Queensland will be a major producer of sustainable aviation fuel. My department is working with proponents across the state, including Ampol and Japanese energy giant Eneos. We have commissioned a report that shows how Queensland can be front and centre of this exciting new industry. It is clear: the Miles government's vision for Queensland's future as a clean energy superpower is taking us to new heights and will help us reach our 80 per cent renewable energy target by 2035. The Miles government is proudly not only delivering new industry and new great regional jobs but also delivering a cleaner, greener and more prosperous future for our great state.

### **Child Safety, Seniors, Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs**



**Hon. C MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.51 am): It is an honour to stand in this place as the new Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. I am very excited to be part of a new, invigorated team bringing fresh perspectives and a renewed commitment to the people of Queensland. I know I speak for my colleagues when I say we are certainly very proud to be a part of the new Miles government.

The past few weeks have been a whirlwind of meetings, visits, events and lots of learning. I have loved connecting with our key sector stakeholders, attending multicultural events, visiting some of our funded organisations and getting to know our dedicated department teams—Child Safety staff caring for vulnerable children and families; Seniors and Disability Services staff advocating for and supporting our seniors and people with disability; and Multicultural Affairs staff fostering and supporting cultural diversity in our state. I have been inspired by so many who bring a powerful energy and commitment to their jobs.

When I became the minister, I said that how we look after the most vulnerable in our community speaks to the Queensland we want to be. I also recognise that at times the issues are complex and sometimes heartbreaking, but they are not insurmountable or without hope. We have a big agenda of legislative and policy reform ahead of us, particularly in child safety and disability services. It is such an exciting time to be at the helm of these important portfolios.

Since my appointment we have released the Roadmap for Residential Care in Queensland, a five-year plan designed in partnership with the sector and aimed at halving the rate of children and young people in residential care. I have attended my first disability reform ministers meeting, representing the interests of Queenslanders with disability as we progress key reforms from the disability royal commission and the NDIS review. We have also announced additional funding of \$1.6 million for disability advocacy services which support people with disability, their families and carers here in Queensland, particularly as we embark on this important period of reform.

This year we will also deliver a new seniors strategy and multicultural action plan. As a local member of parliament and like so many of my colleagues here in the House, I value our multicultural communities. It is the realisation of a dream to have the responsibility to support our multicultural communities at the highest level in government—not bad for the daughter of Greek migrants. It is an honour to serve the people of this state and be part of the Miles Labor team. I hope to be a worthy champion for Queenslanders, particularly for those who need their voice amplified—children, families, people with disability, seniors and our culturally and linguistically diverse communities. I look forward to travelling the state this year to witness firsthand the incredible and important work taking place across my portfolio responsibilities.

### **Tourism Industry**




**Hon. MP HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Sport) (9.54 am): I am honoured also to stand before the House as the new Minister for Tourism and Sport in the Miles government. I may be a new minister, but I have had a lifetime of experience in sport and I am a veteran of nearly 40 years experience working in and around the tourism industry. I will be drawing on all of that experience to help our tourism operators get back on their feet following what can only be described as a horrendous summer of natural disasters across our state. I have been out to many of the affected regions and met personally with not just the operators but also the ever-important regional tourism organisations. Their strength and resilience in these tough times is to be admired. There is a long rebuild ahead for many, but I can assure you, Mr Speaker, and the industry that the Miles government will be with them every step of the way.

Already, the Queensland and Australian governments have partnered to deliver more than \$29 million in disaster recovery assistance to tourism operators in the Far North—and this is desperately needed. This targeted funding is supporting the industry to get back to business with: one, exceptional assistance and resilient infrastructure grants; two, discounted flights and accommodation; and, three, campaigns to profile tourism experiences and, most importantly, boost events.

In that light, I am delighted to announce today another new initiative. Virgin Australia and Tourism and Events Queensland are bringing discounted flights to the Whitsundays, Townsville and Cairns. From today, Aussies can snap up big discounts on Virgin Australia flights to Queensland from a range of destinations with over 300,000 seats on sale, starting at retail prices as cheap as \$69. This Virgin Australia sale gives travellers even more reason to have a holiday in the Far North where tourism is the lifeblood of those economies. We know tourism employs as many as one in three people in the Whitsundays and one in five in the Cairns region.

Severe weather events also affected the Gold Coast and Townsville. We recognised that they also needed a lot of assistance because the impact on the Australia Day long weekend trade was significant. We have backed our tourism operators in these regions also. We have been rolling out the incredibly popular Gold Coast Summer FUNds initiative on the Gold Coast, while Tourism and Events Queensland's Unmissable Holiday Deals campaign is shining a spotlight on Townsville and the Whitsundays. Queensland is open for business. The best way to help the tourism industry recover is to book a holiday in this wonderful part of our state. If you are dreaming of a tropical getaway, the welcome mat is well and truly out. Come on up; we would love to see you.

### Health System, Performance; Syphilis

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.57 am): Over the past few weeks Queenslanders have seen several batches of data released about their health system. It is good news. I want to take the opportunity to thank our incredibly hardworking frontline doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, allied health professionals and all of our hardworking health staff. Because of them and their efforts, Queensland has been ranked the best in the country for elective surgery and treating patients within clinically recommended times. Our emergency department wait times are the second-best in the country.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** Just wait for it, Leader of the Opposition: the Queensland Ambulance Service has the best response times in the country. It is the only service that is free in mainland Australia and that will not change under this government. Ambulances are arriving sooner and patients are reporting better experiences.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Buderim and member for Everton, you will cease your interjections.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** You do not have to take my word for it, Mr Speaker; you can take the Productivity Commission's word for it. Through our Queensland Health big build, we are delivering thousands more hospital beds to keep up with our rapidly growing population. In fact, our 7.1 per cent increase in hospital beds is the envy of the nation, because New South Wales has gone backwards by three per cent and Victoria has grown by only 0.3 per cent in the same period.

Now that our satellite hospital data is being published through our Queensland Health performance website, Queenslanders can see firsthand what an impact they are having. Around 28,000 patients presented at a satellite hospital last quarter, resulting in a 13 per cent decrease in less urgent presentations at our emergency departments. Our satellite hospitals are working. Queenslanders are voting with their feet. The data is very clear: our doctors and nurses are helping to deliver one of the best hospital systems in the country. That is why we continue to back them with more staff, more beds and more health infrastructure to ensure they have what they need to continue caring for Queenslanders.

Mr Speaker, on a different note, I want to put three names to you: a genius German composer, a ruthless Chicago gangster and a legendary Irish poet and playwright. What do these men—Beethoven, Al Capone and Oscar Wilde—all have in common? Unfortunately, all of them were suspected of having contracted and in some cases dying of syphilis.

I know that STIs and sexual health are not topics we often like to discuss, but when public safety is at risk it is so important that leaders of our community engage in this conversation. That is our responsibility. The fact is that in Queensland we are seeing a concerning surge in syphilis cases, including a record 1,300 cases last year. In Queensland, notifications have increased from 200 cases in 2008 to 1,365 cases last year. If left untreated, syphilis can pose serious health risks. That is why the Miles Labor government is investing in a new five-year Queensland Syphilis Action Plan, backed by an initial \$1 million investment. The key aim is to eliminate congenital syphilis by 2028 and reduce syphilis across the state. Congenital syphilis is a devastating form of syphilis passed on to an unborn baby during pregnancy or at the time of birth and can result in miscarriage, stillbirth or serious health problems. Key actions of the plan include more resources for education and awareness, strengthening regional contact tracing to ensure faster identification and notification, and establishing dedicated positions to support women at risk through pregnancy. This will make a real difference to combating infections.

Queenslanders can play their part by remaining vigilant, practising safe sex and getting tested. Beethoven, Al Capone and Oscar Wilde once had to have their syphilis treated with mercury. Today it is just as easy as penicillin—because, if there is one thing you do not want to be giving your partner this Valentine's Day, it's syphilis!

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable members. I have nothing.

### **Taskforce Guardian; Police Services, Polair**



**Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (10.01 am): The Queensland Police Service is relentless in targeting those who wish to cause harm in the community. Police adopt innovative operational strategies to disrupt and prevent crime. Taskforce Guardian is one such example. Taskforce Guardian is a dedicated flying squad of experienced officers, working alongside hardworking local police and youth justice personnel.

The taskforce is deployed on an intelligence-driven basis to target hardcore youth offending. The group deployments across the state to date include Townsville, Cairns, Ipswich, Logan, Toowoomba, South Brisbane, Mount Isa and Rockhampton. The teams focusing on youth crime have charged over 800 young people with almost 2,700 offences ranging from stealing to unlawful use of motor vehicles, burglary, assault and robbery.

While even one instance of criminal offending is one too many, yesterday, as a result of the collective efforts of police, Youth Justice, other partner agencies and the community, the Queensland Police Service in Toowoomba released new information showing that youth crime in the Darling Downs district has decreased by 16 per cent and the number of offenders has declined by 15 per cent. Police advise that these results are off the back of the hard work of all partner agencies in the community but also associated with the operational efforts of Taskforce Guardian and the extreme high visibility of police patrols funded by this government under Operation Whiskey Unison.

Police advise that, also thanks to Taskforce Guardian's activities in Townsville, in recent times there has been a substantial reduction in car theft and robberies. Police advise there has been a 50 per cent reduction in car theft by youth offenders and a 70 per cent reduction in violent crime and robberies associated with youth offenders.

As a result of a request by the Queensland Police Service, for the first time another important innovation in the north of our state has been the Miles government's investment in a Polair helicopter that is based in Townsville. The Miles government acted immediately when the Queensland Police Service requested this for the first time—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left, the minister is making what I am hearing as a factual ministerial statement. I ask you to hear that statement, as I would like to.


**Mr RYAN:** The Miles government acted immediately when the Queensland Police Service asked for the first time for this asset in North Queensland. We are the first government to fund a permanent Polair in Townsville. Townsville's Polair capability became operational in December. Since then the aircraft has been deployed on more than 20 occasions for over 70 flight hours.

Some of the successful deployments include that in December the helicopter: provided immediate success in identifying and locating a vehicle of interest and supporting ground crews; assisted in tracking a male person who had run from police and assisted with the locating of that person,

who was then arrested and charged; assisted in searching large areas to find missing people; and assisted in the tracking of occupants from a crashed stolen vehicle. In addition, the helicopter conducted a surveillance flight in February at the request of the Townsville CIB to find a stolen boat on a rural property. Finally, the helicopter was recently utilised to track a male who allegedly ran from police, providing advice to police crews on the ground to keep them safe and result in a quick arrest.

I take this opportunity to commend the Queensland Police Service in every corner of this state. They are working relentlessly to support community safety and they have the support of this government. The government will always invest in the personnel and resources our police need to keep the community safe.

### Energy Industry

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Premier) (10.06 am): Today my government will introduce legislation to lock in our emissions reductions target of 75 per cent by 2035, as well as the existing target of 30 per cent by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. As I said yesterday, 75 by '35 will support industry growth, attract more investment and generate good jobs, especially in Queensland's regions. It builds on the momentum and progress our state has achieved already.

We have already hit a 29 per cent reduction on 2005 levels, putting us on track to exceed our 2030 target of 30 per cent. This shows we can do it, because of our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. It is a landmark plan that maps our transition to renewable energy and charts Queensland's big energy build, with \$19 billion invested over the next four years supporting thousands of jobs in Rockhampton, Gladstone, Townsville, Mount Isa, Cairns, Kingaroy and everywhere in between to build assets that Queenslanders own such as CopperString—a \$5 billion high-voltage transmission line connecting Mount Isa and Townsville, unlocking more than half a trillion dollars in clean energy and critical mineral opportunities—and the world's largest pumped hydro plan for Pioneer-Burdekin and another at Borumba.


Our government has helped connect the largest solar farm in Australia to the SuperGrid. It has the capacity to power 235,000 Queensland homes. We are progressing major wind projects like the Wambo and MacIntyre wind farms so we can power even more Queensland homes with cheaper, cleaner renewable energy. Just last month I announced \$179 million for stages 3 and 4 of our local network connected batteries program. This funding will deliver 12 new network batteries that will convert the power from rooftop solar into clean energy at times of peak demand, building on the 17 in delivery as part of stages 1 and 2 of the program.

Under our Energy and Jobs Plan big build, this year we are starting construction on stage 2 of the Wambo Windfarm, the Boulder Creek Windfarm and the Brigalow hydrogen-ready gas-peaking plant. There will be many more projects to come this year. We know that more projects like these will push down the wholesale price of power. A recent report by the Australian Energy Market Operator shows that renewables are more regularly pushing the spot price of power below zero. That shows our transition to net zero is working as it should—cutting energy prices. Those savings should be passed on to Queensland families. The latest consumer price index data shows that Brisbane has the lowest energy prices on the east coast thanks to our cost-of-living rebates.

A clean economy also pays dividends for our environment. That is why I am pleased our government continues to expand our protected areas. Two more properties totalling 200,000 hectares have been secured near Longreach and Winton. They will make a major contribution to protecting the headwaters of the Queensland section of the Lake Eyre basin. This acquisition takes our protected areas to over 14.51 million hectares. That is bigger than England, bigger than Greece, and it is more than two whole Tasmanias—just in protected areas, just in Queensland.

I am proud of the work we are doing to preserve Queensland's environment for the next generation, reduce our emissions contribution, slow climate change and power Queensland on the sun, wind and water we have in abundance, and delivering a bigger, brighter Queensland for our children and our children's children—something only a Labor government can and will do.

### Queensland Women's Week

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (10.11 am): With March fast approaching, I am delighted to update the House on this year's theme for Queensland Women's Week. The theme 'Count Her In' is all about including women in everything we do, whether it is health, housing or supporting families with the cost of living. I would encourage all members of parliament to make sure they always count women in,

because I think we should be able to agree that in 2024 counting women in is a universal, non-controversial idea. It is something that everyone in this place should champion, because thankfully the days of Parliament House being one big old boys' club is long gone—or is it?

I must say, I was very surprised to see one of the longest-serving members in this House yesterday hark back to days gone by. Yesterday morning the member for Surfers Paradise enlightened us all with an Instagram selfie video talking about his colleagues—'da boyz', as he put it. That is right; there was a video in the Strangers' dining room literally describing his party as a boys' club. This is parliament, not a frat house. Sadly, I think it is safe to say that no women were counted in in the filming of that video or even the decision to post it online.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left, the minister is making a ministerial statement. You may not like—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am giving a ruling, members. You will be very careful to not interrupt me. The minister is making a ministerial statement. You may not like the content of the statement, but you will hear the statement.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** For his part, the member for Bonney told the member for Surfers Paradise that he believes some might say he has spent too long in this place. After seeing the video yesterday I might well agree.

## NOTICES OF MOTION

### Miles Labor Government



**Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (10.14 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

- (a) notes the concern throughout Far North Queensland at the increased incidence of crime, failure by the government to combat cost-of-living increases and the government's inability to address the region's health crisis; and
- (b) calls on the members for Barron River, Cairns and Cook to support their communities to ensure laws favour victims rather than offenders, the state government reduces the pressure its own activities impose on cost-of-living increases and adopt policies that restore health services throughout the region.

### Olympic and Paralympic Games



**Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (10.14 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House endorses immediate action against the Brisbane 2032 Summer Olympics ('the Brisbane Olympics'), namely by:

1. immediately commencing the necessary steps to cancel the Brisbane Olympics and redirect the \$7 billion of funds towards improving state government services and infrastructure and nation-building projects in regional Queensland.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

**Mr SPEAKER:** Question time will conclude today at 11.15 am.

### Callide Power Station, Ministerial Responsibility



**Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.15 am): My question is to the Premier. Is it acceptable that after 994 days the energy minister does not know what went wrong at the Callide power plant?

**Mr MILES:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. I know that the energy minister has been working hard to ensure that CS Energy gets that generator back up and running. I know that yesterday the minister addressed this at length in an eight-minute ministerial statement.

Yesterday CS Energy met its commitment, which was to release the technical findings of that incident involving the C4 generation unit. They have committed to release this information to provide guidance both here and overseas to help its industry ensure this kind of incident does not happen again and, most importantly, that no-one ever gets hurt in an incident like this. I think the one heartening outcome from this incident is that no-one was hurt. I understand the minister was briefed yesterday by the CS Energy board. They released some material yesterday and there will be more to come.

The detailed report that Dr Sean Brady is undertaking has not yet been provided to government. The minister has expressed his disappointment at how long that is taking. I understand the minister has written to CS Energy to give them a firm deadline on the provision of that report from Dr Brady, and we look forward to making as much of it public as we can.

### **Callide Power Station, Ministerial Responsibility**

**Mr CRISAFULLI:** My question is to the Premier. Professor Coaldrake's report called out ministers being kept in the dark for plausible deniability. The energy minister's diary shows that the minister met with CS Energy 25 times over the past two years, including 14 with Labor heavyweight Jim Soorley. Is it the Premier's expectation that a minister can sit in 25 meetings and still not know what caused the power plant to fail?

**Mr MILES:** The energy minister is a very talented minister but he is not a forensic engineer. In fact, as far as I know, no-one in this chamber is a forensic engineer. Dr Sean Brady is the forensic engineer and it is his job to identify what happened and notify CS Energy. It is CS Energy's job to notify their shareholding ministers. I am advised—

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

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

**Mr MILES:** I am advised that CS Energy has not received that report and therefore the implication of the member's question is misleading.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Kawana and the member for Nanango are both warned under the standing orders.

**Mr MILES:** The implication in the member's question that CS Energy are withholding information from the minister to provide him with deniability is misleading and offensive. The fact is: CS Energy do not have that report. When they get that report, they will provide it to the minister.

The Leader of the Opposition also asked me about my expectation of ministers. The fact that this minister has met with that GOC I think it was 25 times demonstrates just how hard he is working and just how actively he is doing his job.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

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

**Mr MILES:** We will continue to get that generator back online, but I make this point: it would not be being rebuilt if those opposite had sold it off. The member for Clayfield shakes his head, but it was his plan to sell it off. No private operator would be rebuilding it. We are rebuilding it because we can because it is in public hands—

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

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

**Mr Nicholls:** He is talking to me.

**Mr MILES:**—because the people of Queensland made the right decision in 2015.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I remind members that their comments need to be directed through the chair and I will then determine whether the interjection is unruly or not.

### **Energy Industry**

**Ms KING:** My question is of the Premier. Can the Premier please update Queenslanders on how the Miles government is taking the opportunity of decarbonising our Queensland economy to secure existing jobs and create new industries across Queensland, and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr MILES:** I thank the member for Pumicestone for her question. I know that the people of Pumicestone love their rooftop solar. I know that they are looking forward to getting more community batteries so they can get even more rooftop solar. The fact is that, no matter where you are in Queensland—whether that is on Bribie Island or in Gladstone, Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville,

Cairns or the state's Far North—right across this state investors are looking to Queensland to create the clean energy jobs of the future. They are doing that because they have certainty of our pathway to decarbonise our energy system.

The renewable Energy and Jobs Plan has given those investors the confidence to come here and invest in Queensland over other places. The interest is enormous. Soon we will open the world's biggest electrolyser factory in Gladstone; it is a massive electrolyser factory. In fact, just QA testing the electrolyzers off that plant will produce more hydrogen than the rest of Australia currently produces—by just testing the electrolyzers.

We have got the Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct in Cairns taking off. We have SAF manufacturers looking to places like Mackay and Wide Bay, and the Minister for State Development outlined some progress there today as well. We have the whole world looking at the North West Minerals Province and the critical minerals that will be extracted from there to help the whole world decarbonise. That is going to be absolutely critical. Those same investors tell us that they would invest more, they would bring more capital here and they will create more jobs here if they have even more certainty about our pathway to net zero emissions. That is why today we are legislating that pathway—because those investors have said that they will create more jobs here in Queensland if they have certainty about how we intend to reduce our emissions. That is why that pathway to net zero is so critical; that 75 per cent by 2035 target is so critical.

While some of those opposite deny that the energy revolution is happening, while some of those opposite make plans to build nuclear power plants at Bribie Island or on the Sunshine Coast or all over the state, while the Leader of the Opposition tries his best to never take a position on any of this, we on this side of the House will use this parliament to deliver global investor certainty to create the clean energy jobs of the future right here.

### **Callide Power Station, Ministerial Responsibility**

**Mr BLEIJIE:** My question is to the Premier. Nearly 1,000 days ago the Callide power plant failed. Since then the government has missed seven dates to fix it, the energy minister has met with the power plant owners 25 times and now there are court cases brought on by the federal regulator. Is the Premier concerned that the first the energy minister knew about the report on why the Callide power plant failed was when he watched a video yesterday?

**Mr MILES:** Can I clarify for the benefit of the member for Kawana—and I thank him for his question—that the first the minister knew about the causes of the incident were the first report that was provided in October 2021, which I am happy to table for the benefit of the House.

*Tabled paper:* Report by the Australian Energy Market Operator, dated October 2021, titled 'Trip of multiple generators and lines in Central Queensland and associated under-frequency load shedding on 25 May 2021: Reviewable Operating Incident Report under the National Electricity Rules' [\[180\]](#).

You are right: there is an ongoing forensic investigation. We have said consistently that we would prefer to see that forensic investigation concluded sooner, but we cannot control the time frames of the investigator. We have put a deadline on CS Energy to provide that report, and we will make as much of that public as we possibly can, and the minister has indicated that.

I know that members of the House will be interested in this because there has been a fair bit of commentary—particularly from those opposite—around whether CS Energy were adequately maintaining the generator. There was an implication and an accusation that CS Energy had been directed to cut back their spending on that maintenance. I can advise the House that they were directed to cut back on maintenance spending. Their shareholder ministers told them, 'As a guide, you should be looking to reduce expenditure by at least \$74 million in 2012-13.' That letter, which is dated 6 September 2012, was signed by Mark McArdle and none other than the member for Clayfield, Mr Tim Nicholls. If anyone in this House should be explaining why CS Energy at points in time cut back on spending on maintenance, it should be those opposite because, just like with everything else, they told them they had to cut.

### **Cost of Living**

**Mr KELLY:** My question is of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Miles Labor government is helping Queenslanders with cost-of-living pressures, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for Greenslopes for his question. As the member for Greenslopes knows, our Energy and Jobs Plan is already delivering the cheapest power in the country. We are proud of that because we are putting more renewables into the power system in Queensland. Even so, we know that national cost-of-living pressures are still weighing heavily on Queenslanders. Those pressures come from global forces but they end up in the homes of Queensland families.

That is why we put in place the biggest electricity bill relief plan in the country, with rebates of \$550 for every Queensland household and rebates of more than \$1,000 for 600,000 disadvantaged households and pensioners. That is why we have frozen car rego and frozen public transport fares. That is why we are giving Queenslanders free kindy and free TAFE. It is why the Premier and I have called on the Reserve Bank to stop raising interest rates and to start reducing. That is something that is supported by every Queensland—well, almost. The LNP leader never misses an opportunity to whinge and to whine, and he did that on interest rates. I apologise, Mr Speaker—he is not the Leader of the Opposition; he is the ‘Queensland premier-elect’. That is the arrogance of the Leader of the Opposition—the ‘Queensland premier-elect’. Happy Valentine’s Day to the Leader of the Opposition. If there is one person he is in love with, it is himself. Why do we know that? It is not only Valentine’s Day. I would say happy birthday to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Premier, I ask for the benefit of the House for you to please use members’ correct titles.

**Mr DICK:** I say happy birthday to the Leader of the Opposition because today is his third birthday. It is the third birthday of the Leader of the Opposition bragging that he was not just going to win the next election, he was ‘going to win big’. They were his words. He said that three years ago—again, arrogance writ large.

The one thing that the Leader of the Opposition should do is listen to the people of Queensland. They will not listen on public ownership of public assets. You would think the LNP would have learned their lesson about attacking publicly owned power stations, but they have started again today. Yesterday CS Energy gave an extensive technical response to what exactly happened during the Callide incident, but a publicly owned generator is never good enough for the LNP. Why? Because they want to sell them. The attacks continue. Why do they not ask the same questions of the Millmerran Power Station that had an outage? It is because it is privately owned—that is the truth. They will not attack a privately owned power station, but they will attack a publicly owned power station because—this is what they want to do—they want to talk it down and rip \$74 million out of it so they can put it on the market to sell. We believe in public ownership for public assets.

*(Time expired)*

### **Callide Power Station, Ministerial Responsibility**

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** My question is to the Premier. Power prices in Queensland are up 20 per cent in the past year, yet the minister did not share with Queenslanders why Callide failed over almost 1,000 days ago. On seven occasions, deadlines to fix the Callide Power Station were missed, which would have helped lower those power prices. Given this track record, why did the Premier reappoint and promote the energy minister?

**Mr MILES:** I thank the member for Nanango for her question. I really did not see the day coming when the LNP was silly enough to come in here and talk about power prices. Does anyone remember? Does anyone remember how much they put power prices up? I think it was forty-something—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr MILES:** How much?

**A government member:** Forty-three per cent.

**Mr MILES:** Forty-three per cent was how much the government you were part of put power prices up. Then you wanted to sell them all off.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Premier, may I ask you to please direct your comments through the chair and not at those opposite.

**Mr MILES:** I am sorry. Those opposite have no credibility when it comes to power prices. We could not have succeeded in delivering the lowest power prices along the eastern seaboard if Queenslanders had not made the right decision and voted against the member for Clayfield’s plan to sell off all of our electricity generators. Because we own them, we are able to deliver those lower prices, and that is precisely what we will continue to do. They come in here and talk about Callide without ever



talking about the power station they closed. Let us not forget, power prices are cheaper now because we reopened Swanbank E which those opposite closed. While on this side of the House we have a strong record of managing our power system for stability and for lower prices, those opposite have no credibility to stand on.

### State Development

**Mr WALKER:** My question is of the Minister for State Development and Infrastructure. Can the minister update the House on the work being undertaken by the Miles government to develop and support the industries of the future, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms GRACE:** I thank the member for Mundingburra for the question. He knows that it is only a Labor government that has a vision for new industries in this state. There is absolutely nothing from those opposite about where they are going to take this state. There is plenty of it here. The members for Mundingburra, Thuringowa and Townsville know what is happening in North Queensland and what we are delivering with major businesses in this country, and it is outstanding. As I said previously, we only buy sustainable fuel from overseas. We do not produce it anywhere in Australia. Let me tell you, Queensland is leading the charge to produce it right here in this state. That is an absolutely outstanding move by this government and the regional jobs that come with it—1,000 construction jobs and 100 operational jobs that will be there forever. I remind the House that when we came to government, the unemployment rate in Townsville, with the closing of some of those other refineries—they were closing down industries—was around 13.8 per cent or 13.4, or something, per cent. Do you know what it is today? It is 3.4 per cent and there are more jobs to come. When it comes to cost of living, you know the best thing you can do for cost of living for your household? It is to have a job. We have been producing it in this state in absolute spades.

In our regions especially, we want the hydrogen industry that the Premier spoke about, we want the batteries, the critical minerals, the renewable energy manufacturing and bioenergy and, of course, we want the sustainable aviation fuel industry. It is all part of our future, but our future is at risk if those opposite ever get to this side of the House. The pamphlet they walk around with—the whingeing, whining one about everything that is wrong with Queensland—contains no vision whatsoever.

The Leader of the Opposition thinks he is the premier-elect already. I notice that that little notice was torn down. We tried to find it again, but, no, it has come down off the site. The Leader of the Opposition thinks by walking around with a whingeing and whining document with no vision for the future of this state, he is—what did he say?—premier-elect. They are also under the other delusion that the member for Everton is going to have all those social housing residents love him, as he suggested yesterday. They are delusional. Only this government will deliver the industries of the future, the jobs of the future, and the Miles government is proud of it.

*(Time expired)*

### Callide Power Station, Electricity Prices

**Mr HEAD:** My question is to the Premier. The Callide Power Station has not been fully operational for 995 days. The energy minister claims this outage has not impacted power prices. Is this the government's position?

**Mr MILES:** I thank the member for Callide for his question. I do acknowledge that the energy market is quite complicated, so the poor member for Callide might not be fully across it. However, I can advise the House that Queensland has the lowest energy prices along the eastern seaboard precisely because we have maintained ownership of our generators, we maintain them and we use them to deliver stability and lower prices. That is quite the opposite to how those opposite manage the energy system because—

**Mr POWELL:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). It was a very specific question regarding the government's position on the impact of the Callide Power Station failure on power prices in Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Manager of Opposition Business. This may be one of those rare occasions where asking a very direct question can provide quite a broad answer, given that this is about the government's position.

**Mr MILES:** My contribution goes very much to the government's position because what we will never do is deliberately close power stations because prices became too cheap. The member for Nanango admitted this when she said, 'I understand the oversupplied energy market has forced down

wholesale prices leaving Stanwell with no choice but to close their generators.’ That is what the member for Nanango said. If power prices started to become too cheap, they turned them off. We continue to deliver more and more generation into our energy system and more transmission to make sure the energy generated can be used right throughout the state. The results are the lowest energy prices along the eastern seaboard. We will never be convinced, as those opposite were, that prices have become too cheap and we should turn off some of our generators.

### Cooper Electorate, Energy

**Ms BUSH:** My question is of the Minister for Energy and Clean Economy Jobs. Given the Premier has today announced that he will announce a Clean Economy Jobs Bill to position Queensland for the future, can the minister explain how households in the electorate of Cooper will be supported, and is he aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr de BRENNI:** Working families in the electorate of Cooper know that the member for Cooper and the Miles government are on their side. We are already helping, as members have heard from the Premier today, with nation-leading cost-of-living relief through energy rebates—\$550 for every household in the electorate of Cooper and every electorate across this state, and \$1,072 of support for seniors and pensioners. We are helping families in Cooper with over \$8.4 billion of support to purchase energy-efficient appliances, putting downward pressure on household costs of living.

We know that communities like Cooper are embracing the energy transition. Nearly half of the roofs in places like Bardon and The Gap have embraced rooftop solar. They are world leaders—just like Queensland. Thanks to the advocacy of the member for Cooper, today we will legislate a 75 per cent emissions reduction by 2035. This is real action on climate, putting downward pressure on the cost of living for households in her electorate and creating hundreds of thousands of jobs while we do it. We will ensure households like the ones that the member for Cooper represents are part of this transition, too. That is why we have announced the household Battery Booster program to help families cut the cost of living. This program is open now. A clean economy, help for households and more jobs—we are on the side of Queensland.

What voters in Cooper and, in fact, the rest of Queensland want and deserve to know is: will the Queensland Leader of the Opposition support our plan on climate action? Will the member for Broadwater be a leader on this issue or will he stand up to his rabble of sceptics, deniers and cooks? Will he stand up to, for instance, the member for Burleigh? We remember him inferring that renewable energy would cause another ice age. Will he stand up to his hand-picked candidate for Oodgeroo, who called climate action ‘extreme’? Will he stand up to the member for Glass House, his own Manager of Opposition Business, who said that he doubts humans caused climate change? Will he stand up to his frontbench member for Moggill, who questioned the extent of man’s contribution to climate change, or the member for Clayfield, who said that Queensland families like those in the electorate of Cooper who put solar panels on their rooftops were part of some latte and champagne-sipping set? It is up to the Leader of the Opposition: will he lead for Queenslanders or will he lead for this rabble over here? Whose side is he on?

### Callide Power Station, Ministerial Responsibility

**Mr JANETZKI:** My question is to the Treasurer. The energy minister did not share the cause of the failure at Callide power plant nearly 1,000 days ago. As a shareholding minister, did the Treasurer ever make inquiries into the causes of the Callide power plant failure?

**Mr DICK:** I welcome the member for Toowoomba South back to question time. I want to address the misrepresentation the LNP is making about the cause of the outage and the damage to the generator at Callide.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** I am trying to provide you with a respectful answer, Leader of the Opposition. I want to make it clear: that incident continues to be fully assessed. I, as the Premier has said, am not a forensic engineer; no-one in this House is a forensic engineer. If you look at the video released yesterday you will see that there was a catastrophic failure in that generator. As a shareholding minister, I give thanks every day that no-one was injured—or worse—in that incident.

It continues to be fully assessed. It was a really challenging technical problem that occurred there. That video makes clear the sequence of events that occurred—unprecedented. The assessment is being done by a respected independent forensic engineer. I am not going to talk down Sean Brady—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Members to my left, the Deputy Premier is being responsive to the question as I heard it asked. I would like to hear the answer.

**Mr DICK:** I have heard no-one challenge Dr Brady's expertise, his qualifications or his ability to do this investigation. He should be allowed to do that untrammelled and free of political interference from the LNP. He should be able to take as long as he likes. It does not matter the inquiries the government makes—we have heard how the Minister for Energy is deeply engaged—

**Mr Janetzki** interjected.

**Mr DICK:** If you read the Administrative Arrangements Order, member for Toowoomba South, you will know who the Minister for Energy is in this state and his responsibilities. We will support Dr Brady, we will support this process and we support this investigation continuing. We also support the interim findings that were released yesterday to provide Queenslanders with more information.

**Mr JANETZKI:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). It was a direct question to the Treasurer as to what inquiries he in fact made—not about the CV of Dr Brady. What inquiries did the Treasurer make?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you for your point of order.

**Mrs D'Ath** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Attorney-General, I do not need any coaching in that regard. Treasurer, are you finished your response?

**Mr DICK:** I have.

**Mr Janetzki** interjected.

**Mr Dick** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order, members! I will warn the Treasurer and the member for Toowoomba South for interjecting after I have tried to call the next questioner. The interjection was unnecessary.

### Electricity Prices

**Mr SULLIVAN:** My question is of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. Can the Deputy Premier explain why owning electricity assets is important to maintaining affordable power prices, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr DICK:** I thank the member for Stafford for his question.

**Mr Hart** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Burleigh, you are warned under the standing orders. This is not a House where we wait for an opportunity for a prize interjection.

**Mr DICK:** As the member for Stafford and all members of the government know, our Energy and Jobs Plan is already delivering the cheapest power of any mainland state. That is the truth; they are the numbers. Our Energy and Jobs Plan is delivering the cheapest power of any mainland state, and that is before we apply our nation-leading energy rebates. That is the reality, and we are going to keep that going. Our last budget invests \$19 billion in our energy system, with renewables and transition system upgrades. That is our approach to putting downward pressure on prices.

I am asked by the member for Stafford about alternative approaches. The member for Nanango was talking about energy earlier in question time. What is the record of the member for Nanango and the LNP on energy? On 15 October, the newly elected member for Nanango told her community that her government would suspend the operation of two generators at Tarong Power Station for at least two years. What was the reason for that decision? Why did they cut that power generator? The member for Nanango had the answer. She said—

... the oversupplied energy market—

as the Premier has said—

has forced down wholesale prices, leaving the major local employer with little choice.

This is a person who represents workers at that power station. The LNP wanted prices to go higher. It is no wonder the LNP drove up energy prices in this state by 43 per cent, because the LNP absolutely despise public ownership. They want to close generators; they want to sell generators. Never forget that the Leader of the Opposition—the 'premier-elect', as the LNP like to style him—went to

Kingaroy. What did he tell the workers and the people of Kingaroy? He told them that with the full support of the local member, the member for Nanango, they would have to sell Tarong Power Station to get a new hospital. That is what the Leader of the Opposition said; that is what he did. That is why today they are out there attacking our publicly owned energy generators. It is time the LNP explained what their plan is for energy in Queensland. They cannot hide anymore.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mrs Gerber** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Buderim and member for Currumbin.

**Mr DICK:** They have opened the debate about Callide. It is time they explained what the LNP are going to sell, what generators they will close and why—

**Mrs Gerber** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Currumbin, I have asked you to cease your interjections. You are warned under the standing orders. Member for Buderim, you are skating on thin ice. Do you have anything further to add?

**Mr DICK:** I do. Just to reiterate, it is time for the LNP to explain what they are going to sell and what generators they will close to drive up power prices in Queensland again.

### **Gold Coast University Hospital, Death**

**Ms BATES:** My question is to the Minister for Health. I refer to reports regarding the tragic death of a man last week at the Gold Coast University Hospital emergency department. Can the health minister inform the House what triage category the patient was given and how long the patient was in the waiting room before he was found dead in the bathroom?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I thank the member for Mudgeeraba for the question. I was made aware of an incident involving the sudden death of an elderly gentleman at the Gold Coast University Hospital emergency department last week, and my heart goes out to this man's wife and his family during what is an incredibly difficult time. I am advised that the elderly man was triaged appropriately immediately on arrival to the ED and was in the waiting room no longer than eight minutes before he went to the bathroom and sadly suffered a medical episode. There are functional duress buttons located in the bathrooms at the Gold Coast University Hospital but one was not used. The Gold Coast University Hospital resuscitation team immediately commenced emergency treatment on the man when he was located unresponsive and they continued those resuscitation efforts for around 40 minutes.

This is an incredibly sad incident. I want to thank the hardworking staff at the Gold Coast University Hospital, particularly in the emergency department. It is the biggest emergency department in the country and they work incredibly hard. A review is underway and the findings will be delivered accordingly. Again, I want to pass on my very best wishes to the man's family.

### **Women**

**Ms HOWARD:** My question is of the Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women. Can the minister update the House on how the Miles government is supporting women in Queensland including women's health, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms FENTIMAN:** I thank the member for Ipswich for her question. She is a tremendous advocate for women and girls in her community as are all of the members on this side of the House.

**Mr Miles:** No boys' club here.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** Yes, there is no boys' club here; I take that interjection from the Premier. I am one of the many women MPs who sit in our Labor caucus with a strong track record of supporting women's health and wellbeing.

**Mr Head** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Callide, that was unnecessary. You are warned under the standing orders.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, members to my right. I do not need any assistance.

**Ms FENTIMAN:** We recently received the largest ever response to a government survey with our Women and Girls' Health Strategy with 10,000 responses from women and girls across the state. Of course, we are investing record amounts into maternity care and midwifery group practice. On this side of the House we will always support a woman's right to choose what happens to her own body when it comes to sexual and reproductive health.

Earlier I commented on the member for Surfers Paradise's bizarre and embarrassing boys' club LNP frat house party video. While it is clear that the member for Surfers Paradise was not taking himself too seriously, we all know that with every joke there is a nugget of truth and the truth is that the LNP is a boys' club, plain and simple. Nowhere is this more obvious than when it comes to—

**Mr Lister** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Southern Downs.

**Mr Lister** interjected.

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

**Ms FENTIMAN:** Nowhere is this more obvious than when it comes to women's health because it was the LNP that cut funding to the Queensland Women's Health Network, the Logan Women's Health and Wellbeing Centre and the Wide Bay Women Health Centre. Who could forget when Barnaby Joyce, whilst a senator for his state, said that rolling out the cervical cancer vaccine would lead to promiscuity in young women? Poor old Barnaby; things have really gone downhill since then. Of course, who could forget when Peter Dutton, the leader of the LNP, said that women were 'trying it on' when claiming rape and sexual assault to get into Australia from Nauru? These are the leaders of the LNP.

The Leader of the Opposition here in Queensland has staked his reputation on getting Amanda Stoker elected to this place—a vocal opponent of a woman's right to choose. Who could forget when she accused the member for Nanango of playing the gender card when she was making claims about the boys' club in the LNP. This is the person whom the Leader of the Opposition wants to get into the parliament. These are the women who share his values. It is absolutely time that the LNP stood up for women in this state.

### **Palmerston Highway, Disaster Recovery Arrangements**

**Mr KNUTH:** My question without notice is to the Premier. With recent failures on the state owned Palmerston Highway closing this main arterial route that connects the Tablelands to the coast for two months and large gaps having been exposed in disaster relief funding available to the region, will the Premier initiate a full review across relevant ministerial portfolios to examine all current disaster relief funding to ensure it is fit for all purposes and is accessible to those who desperately need it?

**Mr MILES:** I thank the member for Hill for his question. Throughout Far North Queensland's flooding event I was in contact with the member for Hill talking with him about how it was impacting his communities, particularly the damage to the Palmerston Highway. Every disaster event is different. We learn from every one. What was a bit unusual, if you like, about this particular event is there were a lot of places that did not really experience much of the disaster itself but were impacted by the isolation that came with the damage to the roads. Cape Tribulation in the member for Cook's electorate stands out as well as one of the towns that the member for Hill has been talking to me about that were impacted by the closure of the Palmerston.

Our TMR staff did a great job getting those roads reopened as quickly as they did. The number of landslips, the damage and the engineering challenges were quite incredible. I know the Palmerston is not fully open and it is single lane through various sections, but the fact we have access again is good news. It was only Saturday, 10 February that it was opened. They did a great job there.

I can assure the member for Hill that the conversations that we have had have been fed into consideration of future rounds of disaster funding allocations. The minister has collated those rounds and they will be considered by government and then forwarded to the Australian government for consideration. I am really hopeful that an outcome of that process will be more support for those businesses that the member for Hill has been working with.

We do have some grants and loans available under the earlier rounds of the DRFA but, as I say, they are the more standard packages that we know to activate in every disaster. Because of those unique impacts, this particular disaster has required some assessment of those impacts and then consideration of a future package. We will have more to say, and I give the member for Hill an undertaking that he will be fully briefed and he can keep those communities informed.

### Energy Industry, Environment

**Mr SMITH:** My question is of the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef. Can the minister please advise the House on the importance of bold action on climate change, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

**Ms LINARD:** I thank the member for Bundaberg for his question. As I said in my ministerial statement, a failure to address climate change puts our environment, jobs, our economy and our lifestyle at risk, and we are already bearing the cost of more unpredictable weather events. The Premier referred to some of the issues in his answer to a previous question such as coastal erosion, some isolated bleaching events in our coral reefs, and habitat and species loss. Left unchecked, it will also risk jobs—not just our natural environment but jobs across multiple industries—and further exacerbate the cost of living, whether it is insurance premiums or whether it is the cost of food or fuel.

We must continue as a government to take bold steps right now to respond to this threat for the benefit of future generations of Queenslanders. The member for Bundaberg knows this and his community knows this. One of the most important actions we can take to respond to climate change is to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. The Clean Economy Jobs Bill that our Premier will introduce today will enshrine our ambitious new greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets into law and will build upon the significant work that our government has already undertaken to date.

The member also asked if there were any alternative approaches. Everyone on this side of the House knows that there are, and every single Queenslander needs to know it, too. When the LNP was last in office, it systematically revoked every single program and policy that helped mitigate the impacts of climate change. The LNP were and are environmental vandals. The LNP trashed Queensland's environmental reputation. Let me run through just a few points of what the Leader of the Opposition did to Queensland's environment when he sat around the cabinet table in the LNP government: watered down reef protections; significantly weakened tree-clearing protections; abandoned the waste levy, making Queensland the dumping ground of east coast Australia; axed renewable energy projects; slashed the solar feed-in tariff; sacked close to 500 staff across my department—scientists, compliance staff; cut our climate change programs; and disbanded the Office of Climate Change. Only a Labor government will deliver real action on climate change for all Queenslanders. Those opposite were environmental vandals last time they were in office and every Queenslander should know that they will be again if elected.

### Gabba, Redevelopment

**Mr BERKMAN:** My question is to the Premier. John Coates, Brisbane's Lord Mayor and even Peter Beattie have now joined the Greens campaign against the Gabba demolition. Will the Premier finally listen to Queenslanders and call off the Gabba demolition now?

**Mr MILES:** I thank the member for Maiwar for his question. I understand why the Greens political party wants to make this a political issue for its own electoral advantage, but we certainly will not be. We are focused on delivering the best outcome, and that is why we commissioned Graham Quirk to look at the games master plan and identify for us the best value options, and we will take on board the outcomes of that review. It is a sincere process and I certainly hope that it results in a better plan. I certainly hope that it can deliver for us better value for money and a better outcome for the venues. I certainly hope that it helps us to deliver a better outcome, and that is why we have undertaken this process, as I say, in good faith.

Mr Quirk has a wide remit to look at whatever he thinks should be looked at and make whatever recommendations to us he thinks he should make, so I would not, if I was the member for Maiwar, rush to chalk this up as a victory for the Greens political party. This is an attempt to get the most commonsense outcome. We know the position of the Greens political party on the Olympics. That is well established, and we acknowledge that. It is well known. We support the games. We think the games will be good for our state. We know that Queensland will deliver the best Olympics ever, and they will be even better thanks to the contribution that Graham Quirk is making in working with us on this review.

### North Queensland, Infrastructure

**Ms LUI:** My question is of the Premier. Can the Premier provide an update on the delivery of Queensland's Big Build of infrastructure, including in Far North Queensland, and advise on any alternatives?

**Mr MILES:** I thank the member for Cook for her question. Infrastructure is critical in every part of the state, and especially so in the communities that the member for Cook represents. The member for Cook represents that entire far northern part of the state as well as Torres Strait. Delivering infrastructure is harder there than just about anywhere, but infrastructure can make so much of a difference in places like that—the difference to finally deliver road access or the difference to improve the shipping facilities in those Torres Strait Islands. That means that people can access health care. That means that they can go to visit families in other towns. That means that we can get food to them that is reasonably priced and fresh. I know how passionate the member for Cook is about our Big Build and what it can do in her community. Let us think about the impact those improvements to the Peninsula Developmental Road are making. The impact is quite incredible, changing those communities. We need that kind of enabling infrastructure in every part of our state.

The fact is that we are experiencing record interstate migration and record international migration and that is massively increasing our population. You cannot blame people for moving here; it is a great state, so I understand why people are moving here. We cannot stop people moving here either, so we need to ensure we have houses for them. In order to have houses for them, we also need to build the infrastructure that those houses need, and that is what our Big Build is all about—the biggest infrastructure program in our state's history. It is massive and it is needed.

Every one of the \$96 billion worth of projects is important to Queensland communities. We are building 25 new schools and three new hospitals, as well as our seven satellite hospitals and our hospital expansions. There is that record social housing big build that the housing minister and I have both talked about, and of course there is the Cape York Peninsula Developmental Road, which I mentioned earlier and for which I know the member for Cook is a particularly passionate advocate. All of those infrastructure projects are important, and Queensland communities cannot afford to have them cut, as those opposite have said they would. Cutting those infrastructure projects would leave those communities without the infrastructure they need. That is the risk. That is what is at stake. Only Labor—only this government—will deliver those infrastructure projects.

### Right to Information Request

**Mr HART:** My question is to the Premier. On 15 November, when asked if he provided all information to RTI officers regarding an opposition RTI, the Premier said that he always complies with relevant requirements, but no documents were provided to the RTI office. Given this, can the Premier confirm that he did not send an SMS to the member for Pumicestone between 10 am and 11.30 on 11 October last year during discussions about the health recruit CVs being directed to her office?

**Mr MILES:** I thank the member for Burleigh. I can.

### Youth Co-Responder Program

**Mr TANTARI:** My question is of the Minister for Education and Minister for Youth Justice. Can the minister update the House on the youth co-responder program in the Fraser Coast region, and are there any alternative approaches?

**Ms FARMER:** I thank the member for his question. I know how excited he and the member for Maryborough were when I went there in the middle of last year to launch the Fraser Coast youth co-responder team. It is a fantastic initiative where police and youth justice workers team up, working pretty much 24/7 across 13 locations. They have had over 92,000 contacts across the state, taking high-risk offenders off the streets and diverting them. In the Fraser Coast we have just had an update on the figures and there have been over 1,400 contacts and they are doing absolutely fantastic work.

The youth co-responder teams is one of the half a billion dollars worth of early intervention and prevention initiatives that we are running to address youth crime. It includes initiatives like our intensive case management. We are getting good figures on these programs. I have always said that whatever we do must be based on evidence. If something is not working we will stop doing it. If it is working then we want to do more of it. This is a great example. It is just so important for the community that they know our decisions are based on evidence. We can talk as much rhetoric as we like to make the community feel better, but unless we have something behind it we are really doing a disservice to those victims.

Speaking of rhetoric, we know who the experts are in this state and it is the LNP. They have their little document, they have their three slogans and 13 words that are going to magically wipe away youth crime from across Queensland. They have spent thousands of hours, as the premier-elect has said, all across the state and in their speeches talking about these three slogans, but it is impossible to get

anything out of them about what they are going to do and what those slogans mean. Fortunately, we have the LNP candidate for Hervey Bay. He is so helpful. He is able to give us more detail on what the LNP wants. We heard he wants to bulldoze the TAFE up there. He has told us what they want to do is introduce boot camps again. Some people like boot camps, but it is actually specifically the boot camps that the deputy premier-elect personally picked to run when they were in government. These were the people who ran the boot camps. Out of the 12 applicants for the tenders, they picked No. 10. They were not recommended at all. In fact, the panel actually said their submission lacked clarity and explanation, that they did not show an understanding of early intervention. The deputy premier-elect picked them.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am going to ask you to use members' correct titles.

**Ms FARMER:** The member picked them especially. There was a 65 per cent likelihood they would reoffend—

*(Time expired)*

### Small-Claim Mining

**Mr MILLAR:** My question is to the Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals. In November 2023 I wrote to the minister inviting him to visit the gem fields and the Winton opal fields in my electorate to meet small-claim miners. I have not received a response. Given that the minister is finalising legislation to introduce the most significant and sweeping reforms in the history of small-claim mining in Queensland, will the minister commit to visiting both fields to meet with small-claim miners?

**Mr STEWART:** I thank the member for Gregory for his question. I thank the member for Condamine for his work as the shadow for the last three years. He has conducted himself very professionally. In answering your question, member for Gregory, the Miles government stands behind the mining industry in this state. It particularly recognises the great contribution that it makes to the living standards of all Queenslanders. We know how successful and how popular the coalmining royalties are. This includes the small-scale mining sector. Anyone operating a small-scale mine who is doing the right thing will be able to continue to do the right thing. In other words, if they are doing the right thing with their mining they will be able to continue.

Queenslanders have the rightful expectation that anyone operating a mining lease is acting in accordance with those regulations that are in place. As part of the consultation process for our Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan, a significant number of stakeholders raised concerns that the low cost of entry into the industry has attracted a few miners who are not meeting those legislative requirements on their mining lease. The compliance team in my department has witnessed some problematic behaviours, including the erection of unlawful permanent housing structures on some of those mining leases.

**Mr MILLAR:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under 118(b). The question I asked was: will the minister commit to coming to the opal fields in Winton and the gem fields?

**Mr SPEAKER:** The minister still has one minute and 37 seconds to provide you with an answer.

**Mr STEWART:** Outlining the context of this and the work that we are currently doing is certainly part of the consultation process with those particular miners that we have undertaken and will continue to undertake. In fact, because of the various locations that the member for Gregory has outlined in this House in his question, bringing together those small-claim miners can be difficult, so in fact we have done Zoom meetings with those particular people. I also remember my time when I was out at Springsure, which is just up the road from those gem fields. I spent a little bit of time out there kicking the dirt and talking with people as well so I do have a little bit of an understanding in that space and the environment in which they work. As I said, this is about the consultation process that we have done on many occasions, particularly by the department, to ensure that we get—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Minister, I have allowed you to round out your answer. I would ask that you do come back to the question as asked.

**Mr STEWART:** As I said, we will continue to do the consultation about the implications for these small-claim mines and we will continue to meet with and listen to them, including my visits out to the council and discussing with them their concerns.

**Opposition members** interjected.

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



**Mr SPEAKER:** Whilst you are trying to take a point of order, the period for question time will expire. I am trying to see if the minister will answer your question.

**Mr MILLAR:** He is not.


**Mr SPEAKER:** You are not assisting the process, member.

**Mr STEWART:** We have done the consultation. We will continue to do consultation and I hope to get out to the highlands many times.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The period for question time has expired. If you are leaving the chamber, I would ask you to do so quietly.

## CLEAN ECONOMY JOBS BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Premier) (11.17 am): I present a bill for an act to provide for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Queensland by stating emissions reduction targets and for related purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Clean Economy Jobs Bill 2024 [\[181\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Clean Economy Jobs Bill 2024, explanatory notes [\[182\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Clean Economy Jobs Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[183\]](#).

This is a bill that sets up Queensland's economy for the next century by securing blue collar jobs in our regions, in both existing industries and in new ones. It is a bill to protect the Great Barrier Reef and our natural environment for future generations. The Clean Economy Jobs Bill 2024 sets a clear emissions reduction target of 75 per cent on 2005 levels by 2035—a responsible, credible and critical target on the path to net zero emissions by 2050. The 75 by '35 emissions reduction target positions Queensland as a world leader on the pathway to net zero—a target that continues Queensland's record of having reduced more tonnes of emissions than any other state or territory. Without Queensland, Australia would not have met our Kyoto targets and now we are setting out our plan to lead the nation on emissions reduction to 2035 to meet the Paris targets. It is a target for Queensland to take the lead and a target that is responsible by supporting our existing industries to create more jobs and succeed.

When our government sets targets we act and we deliver. Our government is delivering a nation-leading investment in the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, investing \$19 billion over the next four years to deliver 70 per cent renewable energy by 2032 and 80 per cent by 2035. Since coming to government we have already taken renewable energy in Queensland from just seven per cent to 26 per cent. There were no large-scale renewable wind or solar farms in Queensland before we came to government. Now Queensland is on the path to become Australia's and our region's renewable energy superpower. There are now 52 built or committed large-scale wind and solar farms, including the largest solar farm in the nation on the Western Downs. Soon one of the largest onshore wind farms in the world will be completed at MacIntyre. To date we have supported \$11 billion of investment in renewables and 8,500 construction jobs.

We have achieved one million solar rooftop installations, ahead of any other state in Australia. We have installed 20,000 solar panels across 912 schools to power air conditioning in every classroom. We have started early works on the CopperString 2032 project to connect the largest renewable energy zone on the east coast of Australia, with half a trillion dollars of critical minerals. Geotechnical drilling has started on the generational pumped hydro projects that will allow solar energy to be stored during the day and used through the night to power Queensland. We are not stopping there, with projects under development to create a new hydrogen industry to export our renewable energy to the world. We have already achieved a 29 per cent reduction in emissions on 2005 levels. This bill will send a signal to the world that Queensland is determined to attract investment, protect existing jobs and attract new jobs to our state.

Personally, I first became interested in climate change in 2007, when Kim was expecting our son Sam. To be honest, until then I was a bit dismissive of conservation issues. Instead, I was more motivated by social and economic justice concerns—the kinds of topics members have heard me talk a lot about lately: education, opportunity, housing, jobs and cost of living. I came to realise then, though, that climate change threatened the opportunities, jobs and lives I wanted for our future family. Since then, it has been an essential political objective for me. Now, as the state's Premier, I think it is important to protect not just my children's future but the future of all Queenslanders.

Queensland is already the most disaster-affected state. We have experienced more than 100 disasters since 2011. They are the kinds of disasters that we know will be more regular and more intense as average temperatures increase. Those who live in the Torres Strait or whose livelihood depends on the Great Barrier Reef have lived experience of what the impacts of climate change mean for their lives and the lives of their children and grandchildren. If action is delayed now then the chances of preventing irreversible climate change become very slim. Last year was the world's warmest year on record, with average temperatures 1.45 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial baseline. If we do not cut emissions, Queensland will experience more cyclones, more heatwaves, more floods, higher sea levels and more fires. That is not a future I want for our children and our grandchildren. The targets we are setting to reduce emissions by 75 per cent by 2035 are based on science and meeting internationally agreed targets. More importantly, they will provide industry with the certainty to invest in converting existing industry to renewables and attracting new industries here.

These targets are crucial to lock in the investment needed for our economic future. This bill proposes to establish the Clean Economy Expert Panel to support the development of sector-based plans: plans to secure ongoing global investment in our manufacturing, agriculture and resources industries; plans to work towards 24-hour renewable energy to power existing heavy industries and for reshoring manufacturing across our regions; a plan to assist our agricultural producers to capture the economic benefits from natural capital and carbon farming and to access low-emission fertilisers; a plan to support lower emission technologies and capture emissions from existing mines for steelmaking coal to make them the most efficient in the world; a plan to work with the expertise from our natural gas industry to grow a new green hydrogen industry; and a plan to support vehicle fleets to move to zero emissions and create even more local manufacturing jobs in the electric vehicle supply chain.

We have already locked in significant investments towards making this happen with our \$500 million Land Restoration Fund and our \$520 million Low Emissions Investment Partnerships program. Through our historic investment of over \$262 million in protected areas, we have now increased our protected areas to over 14.5 million hectares. We will work in partnership with the Albanese government on further funding support because, like us, they have set a clear target for emissions reduction and clear ambitions for seizing the economic opportunity of decarbonisation.

Our sector-based plans and 75 by '35 target will do more than just secure the future of our existing industries. They will unlock new industries in Queensland: creating new jobs in renewable manufacturing; building on our success in securing the green energy manufacturing centre for hydrogen electrolyzers in Gladstone; unlocking a new battery manufacturing industry in Queensland supported by our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan and our Queensland Battery Industry Strategy; unlocking the next resources boom in critical minerals like vanadium, copper and high-purity alumina that the world needs for renewable energy and electric vehicles; and setting up new renewable energy export industries in hydrogen and sustainable aviation fuel.

Queensland is the Sunshine State. We have some of the best solar resources in the world combined with some of the best onshore wind resources. We have the Great Dividing Range with world-class sites for pumped hydro and we have regions that were built to export resources for the second industrial revolution. Now we are perfectly positioned for Queensland to be a world leader in the clean energy industrial revolution. The targets we begin legislating today lay down the framework and provide the investment certainty to make this happen, to provide high-paying, generational clean energy jobs across our regions and also in the south-east. It will provide the opportunity for more young people to stay living in the regions where they grew up, in exciting careers, creating a better future not only for Queensland but also for the world.

This bill will provide the framework for clean economy jobs. It will enshrine in law Queensland's emissions reduction targets of 30 per cent by 2030, 75 per cent by 2035 and net zero in 2050. It will require interim emissions reduction targets for 2040 and 2045 to be set out 10 years in advance. We will develop sector-based emissions reduction plans for achieving the targets and we will require annual reporting to the Queensland parliament on our progress. Finally, we will establish the Clean Economy Expert Panel.

This bill is important. If the world is to reach net zero by 2050, Queensland needs to play our part. The prosperity of our environment, our community and our economy depends on it. Our trading partners, particularly those in Europe, the United States and North-East Asia, are demanding that the places they trade with act responsibly and send them products with a minimised carbon footprint. That is why responsible emissions targets are essential to jobs in our existing industries like mining, agriculture and manufacturing, and they are the key to creating more jobs in new industries like hydrogen, critical minerals and sustainable aviation fuel.

By legislating these targets, we will create certainty for industry and for jobs. By legislating these targets, we are making a clear statement to the world that Queensland is the place to do business if you are looking to use clean energy. By working together, we can create a golden age of opportunity for Queensland. Whether you live in one of our regional cities and are concerned about keeping blue-collar jobs in your region, you live in the inner city and are worried about climate change or you work on a farm and experience the ravages of natural disasters, reducing our emissions is crucial to creating a shared and prosperous future. I am proud to be introducing this bill today. I commend the Minister for Energy and Clean Economy Jobs for helping to prepare it.

### First Reading

**Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Premier) (11.29 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 Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee.

## BUILDING INDUSTRY FAIRNESS (SECURITY OF PAYMENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

### Introduction

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works) (11.29 am): I present a bill for an act to amend the Architects Act 2002, the Building Act 1975, the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Act 2017, the Plumbing and Drainage Act 2018, the Professional Engineers Act 2002 and the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act 1991 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee to consider the bill.

*Tabled paper:* Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 [\[184\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, explanatory notes [\[185\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[186\]](#).

I am pleased to rise to introduce the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. This is a bill for Queensland's building and construction industry—an industry that is a key economic driver for the state. It is an industry that currently adds around \$50 billion a year to the state's economy and puts pay in the pockets of an estimated 250,000 workers. It is an industry that will continue to support more Queensland jobs as it meets the state's needs for new housing and infrastructure, particularly as we deliver our plan for homes for Queenslanders.

In demonstrating our commitment to the sustainability of the industry, the government continues to deliver the Queensland Building Plan 2017 and its 2021 update and to monitor the implementation of these reforms. It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the work of the former minister, Mick de Brenni, who I know did a lot of work on this bill. Since 2015, under the Queensland Building Plan, we have focused on creating a safer, fairer and more sustainable construction industry and protections for consumers. We have introduced nation-leading protections against the use of nonconforming building products that ensure the building materials used in Queensland are compliant with relevant standards, fit for purpose and meet community expectations.

Queensland's strong stance on nonconforming building products has ensured that our community can feel safe in the building in which they live, work and play. We have also strengthened the Queensland Home Warranty Scheme—Australia's first resort compensation scheme. We have expanded coverage and provided more flexible scheme options, and we continue to listen to the community and industry about how we can best enhance these services. We also recognise that a

strong building and construction industry needs a strong, independent regulator to support it. The Queensland Building and Construction Commission plays a vital role in providing a fair, consistent and stable environment that tradies and consumers can count on. Soon I will speak more on how this bill builds on our record of strengthening the QBCC.

Through all of these enhancements to the building and construction industry, our strong focus has been on improving security of payment protections for subcontractors. The cornerstone of these protections is the project trust account framework enshrined in the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Act. We believe that if you do the work you should be paid in full on time every time. This bill supports the continued rollout of the trust account framework by making it easier for industry to comply. By increasing the workability of the framework, the bill not only strengthens existing protections for subcontractors, it supports compliance of head contractors. By supporting industry to manage their business accounting and financial responsibilities, the bill allows contractors to get on with their work delivering Queensland's Big Build. The bill also formalises the government's response to several recommendations of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Governance Review and includes minor amendments to other building legislation to enhance existing provisions and processes.

I will turn first to the security of payment reform. Queensland continues to lead the nation with a suite of payment protections under the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Act. These protections ensure that everyone in the building industry gets paid for the work they do. Examples of existing protections in the Building Industry Fairness (Security of Payment) Act include: the adjudication process, subcontractors' charges, payment withholding requests and charges over property. Additionally, we have introduced a trust account framework designed to protect progress payments and cash retention amounts for the benefit of subcontractor payments. Since trust accounts were first introduced in 2018, they have secured funds under more than 1,200 contracts to the value of more than \$20.7 billion—that is, \$20.7 billion in safekeeping to ensure that subbies get paid for the work that they do.

The framework is being implemented in phases. It currently applies to eligible Queensland government contracts of \$1 million or more. It also applies to private sector, local government, statutory authority and government owned corporation contracts of \$10 million or more. The trust account framework is a driver of significant cultural change for industry. It is important that we continue to listen to industry to support this transition so they can get on with their work on the ground.

The department recently commissioned an independent assessment of the trust account framework. I am pleased to report that the independent report found that the industry is successfully adapting to the fundamental requirements of the new framework. This is no surprise. The building and construction industry is consistently evolving, but the industry always knows how to get in and get the job done. The independent assessment of the trust account framework gave us the opportunity to hear from industry and to consider how the rollout of the trust account framework could be enhanced.

We heard from industry that there is an opportunity to facilitate compliance by improving accounting software capability and simplifying the trust account framework. Specifically, we heard there was uncertainty as to who was protected by and paid through a project trust account. The present approach uses a definition of 'protected work'. We heard from the industry that making protections referable to certain 'work' rather than to the parties performing the work created some ambiguity. The bill clarifies this ambiguity and takes a simpler approach. Rather than the protections being referable to types of work, they will be referable to specific parties and the specific services for which the relevant licence is required. This change will ensure that no-one gets left behind as we continue to strengthen our payment protections.

By aligning with a long established industry requirement to hold a licence, the change will also reduce the administrative effort for trustees and help subcontractors to understand when their payments are protected by a project trust account. We also heard from industry and software providers that the current record keeping requirements could be simplified. The current provisions are detailed and prescriptive. Industry told us that there is uncertainty as to how and when to record trust liabilities. This uncertainty limits options for software providers to respond with automated and streamlined solutions for business record keeping.

The bill provides a regulation making power to prescribe simplified record keeping requirements, and introduces a head of power to produce guidelines for compliance. These amendments will ensure the trust account requirements stay fit for purpose and can rapidly respond to emerging industry practices. These changes also support an uplift in how payments and cash flow are understood and managed for the benefit of everyone in the contracting chain.

We have also heard from industry that their capacity to obtain a trust account review is impacted by the limited availability of registered auditors. We understand there is limited availability of registered auditors nationally, but we are responding at a state level so that our industry is supported. We are expanding industry capacity by empowering other professionals such as accountants to conduct account reviews. This should reduce the cost to industry of obtaining a report while still ensuring protection through independent oversight.

We are also reducing cost to industry by expanding the circumstances in which a trustee may apply for an exemption by providing an account review report. Currently, the exemption only applies if the account held no funds during the review period. This bill expands the circumstances in which an exemption might apply. For example, where there have been no new transactions or changes to the account, there may be no need to provide a report.

This bill ensures our protections are practical and effective by including reasonable exemptions where appropriate. Additionally, the bill clarifies that the trust protections apply to the full retention amount, including GST. This simple change reduces the risk of shortfalls in retention trust accounts in the event of insolvency.

The bill also clarifies several transitional matters, including what happens when contract amendments occur and what criteria apply as the two remaining phases are rolled out. These changes address industry concerns about ambiguity and put beyond doubt how the framework should operate. This bill is about simplifying and clarifying trust accounting processes so that the industry can get on with the important work of delivering Queensland's Big Build. To get on with the job, we also need an efficient, transparent regulator to enable industry and protect consumers.

In addition to simplifying the trust account framework, this bill implements important changes to the governance of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission. These changes formalise the government's response to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Governance Review. The QBCC Governance Review examined the roles and responsibilities of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission and the board, along with their respective policies, procedures and practices. The purpose of the review was to ensure the commission's governance arrangements reflected best practice for a building and construction industry regulator and were fit for purpose to deliver on the objectives of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act.

One of the recommendations from the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Governance Review report was to reduce the size of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Board. This bill reflects that recommendation. Although the QBCC has already adopted a best practice approach and reduced the size of its board from 10 to seven people, this bill enshrines this board size in the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act, ensuring future efficiency.

The QBCC has also proactively responded to the governance review by implementing a conflict-of-interest register. This bill supports the commission's proactive response by codifying the requirement for a conflict-of-interest register to ensure transparency and accountability moving forward. This will be achieved by requiring the detail of disclosure of conflicts of interest in the QBCC Board minutes to be published.

The governance review also recommended that the QBCC refocus its regulatory role on licensing and compliance. This bill responds to that recommendation by transferring responsibility for prescribing technical qualification requirements issued under the Plumbing and Drainage Act and the Building Act from the Queensland Building and Construction Commission to the department. The department is currently responsible for developing policy and legislation for the QBCC, while the commission has operational and regulatory responsibilities.

Transferring the approval of qualifications from the commissioner to the department aligns with existing policy functions performed by the department. It also provides greater separation between the functions performed by the department and the QBCC. In this way, these amendments refocus the QBCC on licensing and compliance so that it can be more efficient and effective in enabling industry and protecting consumers.

The bill also makes several minor and technical amendments to various pieces of Queensland's building and construction legislation. For example, the Architects Act 2002 and Professional Engineers Act 2002 establish independent regulators for Queensland's architecture and engineering professions, which are the Board of Architects of Queensland and the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland.

The amendments in the bill are primarily operational. Specifically, the bill ensures that information provided during registration processes for architects and professional engineers is accurate and reliable, and provides guidance to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the courts about awarding reasonable legal and investigation costs if a person is found guilty of breaching the Architects Act. The changes in the Architects Act for awarding reasonable costs align with similar provisions of the Professional Engineers Act. Clarifying these provisions will support the boards in maintaining the integrity of Queensland's architecture and engineering professions and registration framework.

Finally, several minor, operational amendments are proposed to the Queensland Building and Construction Commission Act concerning licence suspensions and cancellations, internal review applications and disclosure of information for monitoring the effectiveness of legislation. This disclosure power also applies to the building industry fairness act. These minor amendments are necessary to improve regulatory processes, clarify existing provisions and support industry and consumers.

In conclusion, the amendments in this bill will ensure Queensland continues to have one of the most robust building regulatory frameworks in the country. These frameworks underpin our strong security of payment, licensing and financial sustainability requirements which protect contractors, consumers and the industry more broadly.

The bill supports our progression towards a safer, fairer and more sustainable building and construction industry, while making life easier for contractors so they can focus on their important work for Queensland. By listening to and working with industry we will continue to deliver Queensland's Big Build safely, sustainably and in partnership with the people on the ground.

### First Reading

**Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works) (11.43 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 Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee


**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee.

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

### Second Reading

Resumed from 13 February (see p. 112), on motion of Mr Ryan—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (11.44 am), continuing: While the intent of this bill is welcomed, unfortunately it is too little too late from this government. Knife crime is already out of control. While stopping the sale of dangerous weapons to minors makes a lot of sense, it is not the fix to Queensland's escalating youth crime crisis that all Queenslanders are calling out for. Stakeholders have been calling for action in relation to the buying and selling of knives for some time, so it is good that this ban is being implemented. As is the usual case with this Labor government—this tired, third-term Labor government—it is not being rolled out with any thought given to those it impacts. In this case I am talking about small and family businesses right across Queensland that are going to bear the brunt of this legislation.

I note the reservations expressed by the Queensland Small Business Commissioner, who has concerns about the time and the financial impacts on business retailers. I would like to thank Dominique Lamb, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner, for her submission to the committee inquiry in relation to the bill. I am out each and every day listening to small business owners and their staff. One of the biggest issues they raise with me is a desire for the government to address red tape and the

burden that it has on them. Even though this legislation is another step in removing knives from the hands of young offenders, we do need to consider the impact on business—in particular, small and family business—and ensure the government addresses ways to make this rollout easier on them.

For starters, the first-offence penalty for selling a controlled item to a minor is considerable. Our small and family businesses need to be educated and should be allowed a grace period first, before being slapped with a fine of more than \$21,000. Those opposite may not be aware, but our struggling small businesses just do not have a spare 20 grand in their back pocket. They need that money just to keep the lights on, especially with the soaring cost of electricity right across Queensland.

Speaking of money that they do not have, the new provisions also impose secure storage requirements for sellers. Businesses do need to be accountable, but we cannot just shift the responsibility onto them. These operational obligations are tough on small and family businesses. Many will feel the need to install CCTV as a way of providing evidence that they have followed the rules as well. They simply cannot absorb these costs.

The government must provide more guidance to small and family businesses and for retailers to receive warnings before they are being hit with such a large fine, particularly early on in this rollout. The minister's amendment around guidance does not offer much guidance. Simple information around how long businesses have to achieve these requirements should not be a secret.

Big businesses like Coles, Woolies, BCF and the like can comply with increased regulation. In fact, in many cases big businesses like the ones I mentioned like more regulation because it acts as a barrier to entry for other competitors. The businesses that wear the impact of increased regulation are small and family businesses. Unfortunately, though, Labor likes big business because big business likes the unions. However, it is small and family businesses that are the backbone of our community. It is the small and family businesses that sponsor the local footy club and provide sausages for the Bunnings sausage sizzle. Labor continues to wage war on small and family businesses. Even in their latest round of grants they ignored small and family businesses. Queensland small and family businesses deserve better. This legislation ignores the challenges that small businesses face, and that is because Labor do not understand small businesses.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** Labor do not understand small businesses. How many of those opposite have actually worked in or run a small business? Not many compared to this side.

**Mr Smith** interjected.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** Come on, mate. The Queensland Council of Unions is not a small business; it is organised crime at its best.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Order, members! The member for Buderim and the member for Bundaberg and others up in that corner will cease their quarrelling across the chamber. You might have the call, member for Buderim, but put your comments through the chair.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** Thank you for your guidance, Deputy Speaker. Knife crime has to stop. We cannot sit by and watch young thugs stabbing and slashing innocent people—people who are just going about their lives—let alone attacking one another. I have four young children. It is not the kind of Queensland that I want my children to grow up in. I am sure every Queenslander would agree with that sentiment. My wife and I can guide our children to make good choices, but it is scary to think that we cannot always protect them from others, especially—and I shudder to think—those who may be armed with a knife, machete or axe.

My message today is that we cannot forget small business. Getting tough on small business is not getting tough on youth crime.

**Mr Purdie:** That's a great line.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** It is a great line, member for Ninderry. Close to home, on the Sunshine Coast, I feel for the family of Balin Stewart.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** I can hear the member for Logan interjecting. He might care to listen and hear about the experience of a family who lost a loved one at the hands of a young offender with a blade—the family of Balin Stewart. Sixteen-year-old Balin Stewart was fatally stabbed just over two years ago outside his family home in the Kawana electorate. Balin went to school in my electorate at Mountain Creek State High School. Balin's family and friends tried desperately to keep him alive, but Balin could not be saved. What happened to Balin is unthinkable. Unfortunately, it is sadly not an isolated case in

Queensland. I would like to commend Balin's parents and his family and friends for setting up the Bin the Blade for Balin campaign. It encourages anyone who is carrying a knife to dispose of it before another person is hurt or killed and another family is torn apart.

Anything that we can do to remove knives from the street is welcomed. I was pleased to receive information from the Sunshine Coast police service informing me that 14 weapons had been located and seized over a three-month period during street checks under existing legislation. We should do more to provide police with the laws they need to keep us safe. Top Queensland police officers have said themselves that most knives on the street come from the home. Most people have a set of carving knives on the kitchen bench, so it is critical that we educate children on knife safety and provide police with the laws they need to keep our community safe.


We need consequences for the young people who arm themselves and, God forbid, when they use a weapon on someone. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the police for the hard work they do to keep Queenslanders safe. Unfortunately, it is a failing system. Queensland police officers do a stellar job, but they do not have the resources or the legislation to support them. What they have to deal with is the result of weakened laws under this tired third-term Labor government—

**Mr Krause** interjected.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** I take the interjection from the member for Scenic Rim—that does not support police. The evidence shows they do not support police. The intent of this bill is a start, but what Queenslanders want and what Queenslanders need is tougher consequences. That means removing detention as a last resort from the Youth Justice Act. We need to open the doors to the Childrens Court for transparency and accountability. Too many lives have been lost to knife crime. Getting knives off the streets by stopping their sale to minors will make a small dent in knife possession, but these kids need to be educated that knives are not cool and they are not a fashion accessory. The small minority of violent kids who cannot be taught that need to be held to account and made to feel the full force of the consequences of their actions. Right now, they are not.

The first step is for Labor to support the LNP's amendment to remove detention as a last resort from the Youth Justice Act so that young offenders who want to do the wrong thing, who flaunt the law, who through their actions deliberately rub the noses of police in their lack of power, are held to account. Remove detention as a last resort. Support our amendments and remember that getting tough on small business is not the same as getting tough on youth crime. I call on those opposite to support the LNP's amendments and to get tough on those who do the wrong thing.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Members, it is my general intention to stick to the speaking list, but members do have to actively seek the call. The member for Mirani has the call.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (11.53 am): I rise to speak on the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The stated aims of the bill are to reduce knife crime and youth offending in Queensland and the risks associated with the sale, possession and storage of knives and other dangerous items. The reforms in the bill have clearly been brought forward by the government in response to the tragic fatal stabbing of Vyleen White at the Redbank Plains shopping centre in Ipswich. This appalling event has devastated Vyleen White's family, friends and the whole community. Sadly, it is just one of a long list of high-profile incidents involving violent youth crime here in Queensland.

According to figures released by the QPS in 2019, the number of knife crimes in Queensland jumped more than 40 per cent between 2014 and 2019. In 2021-22 QPS reported a 21 per cent increase in the number of young people caught carrying a knife in a public place and 11 knife related murders. That year there were five stabbing deaths within 12 months in the Surfers Paradise area, and since 2015 criminal offences in Queensland have soared 31 per cent. The number of assaults skyrocketed 219 per cent, unlawful entry offences increased 54 per cent and unlawful use of a motor vehicle rose 115 per cent. These are truly shocking statistics. The youth crime crisis in Queensland is no beat-up. That is why I stand here today to deliver a message loud and clear about the issue our state is facing with regard to youth crime, in particular the absolute carnage that is taking place because teenagers who participate in serious violent offending with weapons are being enabled by the current out-of-touch, unsatisfactory responses of this government.

The blame continues to cycle, with the government pressuring police to make more arrests, only to see offenders back on the streets the next day and the police questioning why they even bother. Many police will tell you that magistrates are giving defendants far too many chances, while the judiciary



claim their hands are tied by legislation. It is a never-ending cycle of blame. Meanwhile, people are living in fear and others are being killed, and all the public can see—the public we are paid to represent, incidentally—is a lot of us sitting here on our backsides bickering over knee-jerk solutions that will do little to help those exposed to the real-life threat of what is going on.

This bill focuses on stopping the sale of weapons to under 18s. Is this like how we stopped the sale of vapes to minors? Speak to any parent of a teenager in this state or any teacher at a high school and ask them if stopping sales has made a single bit of difference to vaping. Does anyone seriously think that these young criminals, who are so brazen as to go out and stab someone, will stop that behaviour or be deterred because we pass legislation here in this House banning the sale of knives? Do not get me wrong: we should ban the sale of these weapons if we can, but it will not stop the problem.

We need to get real and we need to get practical. In many instances these offenders are from war-torn countries with a long history of intergenerational violence and trauma. Rather than being given the guidance and support they need, they are being dumped into our schools under the banner of diversity and expected to magically transition into our way of life here in Australia. In some cases they are not transitioning to our way of life at all; they are trashing it. We are left scrambling to find solutions without offending anyone. Let me be clear here today: we owe it to the families of those people who have been stabbed to come up with something a lot more tangible than the laws contained in this bill. As I said, we have not stopped vapes. Do you really think this is going to stop machetes? While I am on the topic of machetes—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr ANDREW:** I will tell you something: the old Labor government deported South Sea islanders back to the South Seas for a lot less than the continuing murders we have in this state. While I am on the topic of machetes, I have spoken at great length to the parent of a child at a private school in Brisbane who last year raised concerns over a number of serious gang offenders at the school who were threatening students with knives and machetes. The parent was even told by one teacher that he had personally taken machetes off students and that this had now largely become his job. Yet when meeting with the principal to discuss their concerns, the parent was told that it was not happening and that it was a delusion and they were the ones deluded. The parent even went to police with their concerns and was told that they had very valid reasons for being worried and concerned, as the criminal histories of these individuals were significant. The school, however, completely denied there was any problem with students carrying weapons. They even referred the parent to the department of child safety and demanded they seek written permission before setting foot on school grounds again. That is outrageous!

Parents get a letter when headlice are detected in schools, but it seems that it is nothing when machetes are detected. No-one gets told. Young offenders are committing these serious crimes in plain sight and the whole thing is being papered over and suppressed. It is all being dealt with behind closed doors because of their age. Those who are carrying machetes and killing people are more protected than the actual communities. We need to look at what is in place right now to monitor, detect and respond to the fears people have around kids who are bringing weapons into school yards and threatening other students with them. We need to look at any government funding that is being given to those schools to house these offenders, and we need to consider the safety of our young people who are being threatened and exploited by these individuals.

According to reports, the teenager who allegedly stabbed Vyleen White was out on bail for armed robbery. The teen had reportedly been charged with these armed robbery offences last year. This incident must serve as a wake-up call to Queenslanders of the state's worsening youth gang problems. At least two of the teens involved in this crime are alleged to have links to the Brisbane drill gang known as SBG. Several of these gangs are linked to car thefts and home invasions, with the groups themselves boasting of their criminal activities on social media. They hold large knives and weapons—

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

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): I think I know what the point of order is going to be. Is it questioning whether the matter is sub judice?

**Ms RICHARDS:** Yes.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Mirani, could you please assure the House that the matters you are referring to are not sub judice, before the criminal courts?

**Mr ANDREW:** To the best of my knowledge.


**Mr NICHOLLS:** On the point of order, my understanding is that in the offence that is being talked about the people involved have been charged and have been before the courts. There has been widespread reporting in the media about that, so I suspect that these matters are in fact before the criminal courts at the moment.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I will take some advice. Member for Mirani, I would ask you to please exercise great caution in how you proceed, bearing in mind the comments from the member for Clayfield. Deputy Speaker Lister and I were in the process of changing over the chair when you made your comments so we did not hear all of them. I would ask you, for the benefit of the House, to please exercise extreme caution about this.

**Mr ANDREW:** Thank you. Despite this, a gang taskforce set up by QPS in 2022 to tackle the problem was disbanded last year, and we are wondering why. It is hard to comprehend that the government would abandon such a vital taskforce, particularly when even the Police Commissioner acknowledges that gangs are an escalating problem in Queensland. The only explanation is that, yet again, Queensland police are being stretched to the wire when it comes to funding, resources and adequate staffing levels.

According to all reports, police officers are now leaving the Queensland police force in droves, and those who remain are stressed and overwhelmed as the pressure and workload mount. Today there are 322 fewer full-time frontline police to deal with these issues in Queensland than there were 18 months ago. Queensland detention centres are overflowing, with several police watch houses in North Queensland at more than 170 per cent capacity. A Working for Queensland survey has found that 50 per cent of police officers say they are likely to quit their jobs over the next two years. A lot of them are on extended sick leave and are not going back to work. They are stretched to the wire.

The problem of violent crime in Queensland is an issue that transcends party lines. It is time for leadership, clear action and a united vision, and it is time for emergency funding for the police and prevention programs to keep the public of Queensland safe. Warm words here are no longer enough. We need change.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (12.03 pm): This bill is sending a clear message: Queensland will not tolerate a knife culture. There are such cultures that have developed around the world, and that is not our standard. I would like to acknowledge all victims of violent crimes and their families. There is no excuse for violent crime. The member for Buderim spoke about small businesses and the impost on them around selling knives. In relation to knife crimes I see in the media, offenders are not going into Big W and the other big stores that he mentioned; they are targeting those small stores. This bill is about protecting those small businesses and those small traders where a teenager is doing the shift on a Sunday night on their own and is held up by somebody with a knife. There are swings and roundabouts in this for everyone.

Unfortunately, we have lost precious lives to knives. Even one life lost is one too many. I thank Brett and Belinda Beasley, parents of Jack, for their unrelenting work to ensure no other young life is lost to senseless knife violence and for saving other families from the immense pain and grief that their family has endured. Their work gave us Jack's Law, giving police wandering powers to disrupt and prevent crime and save lives. The law brought in by this government has given police officers the power to use handheld metal-detecting wands in all safe night precincts, on public transport and at transportation hubs across Queensland to detect weapons, deter offending and protect the community. Since the introduction of the law, we have seen tens of thousands of people being scanned by the handheld scanners and hundreds of potential weapons being seized. This means there are fewer weapons on our streets and the opportunity for fewer crimes to be committed and fewer tragedies.

A single, thoughtless knife crime can destroy many lives: the victim with lifelong impacts both physical and psychological or loss of life, and the perpetrator facing lifelong repercussions. This is unacceptable for our communities. There is more work to be done, and that is why today we are debating laws to ban the sale of knives and other items to juveniles.


We need to target and support our youth because adolescence is a tumultuous time for young people as they develop from childhood into adulthood. They can be impulsive and vulnerable as they navigate life as their brain is maturing. Their behaviour and development are influenced by the environment, hereditary factors and their hormones. Adolescent behaviour can be immature and irresponsible as their brains mature. Drugs and alcohol can also affect their development and maturation. Maturation of our brains occurs between the ages of about 10 and 24, so young people with these maturing brains bring the possibility of immature and impulsive behaviour. They need guidance that comes with these laws. We need these laws to prevent crime. In return, the community gets more protection.

We want to stop the perceived notoriety that is associated with possessing knives amongst those of any age in our community. This is exacerbated by some commercial sellers who profit from the mindless selling of knives and other weapons as they encourage or glamorise items for violence. We need these reforms to make safer environments and safer communities. We do not want the global trend of youth or adults carrying knives, axes, machetes and other dangerous items becoming the norm in our community.

There is still more work to be done. The laws that we have already introduced will be strengthened by this bill. There are now new offences prohibiting the sale of controlled items to anyone under the age of 18, targeting our immature youth. Controlled items will include knives, swords, machetes, axes, sickles, spears, spear guns and replica firearms. Gel blasters as replica firearms are included in this bill. Some think of gel blasters as toys because they associate them with paintball and laser tag. Unfortunately, gel blasters look like firearms and have been used in violent crimes. They need to be included for public safety.

It will be an offence for anyone to falsely represent themselves to be over 18 to obtain any of these prohibited items. To make it very clear that violence with a prohibited weapon is not acceptable, it will be an offence for a seller to advertise or market a prohibited item in a way that suggests the item is suitable for combat, is intended to be used for violence or is likely to stimulate or encourage violence or criminal acts.

This bill does not change the restrictions that are already in place on people of all ages relating to carrying knives in public or at a school. A person must have a reasonable excuse to carry a knife including for work, to participate in a lawful activity or sport—for example fishing, as many people do in my area—or for lawful purposes when you go out and you have a meal in public. It is time all our young and older people can say, 'I live my life without a knife.'

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.10 pm): I rise to address the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. As I have often said, including here in the Queensland parliament, one of the most fundamental duties of any elected government is to ensure the safety and security of its citizens. It is a responsibility that is absolute and it is a responsibility that is non-negotiable. There is no doubt that this Labor state government has failed in this most fundamental duty. It is a failure that has only been compounded over the last nine years because the Labor government has failed to act and, as a consequence, there has been fear, pain, heartbreak and devastating impacts to communities right across Queensland. It is in this context that Queenslanders must view this legislation.

The Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 will seek to: prohibit the sale of knives and other weapons known as controlled items to minors; make it an offence for a person to falsely represent themselves as being over the age of 18 years for the purpose of being sold a controlled item; require retailers to display signage advertising the legal prohibition against the sale of controlled items to minors; and prohibit controlled items from being sold or advertised in a way that suggests the item is suitable for combat, intended to be used for violence, or likely to stimulate or encourage violent or criminal behaviour involving the item.

This legislation will also impose obligations upon suppliers of particular controlled items to safely secure the items at retail locations. The legislation will also make consequential amendments to support these reforms such as allowing a police officer to request to see proof of age if they see or reasonably suspect a person under the age of 18 has been sold a controlled item, and authorising the police officer to seize the item under certain circumstances. Consequently, amendments will be made to both the Summary Offences Act 2005 and the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 to enable this legislation.

There is no question that every available legislative instrument and resource that can be provided must be provided to our dedicated frontline Queensland Police Service officers in order to combat Queensland's youth crime crisis. This legislation is a welcomed addition and one that is well overdue, considering that for too long Queensland remained the only state jurisdiction that did not comprehensively legislate for the restriction of the sale of knives. However, it must be noted that there are those who have articulated genuine concerns in relation to the timing, efficacy and overall impact of these laws which warrant further examination and consideration by the Labor state government. Indeed, whilst under this legislation the definition of 'sell' includes sales that are made online or at any place and sales outside of Queensland to a person in Queensland, it has been suggested that in all likelihood and reality it would be extremely difficult to enforce and secure a prosecution for online purchases made outside Queensland. Accordingly, the effectiveness of this provision to prevent sale to young Queenslanders remains highly doubtful.

Further, I understand there has been limited evidence produced as to the sources of knives that are carried by offenders and, what is more, questions remain as to the evidence that offenders will be deterred from carrying knives, let alone change the current knife culture. It has to be said that in Queensland we all have a responsibility to tackle the knife culture, particularly amongst young people, whether that is representatives here in the Queensland parliament, our community leaders, our school principals and others to change that knife culture. Certainly in our schools we have seen many instances in relation to weapons offences, so via the Department of Education there needs to be a greater effort put in to education amongst young people to ensure what happens in the broader community is reduced. I know the member for Mackay talked about young people and their neurodevelopment occurring throughout their adolescent years. The brain takes up to about 25 years of age for that development, and we know that many young people make poor choices and decisions because they are still going through those developmental phases.

I also want to highlight, as a part of the debate, the submission provided to the Queensland parliament's State Development and Regional Industries Committee by the Queensland Law Society on this legislation wherein they stated—

There is no conclusive evidence that this type of legislation will be effective in terms of the objective that it is trying to achieve. Instead, this approach will lead to unintended consequences and will not address the root cause of the conduct it seeks to address. The evidence shows that the mechanisms to achieve the objective involves supporting families and young people and diverting children and young people into positive programs.

That is the point. Ever since Labor weakened Queensland's youth justice laws in 2015, successive Labor state governments have allowed the youth crime crisis to worsen, and at every turn they have failed to implement the solutions, including comprehensive intervention and prevention measures that are actually required to keep our communities safe.

Within the Brisbane region, including the electorate of Moggill, recent data from the Queensland police shows that from 2015 to 2023: car theft has increased by 114 per cent; break and enters have increased by 57 per cent; thefts have increased by 76 per cent; and assaults have skyrocketed by 155 per cent. I am regularly contacted by local residents and community members who share with me their deep concerns and often lived experiences as a result of Labor's youth crime crisis. In fact, just last week, I received this message from a resident who said they felt compelled to share with me the following after they personally reviewed the latest local crime statistics—

I am writing to you with deep concern regarding the current state of crime in our community, particularly the alarming increase in youth crime. Over the past few months, the incidence of crime, especially amongst young people, has reached unacceptable levels. The impact of these crime extends beyond mere statistics; it is causing distress, fear and disruption to the lives of residents. Moreover, it threatens the safety and security of our community as a whole.

This message is from another local resident, this time detailing what happened to his father. He states—

While my father slept, someone broke into his car and into his home, they stole valuables, but more importantly, it put his life in danger... My family moved from South Africa to Australia to get away from the crime and sadly, we have now dealt with more crime, personally, here in Australia than we did in South Africa. We are now forced to put up cameras, security lighting and other measures to try and deter these criminals.


What compounds this pain even further is the fact that I received this correspondence from this resident almost a year to the day from when he had contacted me to share the details of break and enters happening to other family members, so it is no wonder that this resident felt that 'clearly nothing has been done to resolve the ever-growing crime problem'. This is just a handful of the many local stories I receive about the impacts of this third-term Labor state government's watering down of criminal laws, together with their reduction in police numbers.

Unlike the Labor government, the Liberal National Party has announced practical solutions to tackle Queensland's youth crime crisis which will reduce crime, including: rewriting the Youth Justice Act and embedding consequences for actions; putting victims' rights ahead of young criminals'; unshackling the judiciary by removing Labor's policy of detention as a last resort; delivering gold standard early intervention to turn around young offenders; prioritising discipline, guidance and opportunity for children in residential care to prevent them from ending up in the youth justice system; and attracting and retaining more police by giving them the laws and resources needed to do their job.

As foreshadowed by the LNP shadow minister for police and community safety, the LNP, as a part of this debate, is introducing critical amendments to Queensland's youth crime laws, including to: amend the Youth Justice Act to remove the provision of detention as a last resort; and amend the Childrens Court Act to remove the provision excluding victims and their families from Childrens Court on the basis of prejudice to offenders and to reopen the court to the media for greater scrutiny. I encourage all elected representatives to fully consider these amendments to make our communities safer and provide much needed transparency.

For too long, Queenslanders have been forced to endure the chaos and crisis of this Labor government and Queensland's youth crime crisis. Queenslanders deserve to live safely within their communities, to have their properties respected and protected, and to live free from the fear of rampant crime. As we know, towards the end of this year in October, all Queenslanders will have the opportunity to elect an LNP government which will ensure our communities are safe. We must do more to protect our communities. We must reduce crime in all electorates and in all communities right across Queensland. Certainly to date, we have seen the failure of the state Labor government. They have failed since 2015 when they were first elected. They watered down the laws. We have seen the consequences when it comes to rampant crime, whether that be youth crime or that committed by even more senior offenders. It is simply not good enough. It is a government's responsibility to protect its citizens, to act in their interests and to provide all available resources to make sure they are looked after.

People are being attacked personally, are violated in their homes and are having their possessions stolen. The consequences to them personally, to their families and to their communities is clearly unacceptable. When it comes to knives here in Queensland, we need to change the culture. We need to ensure young people understand there is no place for carrying such weapons in public, let alone using them, and the real harm and consequences that occur as a result of them doing that. That will take a combined effort with leadership from all elected representatives here in the Queensland parliament, all of our community leaders, those who are in our schools and the broader community. Certainly whilst this legislation in part will address that, there is still a lot more work that needs to be done here in Queensland.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (12.19 pm): I first want to acknowledge Mr and Mrs Beasley for their advocacy in continuing to keep our community safe after the sad loss of their son Jack, which lead to the establishment of the law named after him. I also acknowledge the serious and horrific stabbing death of Ms Vyleen White and the heartbreaking loss for her family and friends. I send my sincere condolences.

I rise to speak in support of the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Knives are deadly. We all know that those opposite had serious juvenile crime under their watch. Yes, that is right: stabbings, stolen cars, break and enters, murders, domestic violence—the list goes on. We just heard the member for Moggill clearly say that they only want to reduce it. The LNP have people believing that they are going to stop it, which is a fallacy. Do not be fooled by those opposite playing politics with this serious issue. The sooner they get on the same page and work collectively to address the youth crime scourge, the sooner our communities will feel much safer.

It is no secret that crime fighting is a challenge for all crime fighters around the globe in the ever-changing world that we live in. What is of grave concern for me is the constant political pointscore at the cost of community safety. Speaking as a former corrective services officer with five years experience and 18 years experience and service in the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, I can say that edged weapons are the biggest fear when working at close quarters with offenders inside a detention facility—more so today.

In a detention centre you know the environment you are working in and the individuals you are managing. Even with all of the training you receive, it is still a very dangerous environment. That is why it is critical to have good laws, the latest equipment, best practice procedures in place and high-level training to help to manage edged weapons within a detention centre facility to keep officers, support staff and other detainees safe. Police need the same support. In an uncontrolled environment—on the streets, in safe night precincts, on malls and in the broader community—it is even harder for our police and security to know what will be presented to them in a split second when confronted by an agitated person or a conflict that involves several individuals. This is why the Miles Labor state government has committed to a new police helicopter for the Townsville region with a new encrypted radio communications system that will give police a safer working environment and stop criminals listening in to police operations.

This legislation controlling the sale of knives will help minimise the risk to police and security officers when confronted with aggressive individuals on the streets, in shopping centres and in other areas where large numbers of youth and others congregate. It will no doubt also improve community safety. With the emergence of different social media platforms, the World Wide Web and young people having access to mobile telecommunication devices, more information is being shared with young people and offenders about crime and the use of edged weapons—knives—as a lethal force against others. It presents a challenge in terms of how individuals obtain illegal items.

Just the thought of knives being used in an aggressive and threatening manner is confronting and sickening. This is why it is important to support this bill. It will not only improve community safety but also give our police the tools they need to carry out their very important work and to keep themselves and our community safe.


As a former trainer in protective actions I can say that edged weapons are one of the deadliest and hardest things to deal with when it comes to an individual making a threat, especially if the person exhibits in a manner that demonstrates they know exactly how to use them. It is critical that we limit the access to knives, which have deadly consequences in the hands of those who want to create mayhem or inflict serious injury or death. An edged weapon is easily concealed and is in some cases very small in size but still able to cause serious harm or death. There is no doubt that we will have not only the people of Queensland supporting this bill but also every police and security officer in Queensland waiting for it to become law.

I note the new measures in the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill to control spray paint and gel blaster guns. Spray paint not only causes endless damage through graffiti in towns and cities across our beautiful state but also leaves many local authorities and private property owners with huge clean-up bills from vandalism. As a former Townsville City councillor, I witnessed firsthand the large amount of damage graffiti caused through direct access to spray paint; it is a big cost to council to have it removed. The program introduced by former Townsville City mayor Tony Mooney—Graffiti Busters through CitySafe—for the quick removal of graffiti was highly successful. The current Townsville City Council really needs to bring back this highly successful program and to get the young offenders involved in cleaning it up.

People continually sniffing spray paint is a very serious concern for their health and the mental state they enter. In some cases it causes fear for people such as police, paramedics, support services and health professionals when confronted by individuals who have been sniffing spray-paint products. These extra measures to secure spray paint and limit its sale will no doubt be a welcome change for all concerned.

I support the changes in this bill to limit young people's access to replica firearms like gel blasters. Gel blasters in the hands of young offenders, and young people in general, are very dangerous. It makes operational life for police extremely hard when they are confronted by a young person with a gel blaster in a highly stressed and confronting environment which requires a split-second decision by law enforcement officers to bring the situation under control. This bill will go a long way towards minimising this type of scenario.

The changes in the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 have my unconditional support. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (12.26 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. In general, the bill is designed to reduce knife crime and associated youth offending and to enhance community safety by strengthening the legislative framework regarding the sale, possession and storage of knives and other dangerous items such as gel blasters.

The LNP supports enhancing community safety; however, this bill is a missed opportunity from this tired, third-term Labor government. During consideration in detail the LNP will deal with the real problem at the heart of much of our recidivist youth offending. Our shadow minister will introduce amendments to remove detention as a last resort and to improve the transparency of the Childrens Court by allowing victims, their families and the media into the Childrens Court.

The bill amends the Summary Offences Act and introduces a new division prohibiting the sale of controlled items to persons under the age of 18. Previous speakers have spoken on the controlled items, and these are outlined in the explanatory notes of the bill. The bill provides that commercial sellers will be responsible for ensuring they instruct their employees about the prohibition on the sale of controlled items to minors. Sellers will be required to display signage publicising the prohibition in all retail outlets.


The definition of 'sell' includes sales made online or at any place and sales outside of Queensland to a person in Queensland. It will be next to impossible to secure a prosecution for an online purchase made outside of Queensland, and the effectiveness of this in preventing sales to youth is highly doubtful. It will be an absolute nightmare in the border communities that I represent, because people traverse backwards and forwards across those border communities and it will be very difficult in some of those remote areas to have that enforced.

The bill creates much confusion for mixed businesses, of which there are many across my electorate. I ask the government: will the local Red Cross and Lifeline shops that sell second-hand knives in the op shop have to comply with this legislation? Will the antiques dealer who sells the odd carving knife set have to comply with this legislation? Will the local jeweller selling knife and fork sets have to comply? I would appreciate it if the minister could address these concerns in his summing-up, because, as I walk down the streets in my local communities, they are the questions that will be asked of me in relation to this legislation, so I have no hesitation in asking the government.

Even the local clothing retailers in my electorate that sell a Leatherman tool will have to instruct their staff, display signage and keep a register of those staff. It is hard enough now to actually get staff to fill those positions in many of these small businesses, let alone say to them, 'Now you have to sign on to this and there will be penalties if you don't do that.' More paperwork and compliance will be thrust onto family and small businesses by this legislation.

I see the government have no problem in getting tough on family and small business, yet they cannot get tough on youth crime. It is a real missed opportunity that the state Labor government have here. They really should be supporting the LNP amendments that go to the heart of the problems with the Youth Justice Act. Across my electorate we have seen some massive increases in youth offending and it is of great concern to many within the community.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Order! 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 call the minister to reply to the second reading debate.

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (12.30 pm), in reply: This government is committed to supporting community safety. We are supporting community safety through supporting the Queensland Police Service and other partner agencies with early intervention and prevention strategies as well as boosting resources to the Queensland Police Service. We have record police budgets and we are making the biggest investment in policing personnel in more than 30 years. We have provided the Queensland Police Service with specific funding to conduct extreme high visibility police patrols right across the state. With dedicated funding from the Queensland government, police have also established Taskforce Guardian—a dedicated flying squad of experienced officers working alongside local police and partner agencies like Youth Justice. It is deployed wherever hardcore offending is occurring in the state. Police advise that these measures are having an impact, but certainly more work needs to be done.

As I mentioned this morning, whilst one instance of criminal offending is never acceptable, it is one too many. Police have advised that recent data with respect to youth offending as a result of the efforts of police in the northern part of our state has shown that car thefts committed by youth offenders have reduced by 50 per cent in Townsville and that violent crimes and robberies committed by youth offenders are down by 70 per cent. Just yesterday police released figures in the wake of another targeted operation by Taskforce Guardian indicating that crime committed by youth offenders in the Darling Downs district has also declined. As I said, even one instance of criminal offending is one too many, and that is why all of our collective efforts must continue.

Police are doing outstanding work. Partner agencies are doing outstanding work. Communities are doing outstanding work and advocates like the Jack Beasley Foundation are doing outstanding work. In particular, I note that wandering operations authorised by the nation-leading Jack's Law have removed hundreds and hundreds of knives from the streets. The bill before the House today provides further support to the Queensland Police Service's efforts by restricting the availability of knives to young people.

As we have seen, knife crime is a grave concern. I would like to take this opportunity now to thank all the members who have made a contribution to the debate on the Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. The government is acting to address this concern in the community, and it is having a most tragic impact on many communities. Knife crime is devastating. Our government understands the need to address knife crime comprehensively and effectively. We are committed to taking decisive action to combat this menace and ensure the safety of all Queenslanders. This commitment extends across multiple fronts including law enforcement, education and community engagement.

The bill includes a number of initiatives designed to promote community safety, reduce youth offending and minimise the risks associated with knives and other dangerous items. The provisions in the bill are concerned with restrictions on the sale, storage and promotion of controlled items—a term which is defined to mean knives other than those exempt knives, swords, machetes, axes including a

tomahawk, sickles, scythes, spear guns, spears and replica firearms that are considered a restricted item under section 9 of the Weapons Categories Regulation, including gel blasters that are replica firearms. This latter category is designed to capture, amongst other things, those items known as gel blasters that shoot gel pellets if the design of that item replicates a firearm to the extent that it may be mistaken for a genuine firearm.

This bill contains five major initiatives to contribute to community safety and minimise the inherent risks associated with knives and other items: prohibiting the sale of controlled items to minors; making it an offence for a person to falsely represent themselves as being over the age of 18 for the purposes of being sold one of these controlled items; requiring retailers to display signage advertising the legal prohibition against the sale of controlled items to minors; prohibiting controlled items from being sold or advertised in a way that suggests the item is suitable for combat, intended to be used for violence or likely to stimulate or encourage violent or criminal behaviour involving the item; and imposing obligations upon suppliers of particular controlled items to safely secure those items at retail locations.

It is intended that the initiatives in the bill to prohibit the sale of controlled items to minors and impose a requirement on retailers to securely store those certain controlled items mentioned in the bill will assist this government's strategy in addressing knife crime. It is acknowledged that the initiatives to prohibit the sale of controlled items and ensure the secure storage of those certain types of controlled items mentioned in the bill will have some impact on industry. It is also acknowledged that this bill will not by itself eradicate knife crime in its entirety. However, it is common sense that making it harder or more difficult for young people to access knives is a big step in the right direction to reducing knife crime.

Any knife in the wrong hands can lead to a potentially life-changing injury or even worse. Every member would be all too familiar with the tragic circumstances that can arise when a knife is used in the wrong hands and a life is tragically cut short. Taking a knife out of the hands of one person who is going to use it for nefarious or malicious means is a success.

As mentioned earlier, the bill is not entirely focused on knives and will also capture other items including gel blasters that are replica firearms. A gel blaster is a lifelike item designed to shoot a gel pellet that has been soaked in water and is similar to a paintball gun. Gel blasters may also be known as hydro blasters or gel guns and are intended to be used for recreational activities similar to paintball, skirmish or laser tag. Many gel blasters are clearly recreational items. They are designed with bright fluorescent colours or are shaped in such a way that they resemble a toy.

I would like to make it clear that these types of gel blasters are not captured by the amendments in this bill. However, this bill captures those gel blasters that are designed in a way that they constitute a replica of a firearm under the Weapons Act 1990. These items can be indistinguishable from a genuine firearm and, concerningly, have been used by young offenders to commit serious criminal offences such as armed robbery. It is clear that in the wrong hands gel blasters that are replica firearms can be dangerous items and used for violence in the commission of criminal offences. This bill tackles this issue by prohibiting the sale of those gel blasters that are replica firearms to anyone under the age of 18, thereby mitigating the risk of a replica firearm being used in the commission of an offence or to cause psychological or physical harm.

It is important to note that, under the Weapons Act and the Weapons Categories Regulation 1997, gel blasters that are replica firearms are already considered a restricted item. Under section 67 of the Weapons Act it is an offence for a person to possess or acquire a restricted item without a reasonable excuse. This bill therefore builds upon these legislative safeguards and provides yet another layer of protection to ensure those gel blasters are used solely for the purposes for which they were intended.

In addition to prohibiting the sale of controlled items to minors, this bill is also designed to combat the notoriety of knife possession that spurs the trend of unlawful possession of bladed items amongst young people. This is achieved by banning the sale of all controlled items that possess features which suggest the item is suitable for combat, intended to be used for violent behaviour or likely to encourage violent or criminal behaviour involving the item. This new offence specifically targets zombie style knives and machetes, which have risen in popularity internationally and are increasingly becoming the weapon of choice amongst some gangs and some young offenders. Inspired by zombie or horror movies, these items can vary in size, shape and style but are connected by a common theme—the very design or marketing of the item is intended to glamorise their use as deadly weapons.

These weapons have already been associated with a string of violent and deadly attacks in the United Kingdom and have been banned in other jurisdictions within Australia including New South Wales and South Australia. This bill makes it clear that the Queensland government and the



Queensland community will not tolerate the sale of deadly weapons designed or marketed in a way that encourages violent or criminal behaviour. These weapons have no place in our society and serve no purpose other than to bolster criminal egos and induce fear in their victims. It is not acceptable to sell a knife depicted with blood spattering the edge of the blade. It is not acceptable to sell a machete inscribed with the words 'killer' or 'slayer' on the blade. It is not acceptable to use marketing to glamorise the use of these items as deadly weaponry, and this government will do whatever is necessary to dispel the dangerous view amongst some young people regarding knife possession.

As detailed in the government's response to the former State Development and Regional Industries Committee's report on the bill, the government will embark on a campaign to ensure that the industry and the broader community are aware of their obligations. The government will consult with relevant stakeholders during the development of this campaign to ensure it is as effective as possible.

As referenced in my second reading speech, I will move some minor amendments during the consideration in detail of this bill. A number of stakeholders during the committee's inquiry suggested that a reasonable period prior to implementation should occur to allow retail outlets to adapt. I will move an amendment to provide that flexibility to retailers in implementing policies to restrict the sale of controlled items to minors prior to the commencement of the offence provisions within the bill by proclamation. The amendment will make it clear that any retailer that refuses to sell a controlled item to a minor will not be taken to discriminate on the basis of age against that person under the Anti-Discrimination Act. This ensures that any retailer that wishes to introduce measures to restrict the sale of knives and other dangerous items to minors can do so immediately upon assent of this bill and with confidence, and I encourage those retailers to act as quickly as they can.

I will now address some of the issues raised by members during the debate. As the member for Ninderry said—

As this bill explores, weapons of choice come in many shapes and sizes. In addition to the use of knives in violent crimes, gel blasters have recently been used in armed robberies by young offenders.

The member for Ninderry continued—

These are not toys; they are replica firearms and can cause serious psychological harm in the event they are mistaken for genuine firearms. They can result in injury or death.

I agree with the member for Ninderry. This is a serious issue and I do welcome the change in position of those opposite when it comes to the gel blaster safety framework. Many members in this House may recall that in 2020 when we sought to strengthen the gel blaster safety framework those opposite opposed that and in fact ridiculed us for putting in place the safety framework—on the advice of the Queensland Police Service, mind you. It was interesting to reflect on some of those comments. In fact, it was the same member, the member for Ninderry, who in 2020 said about our safety framework—

... Labor chooses to pick on innocent children who own toys ...

The member for Currumbin said—

Labor is focused on cracking down on toy guns ...

The member for Kawana, in his usual way, said—

Are kids allowed to play that anymore? Is that a politically incorrect term that we are not allowed to use anymore? Are kids not allowed to play cops and robbers in the street for fear of a Labor minister thinking the world will end because kids are playing cops and robbers?

I welcome the LNP's support now of our safety framework and its change in position from 2020. It is important for us to have a safety framework when it comes to gel blasters that are replica firearms.

The member for Ninderry also raised an issue around the impact of this legislation on retailers, and a number of other members raised that as well. I want to acknowledge how supportive the retail sector has been in the development of this bill. In fact, there were numerous consultations with the sector prior to the introduction of this bill. However, it is also equally important to remember the words of Brett Beasley, who once again is in the gallery today with his wife, Belinda, who said—

We need to stop these retailers selling these knives to underage kids. It's so morally wrong. It's disgusting.

Brett, you know that I agree with a lot of what you say and you said it right there, and we agree with you again.

I note that the opposition has tabled some proposed amendments. In respect of those, I want to reiterate the words of the Premier. The Premier has made it very clear that youth crime is a very serious issue, and future substantive legislative amendments should be considered through a proper parliamentary process which will enable Queenslanders to have a say and ensure that all evidence in support of any amendments can be fully examined and scrutinised and that members have the opportunity to consider a committee report and any recommendations that that committee may have in respect of the scrutiny of any proposed amendments, and of course we would want to welcome the opportunity for members to contribute to a debate in that considered way.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have worked in the development of this bill. I particularly want to thank Jess Mudryk; Senior Sergeant Nicole Powell; and Michael Shears from the Strategic Policy and Legislation Branch within the Queensland Police Service. I also want to thank the Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner Shane Chelepy and Assistant Commissioner and Youth Crime Taskforce commander Andrew Massingham. I also want to give particular thanks to all of the Queensland Police Service right across the state who put community safety front and centre every time they are on shift and every time they are out there supporting community safety and helping to keep Queenslanders safe.

I want to thank my office for the work it has done in preparation of this bill and also Darren Cann from the Premier's office for his assistance in the development of this bill. Most importantly, I want to once again put on record all of those community champions who tirelessly campaigned for reform—reform in the interests of community safety—such as the Jack Beasley Foundation and acknowledge Brett and Belinda Beasley's tireless campaign to help strengthen Queensland laws. I sincerely thank them once again for their support of this bill and the assistance they provided to the committee in its consideration of this bill.

In closing, I want to reaffirm the Queensland government's unwavering dedication to addressing knife crime and ensuring the safety and security of all Queenslanders. This is important legislation. It has strong support right across the community—industry, community, individuals, households. It is legislation that in important ways came from the people. It is legislation for the people and it is legislation that supports community safety for all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House and I encourage all members to support it.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

### Consideration in Detail

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2—



**Mr RYAN** (12.50 pm): I move the following amendment—

#### 1 Clause 2 (Commencement)

Page 4, line 7—

*omit, insert—*

The following provisions commence on a day to be fixed by proclamation—

- (a) part 2;
- (b) sections 6 to 11;
- (c) section 12.

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

*Tabled paper:* Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Mark Ryan's amendments [187].

*Tabled paper:* Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Mark Ryan's amendments [188].

In speaking to this amendment, it is important to highlight what this means for retailers because it does provide an adjustment to the proposed commencement of the provisions of the act. As members would no doubt be aware, pieces of legislation in Queensland will ordinarily commence upon the date that it receives royal assent—that is, the approval of the Governor—on another date specified in the

act or else on the day or days which are fixed by proclamation. It is important to highlight that the amendment before the House specifies that part 2, which relates to the amendment of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act sections 6 to 11, which deals with the newer provisions within the Summary Offences Act and the associated amendments to existing provisions, and section 12 will all commence upon a date to be fixed by proclamation.

That being said, the ability to exclude the application of the Anti-Discrimination Act in respect of age for those retailers who seek to introduce these new arrangements immediately upon assent will be supported by these amendments. It is an opportunity to once again reaffirm that we will work with industry, we will work with the sector, to ensure that there is awareness and education about these provisions, but we will also work with them to ensure that they can, should they choose, implement these amendments as quickly as possible and, in fact, immediately on assent.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.



**Mr PURDIE** (12.51 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

**AYES, 38:**

**LNP, 34**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

**KAP, 2**—Dametto, Knuth.

**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

**Ind, 1**—Bolton.

**NOES, 50:**

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

**Grn, 1**—Berkman.

Resolved in the negative.

Clauses 3 and 4, as read, agreed to.



**Mr PURDIE** (12.57 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title.

Division: Question put—That leave be granted.

**AYES, 38:**

**LNP, 34**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

**KAP, 2**—Dametto, Knuth.

**PHON, 1**—Andrew.

**Ind, 1**—Bolton.

**NOES, 50:**

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

**Grn, 1**—Berkman.

Resolved in the negative.

**Mr SPEAKER:** In accordance with sessional orders, the House must now consider remaining clauses, schedules and any amendments circulated by the minister in charge of the bill.

Question put—That the minister's amendment No. 2, as circulated, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment as circulated—

**2 After clause 11**

Page 14, after line 21—

*insert—*

**11A Insertion of new pt 7**

After part 6—

*insert—*

**Part 7 Transitional provisions for Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023**

**51 Application of Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, s 46**

- (1) For the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*, section 46, a person (the **seller**) does not discriminate against another person only because the seller refuses to sell a controlled item to the other person because the other person is a minor.
- (2) In this section—

***controlled item—***

- (a) means any of the following—
  - (i) a knife other than an exempt knife;
  - (ii) a sword, machete or axe;
  - (iii) a sickle or scythe;
  - (iv) a spear gun;
  - (v) a spear;
  - (vi) a restricted item under the *Weapons Act 1990*, section 67 that is a replica of a firearm under that Act; and
- (b) includes a thing prescribed by regulation to be a controlled item; and
- (c) does not include a thing prescribed by regulation not to be a controlled item.

***exempt knife* means—**

- (a) a plastic or wooden knife designed to be used for eating; or
- (b) a knife with a rounded or dull edge; or

*Example—*

a butter knife

- (c) a knife designed for use as a cheese knife.

**52 Expiry of part**

This part expires on the day of commencement of section 19J inserted by the *Summary Offences (Prevention of Knife Crime) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2023*.

Question put—That clauses 5 to 12, as amended, stand part of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 12, as amended, 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 long title of the bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.


Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

## TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

### Report, Motion to Take Note


Resumed from 30 November 2023 (see p. 3949), on motion of Mr King—

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.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.00 pm), continuing: I have a couple of minutes remaining in which to wind up. There has been a little time between the previous debate and this one. As we travelled around, the main thing that we found was that developers and people living on the islands faced a multitude of overlapping regulations that made their lives very confusing. It made it difficult for local government. Sometimes the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority would come into play. Whether it was about a pontoon or landing a plane, the owners of the islands were not always very cooperative with the residents.

We had a great visit to Keswick Island. The pontoon was not functional and we had to get our feet wet, but that was very pleasant. At that time they were not able to land a plane on the island. The people who live on the island have a beautiful lifestyle and live in beautiful homes, but in a medical emergency they would be very vulnerable if no aircraft were available to get out them in a rush. My understanding is that some of that has been resolved. The success of the committee, in undertaking this inquiry, putting the details together and writing this report, has meant a little bit better cooperation and a little better understanding.

Hopefully, going forward, we will see some tighter legislation and we can use these jewels in Queensland's crown as tourist destinations and lifestyle destinations and make them work. These are beautiful places and they are a wonderful part of Queensland, but it has been significantly difficult for people to live and have a Queensland lifestyle on those islands. I commend the report to the House.

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (2.02 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Transport and Resources Committee report *Inquiry into the economic and regulatory frameworks for Queensland island resorts*. I begin by congratulating and thanking the committee and the chair for their work and efforts in coming to Central Queensland and to Yeppoon to hear from our local stakeholders about the importance of the inquiry. The recommendations they have made have been very well received by my community, industry and tourism operators.

In the electorate of Keppel there are a number of amazing islands off the coast in the Southern Great Barrier Reef. The most famous of all of those islands is, of course, the beautiful and majestic Great Keppel Island—or Woppa, as it is known by the traditional owners and native title holders, the Woppaburra people. I have spoken a number of times in this place about the beauty and magic that is Great Keppel Island in the Southern Great Barrier Reef, how proud I am to have that jewel in our crown right there, just a number of kilometres off the coast of Yeppoon and how much I have enjoyed it.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Ms LAUGA:** It is beautiful. I take that interjection. I have enjoyed visiting that island since I was a little girl. Many people have great stories and memories of their visits to Great Keppel Island.

While the island has not always had a bright past, through the recommendations that have been made in this committee report and the work that the state government is doing I hope that Great Keppel Island has a bright future. Last year we all celebrated when the Department of Resources made Tower Holdings relinquish the leases it held over around 700 hectares of land on the island. They held a huge parcel of leases and basically held us all to ransom for over 10 years. More than 10 years ago they closed the resort on Great Keppel Island and it has been left to sit and perish.

**Ms Pease:** Shame.

**Ms LAUGA:** It is a form of environmental vandalism. What is left there is a tragedy. Thankfully, the leases are back in the state government's hands as a result of the actions of the then Palaszczuk government. We have control of those parcels of land. We can set the future for what that land will look like and the future of Great Keppel Island, having been held to ransom for so many years by that unscrupulous developer. Now these leases have been relinquished, the state government is starting to work on cleaning up the old resort. I am instructed that the department is using every lever that it can utilise to try to recoup the costs associated with the clean-up from Tower Holdings as a result of it leaving the resort in such a disgraceful way.

Over the past few years, we have been working on a master plan for the island in consultation with a large group of stakeholders. I think there are about 50 stakeholders on the working group mailing list who have all played a really important role in developing the master plan. What I love about the master plan is that it has been developed by the community for the community. In consultation with the traditional owners, the tourism operators and the residents of the island, the master plan has been developed by the community for the community. In years gone by, a revolving door of developers have had grand plans for what they wanted to do with the old resort, none of which came to fruition.

Now that Tower Holdings has relinquished the leases, we have taken back control of the island and we are developing a master plan that sets out a bright future for the island. I am really pleased that that has been supported by the recommendations from this committee inquiry. Recommendation 1 of the committee states—

The Department of Resources should take immediate action to cancel tourism leases where lessees have been determined by departmental audit ... to be non-compliant with lease conditions ...

I am particularly pleased that that has happened on Great Keppel Island. I envisage that that recommendation and government policy will go on to provide future benefits to other island resorts where this has been the case and developers have held us to ransom. I am very pleased that we are delivering \$30 million worth of infrastructure improvements on the island including a new wastewater treatment plant and walking trails. I commend the committee report to the House.

(Time expired)

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

### Report, Motion to Take Note



**Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (2.08 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Transport and Resources Committee report No. 33, 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into the Peninsula Developmental Road (Laura to Weipa) Project*, tabled on 13 April 2023.

The Transport and Resources Committee inquired into the Peninsula Developmental Road, Laura to Weipa. The Peninsula Developmental Road, or PDR as it is fondly known, has been a vital transport route that travels over 500 kilometres through Cape York to Weipa. However, historically the road has been in a poor state, with only a quarter of its length being sealed prior to 2014-15 and it being flooded and cut for up to four months during each wet season. The impacts of the road being inoperable for such long periods each year have been significant on communities across Cape York. The outcomes from road closures have included isolation, the hindering of economic and social opportunities, the need for residents to stockpile provisions—in particular, food—and a requirement for locals to be airlifted for medical services.

The prior state of the PDR and the effects of poor connectivity across the cape have contributed to the region experiencing significant disadvantage—in particular, the local First Nations peoples. During these road closures, the other option to Weipa residents and the mining operation for transport of consumables, vehicles and materials is by ship. We were told that it has been prohibitively expensive.

When our committee resolved to conduct a public works inquiry into the Peninsula Developmental Road, Laura to Weipa, we drove the PDR. In June 2022 we held hearings with local communities to discuss the works. We received overwhelmingly positive reports on the impacts of the project to date. Some of the positives included a focus on training and utilising local residents and businesses for the required works. The benefits of the works have also included a recent increase in tourist and visitor numbers to the cape following the improvement of accessibility of the PDR.


While this has the potential to further contribute to local economic growth, we heard from local communities about the influx of tourists who fill their vehicles with fuel and food in Cairns and who spend a little in the cape communities but still require the use of facilities. As the councils have a lower rate base, the challenge is now the cost of maintaining and improving these amenities with limited funding. The committee encourages all levels of government to continue working together in order to improve services to the residents of Cape York and visitors to this region.

We saw the early works of the Archer River Bridge. It will be an impressive piece of infrastructure when it is finished. Some of the challenges we heard about in terms of the planning for works in an area such as this are unique. This bridge, for example, is not guaranteed to be dry 100 per cent of the time

but will be open for significantly longer periods. If the bridge were raised to a flood-proof level, the cost would make it unviable. While the bridge would be dry, the road for tens of kilometres in either direction leading to it would be well underwater. That is the reason for what they have done.

The committee concluded that the work was suitable for its purpose; the work was necessary and advisable; the work was reasonable value for money; the costs of the work were reasonable; the work has had a positive impact on the community, the economy and the environment, as I have stated; the procurement method for the work was suitable; and the balance of public and private sector involvement in the work was satisfactory.

I would like to thank the members of the Transport and Resources Committee for their work on this report as well as the hardworking secretariat and Hansard. We had quite a number of changes during this inquiry; I am no longer on the committee, either. I would like to thank Deb Jeffrey, who started the report but no longer works here, and Jodhi, who continued it along with Zac and the team. We all appreciate their work and the work of the committee.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.12 pm): I, too, would like to pass on my thanks to Jodhi for her work on this. Like the member who spoke before me, I am no longer on the Transport and Resources Committee either. I would also like to thank all of the committee members, especially the chair, Shane King, member for Kurwongbah. Thank you for your help and certainly for your guidance, mate. I wish you all the best in your new role.

This was a big trip for us. We got to Weipa the day before and we took off at about five o'clock in the morning to drive down to Cooktown on the Peninsula Developmental Road, which ends at Laura but we had to get to Cooktown. It was an experience to see the difficulties that people in the cape face when it comes to transport. As parliamentarians—particularly the current government—we need to make sure every community has bitumen access to be able to get to places. We finally have complete bitumen to Muttaborra from Longreach.

**Mr Stevens:** Muttaborra to Hughenden.

**Mr MILLAR:** Exactly. We also need the 19 kilometres from Bedourie to Birdsville, which the committee has been out to see and inspect. Certainly, it is important that we make sure we continue to build on those roads and make sure they are maintained. These roads from Weipa to Laura are the only way to get there. With limited maternity services in Cape York, most mums have to go to Cairns to have their baby delivered. They have to go down a couple of weeks early and await the birth of their child.

In terms of flooding, we have just seen cyclones go through that area and they can be devastating. It is about people being able to access basic food supplies to continue to live in those areas. If we do not maintain roads like this one and make them bitumen, people do suffer.

**Mr Perrett** interjected.

**Mr MILLAR:** I take the interjection from the member for Gympie. Agriculture is an incredibly important part of Cape York. The beef industry is a lifeblood. We have to be able to get our cattle out to where they have the go, whether it is to the processor or for live trade. It is important that we ensure people can generate economic opportunity for the state.

I congratulate the two departmental staff who were on the trip with us in 2022. They did a fantastic job. They and their departmental colleagues were so committed to making sure the Peninsula Developmental Road was finished. They were proud of what they were able to achieve, especially in terms of the Archer River Bridge. That is a significant piece of infrastructure. If we can get it at least 90 per cent accessible, without it going under, that will be fantastic.


When you use the Archer River Bridge now, you go across it, down into a gully and then back out. Of course it is going to flood. That place floods all the time in the wet season. If we can put in important infrastructure such as that, it is worthwhile. I could see the pride in the departmental staff in terms of achieving something of great significance for the people in Cape York. Public servants are the people who do significant work for us in government. They turn up every day and put their minds to making sure we have a better way in Queensland.

Finally, I reiterate: it is important that regional Queensland has access to good roads. An example is the Dawson Highway, which needs significant infrastructure improvements.

**Mrs Frecklington:** There's a beef road.

**Mr MILLAR:** Yes, absolutely. For the first time in a long time, the Capricorn Highway from Emerald to Alpha is starting to come apart. Surprisingly, last week when I was in Longreach I noticed that the Barcardine to Longreach stretch of road needs work. Let's continue to invest in roads.

(Time expired)

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (2.17 pm): I rise to speak to the report *Inquiry into the Peninsula Developmental Road (Laura to Weipa) Project*. Firstly, I thank my fellow committee members for their work on this report. I did not get to go on the tour. I could not make it—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr WALKER:** It is not a bad thing. There are only so many days in a week to do all of the things that a state member has to do. I acknowledge my fellow committee members: chair Shane King, the member for Kurwongbah, who has moved on to the role of Assistant Minister for Clean Economy Jobs; and deputy chair Lachlan Millar, member for Gregory, who has also moved on but who did a great job. I thank him for his service. Bryson Head is still on the committee. James Martin has since moved on to two other committees. He is sadly missed, but I thank the member for Stretton for his work. Trevor Watts and Pat Weir were also on the committee. Pat has been in and out but is back with us briefly as well. I thank the committee secretariat, Jodhi and Zac, for their great work and thank others who assisted with this report and did an excellent job.

The executive summary of the Transport and Resources Committee's report No. 33 of the 57th Parliament states—

2 Background and scope of the project

2.1 Background

The Peninsula Developmental Road ... is the main road transport link within Cape York and between the Peninsula and the rest of the Australian mainland. The Cape is home to approximately 18,000 residents of which over two-thirds identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. It is one of the most remote areas of Australia and experiences significant disadvantage.

The PDR is a state-controlled road and historically, much of it has been unsealed, severely corrugated and significantly impacted during the annual wet season. Saturation and flooding has resulted in the road being closed for up to four months per year, which then causes remote communities that rely on the road to become isolated.

While a commercial barge service operates to certain locations in Cape York, the committee heard evidence that this transport option can be costly and that there may be extended timeframes to send and receive freight and supplies via this alternate route when the PDR is inoperable.

In January 2014 the Federal Government announced a five-year, \$210 million funding package aimed at improving infrastructure in Cape York. This commitment stated—

"The Cape York Region package will look to upgrade key access roads in the region to ensure they are able to withstand severe weather conditions. This will keep those roads open for longer during the annual wet season and underpin stronger local economies and better services for locals."


2.2 Project overview

The Cape York Region Package (CYRP) was initially a five-year, \$260.5 million program of works jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments. While the focus of the CYRP was sealing sections of the PDR, other components of the package included:

- Indigenous community infrastructure work (\$50.5 million)
- Endeavour Valley Road sealing works (\$10 million).

This original funding package covered the period from 2014-15 to 2018-19 and is referred to as CYRP1 ... In 2018, the program funding was increased by \$15.5 million to a total of \$276 million.

The committee has concluded that the work is suitable for its purpose; the work was necessary and advisable; the work was reasonable value for money; the costs of the work was reasonable; the work has had a positive impact on the community, the economy and the environment; the procurement method for the work was suitable; and the balance of public and private sector involvement in the work was satisfactory. The committee recommends that the Legislative Assembly note the contents of this report. I commend to the House report No. 33 of the 57th Parliament of the Transport and Resources Committee, dated April 2023.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (2.21 pm): I rise to speak on the report *Inquiry into the Peninsula Developmental Road (Laura to Weipa) Project*. The PDR is a vital route through more than 500 kilometres of Cape York, which is 7.3 per cent of Queensland's total land mass. It passes through Laura and Coen and local roads linking to communities such as Weipa, Cooktown and Bamaga. The road is



historically in poor condition with only a quarter sealed prior to 2014-15. It floods and is then cut for up to four months during each wet season. The committee investigated a range of financial, social, timeliness project management criteria regarding the upgrade of the road including its economic and environmental impact on the Cape York communities. This region has unique and specific challenges.

As the report notes, road improvements have generated increased tourist and visitors to Cape York. Michael Rowland, Chair of Weipa Town Authority, said that each year roughly 40,000 tourists and up to 60,000 travel across the PDR. While this is expected to grow and have a positive impact on local economies, the committee heard that it also creates challenges for local authorities for enhanced local amenities. An influx of tourists and movements across the cape also increases threats from biosecurity risks. Unfortunately, the government's dealings with the region seem to be made in isolation from other departments. Linda Cardew, the former chief executive officer of the Cook Shire Council, told the committee—

We would like to take a whole-of-government approach ... which we have tried to initiate at various times. The perception ... is that each government department is ... undertaking its work within its terms of reference but in a very narrow silo.

At the same time this report was tabled last February, the department of agriculture said it was reviewing the Cape York Biosecurity Centre at Coen. While the transport department was projecting increases in people and traffic movements, DAF either did not know, care or ignored the projections. The Coen facility was one of the first northern physical barriers to biosecurity threats. In 2018 the minister announced increased operating hours there and then five years later, last June, he closed it. Yet since 2018 exotic emergency animal disease threats have increased, not decreased. It does not make sense. The threat from biosecurity risks, including to the cattle industry, is increased especially when the PDR upgrade is expected to deliver growth in traffic and tourist numbers. Local growers and graziers said that the Coen facility should have been opened for 24 hours, not shut.

Local traditional owners also want to benefit from increased agricultural opportunities. The Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Cape York Land Council, Terry Piper, told the committee—

I do see the PDR as quite a game changer on the cape ... There are tourism and agriculture opportunities that would not have been there otherwise.

We do hope that some of this brings a bit of a boost to cattle on the cape in some areas. Traditional owners have grown up in the cattle industry. It is in their blood and they want to see improvements in that ... This road will then improve that. It will provide opportunities for export out of Weipa and various things that would not otherwise have been available.

The Coen facility was very successful in stopping the spread of diseases as well as increasing biosecurity awareness amongst travellers. An editorial in the *Cape York Weekly* stated—

... it provided both a physical reminder about biosecurity and provided a bottleneck to monitor traffic in the case of an outbreak.


There were frequent reports of northbound visitors stopping for biosecurity information from a DAF officer and of surrendering produce to the biosecurity bins on their return journey. A retired biosecurity officer told the newspaper—

... a lot of tourists ... pick up driftwood from a beach and ... don't realise what kind of biosecurity problems that can cause if they take it home. That driftwood comes from Indonesia and PNG.

AgForce CEO Michael Guerin said the consequences of the closure of the Coen facility could be catastrophic and makes no sense. He said—

It is simply madness to close the facility ... Without a solid movement control checkpoint on Cape York, an emergency animal disease outbreak on one of the Torres Strait Islands could have a catastrophic impact on red meat exports ... the country has lost the ability to prevent a pest or disease from spreading.

While the PDR upgrade is welcome news for communities in the cape, the agriculture minister's record of crossing his fingers and paying lip-service to biosecurity risks makes us vulnerable.

 **Mr BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (2.26 pm): I rise to support the committee's report into the Peninsula Developmental Road work. This is a particular program that is very special to me as someone involved in transport over the last nine years. I acknowledge the very hard work of the member for Cook, who has been a very strong advocate for this program and for this program continuing. In saying that, I note for all members of the House that this is an extraordinary part of the state. If members have not been up there, I recommend they fit it in at some point. It is an extraordinarily different, diverse and incredible part of Queensland, but it has suffered from having what I have often called in the past probably one of the most dangerous roads in the nation. That is why we are now quite advanced on a second five-year sealing program.

It is unique because for five months of the year you cannot do any work up there. There is the wet season, there is the remnants of the wet season and then there is the entry into the wet season, and you never know precisely when it is going to start. There is a seven-month building program up in the cape and that has unique challenges. It is very remote. What we do know is that a lot of people have died on that road. A lot of those people have been from First Nations communities who live anywhere from Lockhart River to Pormpuraaw and a range of other communities. Those people deserve safe roads as other people do anywhere else in the state. That is what this program is about. I am glad to see the committee looking into it.

In the wet season it is an incredible landscape up there. The Archer River swells to be seven or eight metres higher than it usually is. The area gets cut off and you can only get in there by plane. We are making that road more resilient. To see the road when I first went up there in 2016 to what it is now—it used to be a very rough and ready road. A four-wheel drive is pretty much what you needed. You would be rumbling along and the landscape would be covered in ochre dust as far as the eye could see. Now when you drive along the sealed sections of the road it is as good as any highway anywhere in the country. We have progressively been able to get more done. The Archer River Bridge is a unique bridge because it is designed to be submerged. That is how big the wet season is up there. To be able to get that out of the firing line would be exorbitantly expensive.

That is a phenomenal project. I understand it will be completed this year, and that will see a huge level of resilience going into the PDR. I want to pay tribute to the member for Cook for her strong advocacy. We got a second five-year program negotiated. When the former Morrison government wanted inland rail signed, we wanted another five-year program for this and we got it. That is due to the hard work of the member for Cook and this government's leadership.

Work will need to continue up there into the future. A lot of Indigenous businesses have started road-building businesses. They are contracted successfully to this work and then they go and do work in their local communities as well. That economic sustainability and the capacity for people to work in their own communities, train their own people and be part of their own community in an economic way has been a huge enabler for the cape, and I acknowledge the contribution of all governments. We have seen contributions from the Rudd-Gillard government, this government and the Morrison government after the inland rail signing. It is something that needs to be continued.

I certainly pay tribute to all of the TMR engineers up there. It is not an easy environment. They work in PPE gear in very hot weather and very challenging conditions, but they do a magnificent job. I say to anyone who has not been to the cape that that road is getting safer every year and it is an amazing place in Queensland to visit.

I want to pay tribute to Wayne Butcher, the mayor of Lockhart River. He is a great leader in the cape. They now have festival grounds and they will be holding the Paytham Malkari Dance Festival every year. They have just had their first one. We are seeing more and more people getting up into the cape because the road is safer. It is not dangerous but something to really explore and enjoy. Those communities want to see people travelling up there because it helps them with revenue and their sustainability. This PDR program is phenomenal. It is something that this government is very proud of and it is something that needs to continue into the future.



**Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (2.31 pm): I rise to speak in support of Transport and Resources Committee Report No. 33, 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into the Peninsula Developmental Road (Laura to Weipa) Project*. I would like to acknowledge the work of the committee members on this important report. I would also like to thank all of the individuals and organisations that made written submissions to the inquiry and appeared at the public hearings. Like other members of committee, I would like to thank the TMR staff who helped drive us the 650 kilometres, the secretariat and Hansard who came along for this epic journey.

It was a real experience for me travelling those 650 kilometres because it was a real reminder that Queensland is an incredibly vast state. It was a long drive, and it certainly reminded me of the special challenges that regional communities face when it comes to accessing services. Most importantly, for me it was an example of the real changes infrastructure can make to communities and individuals and the important work that state government departments play in that.

The committee came to several positive conclusions about the project, including: that the work was suitable for its purpose; that it was necessary and advisable; that it was good value for money; that costs were reasonable; and that the work had a positive impact on the community, the economy and the environment. The procurement method for the work was also found to be suitable. The balance of public and private sector investment was also good. One of the great examples of private sector


investment that has come out of work on the PDR in particular is the benefit to local Indigenous owned and operated businesses that contract to TMR. The construction that is happening there goes on to create jobs, much needed investment and ongoing, sustainable Indigenous owned businesses. It was really great to hear about that.

The committee resolved to conduct the public works inquiry into the PDR in November 2021. We received submissions from stakeholders and subscribers, including TMR. The committee undertook a site inspection by driving the whole length of the PDR and further—we went on to Cooktown—in June 2022. We also held hearings with local communities to discuss the works.

Works on the PDR have been happening steadily since 2015. The PDR was identified back in 2014 as a road that needed to be upgraded as part of the Cape York Regional Package. The road provides a vital transport route through over 500 kilometres of Cape York. Only one-quarter of the road was sealed prior to 2014. As members have heard, it is often flooded and cut off for up to four months during each wet season. Since 2014 a total of \$466 million has been spent in two instalments through the Cape York Regional Package, and the ongoing upgrades have sealed a further 201 kilometres of road.

The committee saw—and it was really great to see in person—the improved social outcomes for locals and First Nations communities in Cape York as a result of these road improvements. These improvements have provided better access to health services and employment and education opportunities. It has improved safety, and the improved accessibility of the PDR has also resulted in an increase in tourist and visitor numbers to the cape. We did hear that increasing visitor numbers also meant increasing challenges, particularly at the council level as they have to service the road. The committee received overwhelmingly positive reports on the impacts of the project; however, the likely further influx of people to the cape has created a need for improved local amenities. One of the examples that came up was emptying rubbish bins when the bin is a three-hour drive away.

All levels of government will need to work together to encourage local economic growth and ensure services continue to improve for the residents of Cape York and visitors to the region. They also continue to deal with the challenges of construction in this part of Queensland. As members have heard, you can work on the road up there for only seven months of the year. I was happy to be part of this inquiry. I commend the committee report to the House.

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (2.36 pm): I rise to speak in support of Transport and Resources Committee Report No. 33, 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into the Peninsula Developmental Road (Laura to Weipa) Project*. The Peninsula Developmental Road is an important road network in Cape York in my electorate, providing a vital transport route over 500 kilometres of Cape York. Prior to 2014-15 the road was in pretty poor condition, with only a quarter of its length sealed. The vastness of the Cook electorate makes it incredibly complex, and having a good road is so important to address some of the social and economic challenges that communities face. I can remember my very first trip travelling on the PDR from the NPA. I can tell you that, being an unsealed road, it was not for the faint-hearted. For a four-wheel drive enthusiast, 'yay'; it just was not for me.

The poor state of the road meant that parts of the PDR were subject to major flooding. Communities were cut off, and I have heard many stories about the hardship associated with that. These communities are often cut off for up to four months during the wet season. The impact of the road being inoperable for such long periods each year meant that communities became isolated, so residents would have to stockpile enough supplies to last. Certain services were impacted, especially health, as the only way out would be by air. Isolation also made it very difficult for businesses to thrive, which affected the local economy. It is a known fact that during the wet big road projects, which contract and support local employment, cease operation until after the wet. The prior state of the PDR and the effects of poor connectivity across the cape have contributed to significant disadvantages for anyone living in the region. While a commercial barge service operates to certain locations on Cape York, I acknowledge that it is costly for many of the communities that I look after.

In 2014 the federal government announced a five-year, \$210 million funding package to upgrade key access roads in the region to ensure they are able to withstand severe weather conditions. The Commonwealth investment, combined with the state government contribution, made up the Cape York Regional Package. The Cape York Regional Package did not just focus on sealing sections of the PDR. Other components of the package included Indigenous community infrastructure work and the Endeavour Valley Road sealing, which was delivered shortly after I was elected in 2017.

The sealing of the PDR is now a key economic driver in the region, opening up so many opportunities, especially for those communities that branch off the main PDR. There are many benefits to the region as a result of the state and Commonwealth investment. We are seeing more training opportunities for local people resulting from the strong partnership created between the Department of Transport and Main Roads, local traditional owners and the Cape York Land Council. The roads are becoming safer to travel on so more tourists are visiting our region, therefore supporting our local community. Better and improved roads also mean that our communities stay socially and culturally connected which supports good mental health and wellbeing.

A CY Region Package project board was formed to oversee governance of the CYRP. This is a multiagency board, jointly chaired by representatives from Commonwealth and Queensland government departments and agencies. The board structure is designed to oversee the development of the road infrastructure components of both stages of the CYRP and performs the primary management role relating to key policy, technical and whole-of-government issues associated with the road funding component of CYRP stage 2. This good partnership that is happening across the board will support the future economic viability of a region such as mine—and my region often has limited opportunities to support local jobs. It is good to see that we have partnerships right across the board from state government, local governments and key agencies.

The investment into the PDR is so important. It supports the social and economic wellbeing of all the communities that depend on the PDR. I am always in support of this project. I want to acknowledge Shane King, the committee chair, and also the former minister for transport and main roads, Mark Bailey, who were champions in supporting this big project in my electorate. I commend the inquiry.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

### Report, Motion to Take Note



**Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (2.41 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Economics and Governance Committee Report No. 44, 57th Parliament, *Examination of Auditor-General reports*, tabled on 21 April 2023.

I want to alert the House to the fine work that the EGC is doing in our statutory role. The Economics and Governance Committee, which is now the Cost of Living and Economics Committee—the CoLE Committee, as ‘Ray the wit’ has dubbed it—has the special role of focusing on the cost of living. We will also continue to have oversight of the statutory role of the Queensland Auditor-General. The statutory role is governed by the Auditor-General Act and is quite important, in that the office is set up by the aegis of that act. The Auditor-General has the ability to conduct audits on departments, matters and entities as well as performance audits and chooses them through the statutory process of informing the committee. The Auditor-General does these audits independently and chooses which audits to undertake.

Importantly, when the Auditor-General undertakes a performance audit, the object of the audit includes: deciding whether the objectives of the public sector entity are achieved economically, efficiently and effectively and in compliance with all relevant laws, and identifying any opportunities for the public sector entity to achieve its objectives more economically, efficiently and effectively. It is also very important that the statute dictates that the Auditor-General has a limit to the independence—in that the Auditor-General must not question the merits of policy objectives of the state or a local government, including a decision of cabinet, a direction of a minister, a policy statement in the budget papers of the state or a local government, a document evidencing a policy decision of a cabinet or a minister, and a document evidencing a policy decision of a local government. In that way, the Auditor-General acts as an important tool to get greater efficiency out of our Public Service and looks at the objectives of the government and looks for greater efficiencies, while still attempting to achieve the democratically elected government’s objectives within their framework. I want to highlight for the House one particular report of the Auditor-General—

**Mr Stevens:** The COVID one.

**Mr POWER:** That is correct—the management of the COVID economic response. That will go down in history as an extraordinarily strong health and economic response. I was lucky enough to tune in to a program on the ABC on my son's recommendation called *Nemesis*—it might be obscure for some.

**Mr Smith:** What's it about?

**Mr POWER:** It is a history documentary. Within this documentary, I noticed that former prime minister Morrison stated that during COVID—

**Mrs Frecklington:** What is the relevance of this?

**Mr POWER:** The relevance is that former prime minister Morrison at that point during COVID said that he thought the nation would face 15 per cent unemployment and that is what they were working on. He went further to say that he noted that it was the states that actually delivered on health care and the implementation of policy. The states actually delivered.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** This is his history. I am not sure if you see former prime minister Morrison as a reliable narrator of facts—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Member for Logan, through the chair, please.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. The member is not taking interjections. Member for Logan, I draw you back to the report, please.


**Mr POWER:** As I said, it was the states that actually delivered so in some ways this is reflective on the report—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** Can you give us a break here? This is a serious issue.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Logan and member for Nanango, we will not have any arguing across the chamber. Member for Logan, through the chair, please.

**Mr POWER:** It is no wonder they want to silence talk of that extraordinarily good performance. Let us never forget that in 2015 when we got into office unemployment was at 6.7 per cent. We saw extraordinarily good economic growth, including employment growth, and got that down to 3.6 per cent. The last government would never have dreamed of that. If we had that government, we would have faced former prime minister Morrison's fears of 15 per cent and he was probably fearing what they would have done.


 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (2.47 pm): It is a pleasure for me to rise as the deputy chair of what is now the CoLE Committee to speak on our committee's report No. 44 on Auditor-General reports. The Auditor-General reported on seven important issues, and the member for Logan has outlined one. There were quite a few others, including state entities, appointing boards, improving grants management and the issuing of grants, the status of Auditor-General recommendations, and managing workforce agility in terms of moving from one particular area to the other.

It is a very important role, and Mr Brendan Worrall does a fantastic job as our Auditor-General in putting forward these reports for the committee to consider in the first instance and then for the House to consider so that we can shine a light on government behaviour. That is a very important fact, particularly with this government. The audit reports come out with the facts, the truth and, as he insists himself, transparency in terms of their delivery of government services and government financial accounting matters. He said in one of his reports that it is very important to strengthen governance and oversight arrangements. Basically, the Auditor-General's report said that the government needed to adopt in the audit committees in their own departments the fact that they were not independent and they needed to embrace further technology and advise departments on better reporting. I think he has 111 outstanding recommendations that are still to be implemented throughout the government departments, and that is an important part of the future direction of those departments. It is a wonderful opportunity for the Auditor-General to report directly in an unbiased manner, take all the politics out of it and come back to this House with the facts of the matter.

I will take the opportunity to comment that, in terms of the Auditor-General's job, there had been a bit of a movement, if you like—because he is very concerned about maintaining his independence—towards the EGC having oversight, particularly towards the budgetary matters. I find that very difficult as, the way they are set up, portfolio committees are not independent committees. That is just a fact.

The portfolio committees can take a direction from the government members of the day, by virtue of the voting numbers on that committee. For a committee that has held a lot of its discussions in private, that makes it very difficult for independence and transparency to be highlighted through committee processes. Mr Worrall, the Auditor-General, is very concerned about any transfer of direction that may come through government with regard to budgetary matters—in other words, tightening up the moneys they can spend or the direction in which those things can go in terms of his role as an independent auditor.

I think Mr Worrall finishes up in the short term, as his time will be expiring. He has done an excellent job in bringing those reports—report 44 is just one of them—to the House in a very unbiased and, I think as the member for Logan indicated previously, apolitical way, as per his charter. I am very supportive of the continuation of the independence of Mr Worrall and, particularly following him, the Auditor-General's office, and I certainly support wholeheartedly the report that is being considered by the House today.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (2.52 pm): I rise to make my contribution in relation to the committee's report No. 44, *Examination of Auditor-General reports*. As has been indicated, report No. 44 examines a number of the Auditor-General's reports, two of which I want to touch on in the brief time that I have this afternoon.

QAO report No. 2 was in relation to improving grants management. I think grants and local grants across a number of departments are near and dear to all MPs' hearts, as there is nothing better than hearing of one of your local organisations being the recipient of a grant, whether they be our sporting clubs, community clubs, small businesses or one of a range of really important community members and assets. It is interesting to note the regional distribution of state government grant payments. During the audit period South-East Queensland, which has 73 per cent of the state's population, received only 32 per cent of all state government grants, whereas areas of the regions outside of South-East Queensland received 44.3 per cent.

**Mrs Gilbert:** Hear, hear!


**Mrs McMAHON:** I take that interjection. The member for Mackay believes that is how it should be. I note that, during that time, outside South-East Queensland, Townsville, Cairns and Whitsundays did get a large portion of that, which included a lot of the COVID job recovery. Considering the big concentration of tourism industry there, that is understandable. Twenty-two per cent of grants go for statewide purposes. Every time I now hear that we need to be spending more money in regional Queensland, I will note that most of the grant money already goes to regional Queensland.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mrs McMAHON:** Excellent! All of those members who agree to that should feel free to add their name to the end of the list of speakers on this report so they can vouch for that as well.

The other audit report I want to talk to is one that the member for Logan touched on: report No. 3, *Managing Queensland's COVID-19 economic response and recovery*. We all know, and I am certainly a firm believer, that our strong health response to the pandemic has been the major cause for our strong economic recovery. The Audit Office's report actually backs this in. I will note that the six examined initiatives, together with the containment of the COVID-19 case numbers and the economic stimulus from all levels of government, contributed to a faster than expected economic recovery through to December 2021. It is not just members on this side of the House standing up and repeating the often heard line that our strong health response has led to a strong economic response; the Queensland Audit Office has backed that in.

In relation to the economic stimulus, I note that one of the earlier reports by the QAO specifically looked at a case study—and I know that there was a lot of concern about the number of stimulus packages that went out. They did go out very quickly; they had to go out rapidly because there were jobs and businesses that were at risk. Obviously, with stimulus packages coming out that quickly, there was always a risk that they would not be targeted correctly or that there would be some financial risk, particularly in relation to the loans. However, the Audit Office found that approximately 95 per cent of the recipients were identified as having a minimal-to-low or average-to-moderate credit risk rating and, following that, that the majority of loan recipients were complying with the repayment schedules. I would like to put on record my faith in those businesses that did put their hand up and ask for some support, that they did so in good faith and continue to make their repayments in good faith. Knowing that those decisions had to be made rapidly to keep our businesses afloat and our communities and their jobs intact, the Queensland Audit Office has confirmed that in the majority of cases it was the right decision to make.

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (2.57 pm): I rise to add my contribution to the debate on the Economics and Governance Committee's report No. 44—

**Mr Stevens** interjected.

**Mr TANTARI:** Sorry?

**Mr Smith** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Members, I will start warning people if you are going to have conversations across the chamber.

**Mr TANTARI:**—*Examination of Auditor-General reports.* The EGC had the responsibility, within its portfolio area, of assessing the integrity, economic efficiency and effectiveness of government financial management by examining government financial documents and considering the annual and other reports of the Auditor-General. We know that the role of the Auditor-General is to provide to the parliament an independent assurance of public sector accountability and performance. This is achieved through reporting to parliament results of financial and performance audits undertaken by the Audit Office, QAO.

The QAO performance audits examine government programs to consider if public money is being well used and the government is meeting taxpayers' expectations around service delivery. These audits do not consider the merits of a particular government policy; rather, they focus on how the policy is implemented—for example, whether it is achieving its objectives effectively, economically and efficiently, in keeping with the relevant legislation. In reporting to the parliament on these audit results and on any information or insights identified through the audit process, the QAO makes recommendations for improvements to enhance financial reporting practices and support better public service delivery for all Queenslanders.

The report summarised seven reports considered by the Economics and Governance Committee as referred to the committee by the Auditor-General. They were: report 14, *State entities 2021*; report 17, *Appointing and renewing government boards*; report 2, *Improving grants management*; report 3, *Managing Queensland's COVID-19 economic response and recovery*; report 4, *2022 status of Auditor-General recommendations*; and report 6, *Managing workforce agility in the Queensland public sector*.


The committee considered the findings and recommendations of the QAO and the responses of those entities to those recommendations, including their identified implementation actions and time frames. The committee engaged with the Auditor-General and the QAO in relation to the findings of some of these reports in public briefings. While the committee will not be taking further action in relation to the audits, the committee welcomes further action from entities to ensure the issues identified by the Auditor-General continue to be addressed. Ongoing improvements in entity processes and enhancements to governance, controls, monitoring and reporting will help facilitate more effective, efficient—

Debate, on motion of Mr Tantari, adjourned.

## TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 12 October 2023 (see p. 3023).

### Second Reading

 **Hon. BJ MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (3.00 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to speak on the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I would like to thank the members of the previous Transport and Resources Committee for their review of the bill, and for considering the views of interested community and industry representatives. The committee tabled its report on 24 November last year. The committee report recommended that the bill be passed and included one additional recommendation. I now table the government's response to the committee recommendations.

*Tabled paper:* Transport and Resources Committee: Report No. 43, 57th Parliament—Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, government response [\[189\]](#).

I acknowledge the industry and community stakeholders for their interest in the bill, and thank them for their submissions to the committee. When it comes to safety on our roads and paths, this government can be trusted to deliver. In 2021, a road safety round table was held to address the ongoing community concerns about the safe use of e-scooters and other personal mobility devices and to tackle these issues head-on.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Members, I ask for the level of volume to come down in the chamber. I am having trouble hearing the minister on his feet.

**Mr MELLISH:** Since then, this government has introduced nation-leading reform to address unsafe riding behaviours; worked closely with stakeholders to educate users; significantly increased enforcement; and advocated at the national level for a consistent regulatory framework across Australia. This bill is another step towards addressing unsafe riding behaviours and creating a consistent regulatory framework on our public infrastructure. Everyone deserves to feel safe on our roads and footpaths, regardless of how and where they choose to travel. As a timely reminder of why this work is so important, my department undertook a community survey in relation to these issues. The survey found that two-thirds of footpath users reported feeling unsafe. This is unacceptable and highlights that now, more than ever, we need to prioritise footpath safety.

One of the key amendments in this bill is to expand careless riding offences for personal mobility devices and bicycle riders to road related areas such as footpaths and bikeways. This is already a requirement on Queensland's roads and it will create consistent obligations for riders, regardless of their location. Most importantly, this prioritises the priority of vulnerable path users, including children and people with a disability. Riding with due care and attention is a commonsense benchmark to ensure safety. Throughout the committee process, there was some concern that this could result in unintended enforcement outcomes. I wish to assure all Queenslanders that these laws are to discourage reckless and dangerous riding. Footpaths are shared spaces and we must be mindful of one another. Everyday riding behaviours, such as taking a drink of water, will not be captured and those who do the right thing will not be impacted.

The bill aligns post-crash obligations for all riders and drivers to ensure all injured persons receive timely aid and all parties to a crash are required to exchange details. Without these amendments, bicycle and e-scooter riders are not always required to stop at the scene of a crash. Tragically, there have been recent incidents between e-scooters, bike riders and pedestrians on our path network which highlight the need for these rules to apply consistently for all.

The maximum penalties for these rules are significant, as they should be. Failing to comply can be the difference between life and death for an injured person. The penalties within the bill reflect the seriousness of the offences and already apply to equivalent offences on roads. Like all road rules, these laws will capture everyone who is doing the wrong thing regardless of age—this is not new. Road rules do not differentiate based on age because there is a need to set a level playing field and consistent safety requirements. Of course, there are existing checks and balances built into our judicial system to ensure offences relating to minors are applied appropriately. These will continue to apply, and I am confident that enforcement will be common sense and targeted at dangerous and antisocial riding behaviours.

I am particularly proud that the bill introduces new protections for vulnerable people who may not be able to safely exchange personal information at the scene of a crash. This will help to protect victims of domestic and family violence, as well as children. If any person feels that exchanging their personal information at the scene of a crash may expose them to harm, they will be able to report the crash to police instead. Safety will always be a top priority for the Miles government.

This bill will introduce a modern framework for safety duties, audits and directions across road-based public passenger transport services. Safety duties will apply to operators, drivers and others who are involved in providing road-based public passenger services. Safety management plans will be an important tool for operators and booking service providers to identify risks and actions to address those risks. The framework is flexible and risk based. This will lead to better safety outcomes for passengers.

In October 2022, the Department of Transport and Main Roads sought feedback about legislative changes to support *Creating better connections*, the 10-year plan for passenger transport in Queensland. This feedback has been considered during the development of the safety duty framework to make public passenger services safer and more responsive to community needs and to rapidly



changing technology. Industry consultation and assistance in the implementation of the new safety duty provisions will be ongoing, with the provision of information and guidance about how these initiatives will work with other related transport legislation.

The bill provides for the transition of certain regulatory services from the Department of Transport and Main Roads to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. Of course, operational provisions of the heavy vehicle national law commenced in 2014. At that time, the regulator relied on states and territories to deliver most of the frontline heavy vehicle regulatory services under an agreement with each jurisdiction, which commenced in 2017 with South Australia. All other participating jurisdictions have transitioned services to the regulator as part of the National Services Transition program. As part of this transition, these amendments propose to facilitate the transfer of up to 135 full-time-equivalent Department of Transport and Main Roads employees to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. The transition of services to the regulator is a significant milestone for heavy vehicle regulation in Queensland, and a welcome final step for the heavy vehicle industry nationally. I would like to thank the Together union, their members, impacted TMR staff, the department and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator for working together on this transition.

Queensland's Digital Licence was launched statewide on 1 November 2023. This followed the successful trial of the Digital Licence on the Fraser Coast and Townsville. The bill makes changes to allow Queensland to recognise foreign issued digital licences and other digital authorities. Recognising a foreign issued digital authority will, where verified, enable overseas visitors to use their Digital Licence as an authority to drive, or as a digital evidence of their identity or age. If people have not done so already, I encourage everyone in the House to download the app and to take advantage of this fantastic new technology. Queenslanders have embraced the Digital Licence, and we continue to hear feedback on how easy it is to use.

This bill will enable greater consistency of process in terms of nominating another driver for a tolling debt. Queensland's electronic tolling framework means that those who do not have an account with a toll collection provider need to arrange payment for any tolls incurred. This legislation enables the operator of a toll road or a local government tollway to issue a demand notice to the registered operator. Compliance with a demand notice involves either paying the debt or nominating another driver to do so. The legislation requires this to be done by completing a statutory declaration in the approved form. Statutory declarations are no longer required to be in the approved form under most of Queensland's other transport legislation. Standard statutory declarations, which are made under the Oaths Act 1867, are permitted. This bill amends the tolling provisions to provide that a standard statutory declaration is an accepted method to deal with the demand notice. The bill also provides for online nominations as an accepted method to deal with a toll demand notice. I am advised that a trial of the online nomination facility has been very well received, with over three-quarters of nominations made using it.

The bill will also seek to update references to the relevant advertising standards entity in provisions that support cancellation of vehicle registration for the use of sexually explicit, discriminatory or offensive advertising on vehicles. The bill also makes other minor technical amendments that clarify requirements, improve operational processes and reduce legislative burden.

I intend to move amendments to this bill during consideration in detail. Those amendments are minor and technical provisions to align the heavy vehicle national law with Australian Design Rules changes to increase heavy vehicle width to support access for safer freight vehicles and to facilitate cleaner heavy vehicles on our roads. These ADR changes reflect an increase in overall vehicle width from 2.5 metres to 2.55 metres for heavy vehicles fitted with safer freight vehicle technology. The changes also exclude various indirect vision devices, such as blind spot information systems for the detection of vehicles and vulnerable road users, when measuring the length and width of a heavy motor vehicle.

National commencement of these ADRs occurred on 1 October 2023. As host jurisdiction, Queensland must first pass these national law amendments before they can be applied by other participating jurisdictions. The heavy vehicle national law and supporting regulations need to be amended as soon as possible to align the national law with the ADRs and to enable consistency of heavy vehicle dimensions in participating jurisdictions. The Northern Territory and Western Australia will conduct their own concurrent amendment processes. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.10 pm): As the shadow minister for transport and main roads, it gives me pleasure to respond on behalf of the LNP. On this first opportunity I have had to speak this year, I acknowledge the new Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital

Services. Normally, it would be customary to say that this minister has big shoes to fill. However, I will let other people be the judge of that, and I will have a bit more to say later on. Some people might read the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and not exactly be blown away, but the reality is that this is essential legislation that the LNP will be supporting. I will state that up-front; however, I would like to contribute to the debate.

The background to this bill has been outlined. On 12 October last year the then minister for transport and main roads introduced the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, TOLAB. The stated objectives of the bill are to: firstly, facilitate the transition of certain regulatory services from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, TMR, to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator; and, secondly and very importantly, improve road safety, streamline and improve administrative and legislative processes, and clarify some of the existing requirements.

The National Services Transition is to a large degree the crux of a lot of the bill. Under its National Services Transition program, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, NHVR, has progressively assumed responsibility for direct delivery of heavy vehicle regulatory services—in South Australia in 2017, Tasmania in 2018, the ACT in 2019, Victoria in 2019 and New South Wales in 2022. Queensland will be the final participating jurisdiction to transition regulatory services to the NHVR. As part of this transition, up to about 135 full-time-equivalent TMR staff who undertake heavy vehicle enforcement will be able to transfer to the NHVR. In fact, this bill will allow the minister to transfer the staff and vehicles whilst protecting, very importantly, their staff entitlements.

Other features of the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill pertain to road safety. To address concerns relating to the increasing use of motorised scooters in an ageing population, a number of changes are being made to extend provisions of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 to scooters. These include section 84(2), which relates to the driving of vehicles other than motor vehicles without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other road users. It will be extended to road related areas such as bike paths and footpaths. My background before politics was heavily involved in the property industry. I saw firsthand the rise of a lot of mobility type devices and the conflict when they came into contact with pedestrians. A lot of these changes as outlined in this bill do make perfect sense.

The bill amends section 92, which imposes duties on drivers and riders to very importantly—and one would assume with a degree of compassion—stop and render assistance in the event of an incident resulting in death or injury. This will be extended to apply to drivers of vehicles other than motor vehicles on road related areas such as bike paths and footpaths. Last of all, the bill amends section 93, which requires the drivers and riders of vehicles to provide certain information including their name and address in the event of a crash and this will apply to personal mobility device, PMD, riders.

Other features of this bill are the consistent safety duty regulatory framework for road-based public passenger services. These provisions extend safety requirements for non-personalised transport services, for example bus operators, to personalised transport services like taxis, Uber and the like. The reason cited is to 'effectively anticipate or manage emerging safety risks associated with rapidly changing vehicle technology and fuels and emerging passenger transport service models'. This will include the requirement for safety management plans.

Other parts of this bill pertain to the consistent audit and directional framework for road-based public passenger services. As part of the reforms of the personalised transport industry in 2017, audit and direction provisions were established for investigating personalised transport service compliance, verifying information provided relating to the provision of the service and directing remedial action if, in fact, needed. However, other road-based public passenger services operate under different provisions which allow for audits of records and the giving of directions in relation to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Standard 2010. The bill amends the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 to ensure there is a consistent audit and directions framework for road-based public passenger services.

There are further provisions in the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that I would like to pick up on in my contribution, and they are in relation to the process of simplification and modernisation in relation to tolling demand notice compliance. When a vehicle passes through a toll point and the owner of the vehicle does not pay the toll within the prescribed time, the toll operator may issue a demand notice for payment to the vehicle owner. The vehicle owner may nominate another person as the driver at the time via the use of a statutory declaration. A new demand notice is then issued to the nominated driver.

Non-payment of a demand notice by the due date is an offence which can be prosecuted by the state government or Brisbane City Council, depending on the road used: local controlled road or state controlled road. For a few years now Transurban Queensland has been offering motorists the option to use an online nomination form instead of requiring the motorist to fill in a statutory declaration. However, there was a bit of a disconnect with the state as they had been unwilling to enforce unpaid demand notices issued to nominated drivers using the online nomination form. These changes will very sensibly formalise the online nomination process in current regulations.

There are some minor and technical amendments which I will make some commentary on. The bill also makes a number of minor technical amendments to other legislation within the overall transport portfolio. When the committee reported on 24 November it made the following two recommendations. Recommendation No. 1 was fairly straightforward: that the committee recommends the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 be passed. The second recommendation was: the committee recommends the Department of Transport and Main Roads liaises further with industry if the bill is passed to strengthen industry understanding of the purpose and implications of section 67K of the bill and therefore enhance compliance. I note the LNP members of the committee did not submit a statement of reservation. It was touched on by the new minister in his address and that was in relation to the stakeholder views.

There were only eight submissions to the committee, which I did find a little bit surprising. Nonetheless there were eight submissions. One of them, from the Queensland Tourism Industry Council, called for a communication plan so that visitors to Queensland understand their rights and responsibilities when using personal mobility devices and for consideration to be given to planning segregated pathways for these devices.

The Brisbane Central Business District Bicycle User Group, known as CBD BUG, labelled the maximum penalty of \$6,192 for riding a bike without due care and attention 'draconian'. The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, RACQ and Queenslanders With Disability Network supported the legislation regarding personal mobility devices. The Queensland Bus Industry Council, QBIC, did make a late submission raising concerns about the safety duty provisions of the bill and how they interact with requirements in the workplace health and safety act and heavy vehicle national law. The LNP's position, to be perfectly clear, is that we will not oppose the passing of this bill.

In relation to the National Services Transition, I note the advice from the TMR general manager of land transport safety and regulation that—

Following an extensive consultation process with impacted staff and the Together Queensland union, departmental staff will go to the regulator on an entirely voluntary basis.

However, concerned TMR staff have contacted the opposition saying that if they did not go to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator—the NHVR—and a position is not available within TMR, as inspectors are a very specialised role, they are being classed as 'displaced employees' and are being forced to consider relocation to another part of the state or leaving the Public Service. Concerns are also being raised about the poor communication from TMR senior management with those impacted staff. I would urge the minister to address that internal administrative provision. The LNP is calling on the Department of Transport and Main Roads to give certainty to staff who are electing not to transfer to the NHVR. It is understood that there might only be a small number of potential employees within the overall department, but they deserve to know exactly where they stand. As I have said already, I would hope that the minister would investigate this further within his department.

I will now make a couple of points and comments about road safety, particularly with regard to scooters. The government announced a range of regulatory changes for scooters in 2022. The government has been unable to advise how many fines have been issued as a result of these changes. I again call upon the minister—we might have more luck with this minister—and ask: how many fines have been issued as a result of those changes in 2022? I note that we now have more changes proposed with this bill, so what will be the measure of success for these changes? It is all fine and well to legislate, but if you legislate without any consequences it really just becomes more red tape.

We also believe that this bill is a missed opportunity to close a very important loophole in that e-scooter riders are unable to be—and this might not be grammatically spot-on—RBT'd despite, as we all know in this chamber, drink and drug driving being a major road safety issue. This is a missed opportunity to close a loophole in legislation. Again, I would be very interested in future developments with the minister in relation to that loophole. I believe it absolutely should have been picked up in this bill. It would have been the perfect opportunity.

In relation to road safety in general, I note that the explanatory notes for the bill state that one of the policy objectives of the bill is to 'improve road safety'. Tragically, Queensland's road toll last year was 277 souls lost. That is, tragically, 58 higher—26 per cent—than the pre-COVID levels of 2019. I will repeat that figure: tragically, in 2023 the road toll was 277 people. It absolutely flummoxes me that when we talk about the road toll we also need to take on board another issue, and last night we saw a tragic example of some very disturbing footage pertaining to a member in this chamber. I know that we all wish her all the very best. Politics aside, we wish her all the best. When we see images like that, we seem to be fixated on the road toll—and there are reasons for that—but we as a society also need to take on board the number of people who have such traumatic injury that they will never again be productive in the workforce and will never know what a true hug is from a loved one. I would urge that anything that can be done—and I want to talk about this a bit further—in relation to not just the road toll but serious traumatic injury needs to be absolutely looked at. By way of comparison, last year the road toll in New South Wales, despite having many more citizens on the roads, was one per cent lower and in Western Australia it was four per cent lower. The closest to Queensland is Victoria, which increased by a similar 11 per cent. Clearly, what we are doing in Queensland is simply not working as effectively as we think it might.

The number of police has decreased by 322 in the last 18 months. Police are doing their best to keep our roads safe, but they are being forced to do more with less. I do not know about every other member in this chamber, but, in terms of human dynamics and psychology 101, I know that when I started to drive—in fact, even today—when I saw an officer on a bike, on the footpath or on the street I absolutely made sure to double-check that speedo. If you do not, you are an absolute fool. We need to make sure we can provide the police with all of the resources they need, and that starts with ensuring that deficit of 322 is brought up to speed and quickly.

The other issue that I want to talk about is in relation to the safety duty regulatory framework. I note the concerns raised in one of the submissions from the Queensland Bus Industry Council, QBIC, about the safety duty regulatory framework and how this will work with similar provisions in the workplace health and safety act and heavy vehicle national law. Despite reading this a few times, it is pretty unclear to me what problem the legislation is really trying to solve here. The LNP urges the government to note the committee's recommendations for uptake of further consultation with the industry and the purpose and implications of the bill.

In closing, I want to give a huge note of thanks to the men and women whose office really is the bitumen and the asphalt of the 33,000 kilometres of state controlled road, and that is before we even talk about local road kilometres. These are the men and women who make sure that product gets from market to distribution in the supermarkets that we all frequent. They make a huge difference in our lives. I simply want to acknowledge the efforts of everyone who drives a truck and the heavy vehicle industry. It takes a special breed of person to be able to concentrate and get through a lot of the red tape which seems to be infusing that industry to ensure that when a driver gets behind the wheel of that heavy vehicle they are absolutely on their game.

When I drive around it amazes me to see—and I would hasten to suggest that there would be many members in this chamber who would also see it—the way that normal vehicles dart in and out around heavy vehicles on the roads. I do not have a heavy vehicle licence, but I have had the privilege of being a passenger in a couple of them. Not that it was set up for my benefit or my excitement, but I can tell members that there were a couple of near misses when people literally tried to pull up in front of a heavy vehicle at a red light. I would hope that, in terms of a general awareness campaign when it comes to the road roll and whatnot, there would be something done in relation to the mix of normal cars on the road and the way they interact with heavy vehicles.

The LNP has always made it clear that we will support pragmatic, measured outcomes that will go to reducing the road toll on Queensland's highways and byways. The over-representation of trauma on country roads is tragically out of control. I refer to an article from *Queensland Country Life* some months ago titled 'Queensland road toll: regional deaths disproportionately high'. If ever there is a suite of measures that the minister wants to bring before the House, we on this side of the chamber would be absolutely happy to meet him fifty-fifty every step of the way in anything that can be done to reduce the trauma. Touch wood, I have never had a situation where—cue the thunderclouds—there is that knock on the door and a woman or a man in a blue uniform has to give that tragic news. It is something that I wish would evaporate. We have the fatal five, but we also need to make sure that whilst we have over 33,000 kilometres of state controlled road wherever practicable it is fit for purpose for the safe carriageway of any and every vehicle on the road. As I have said, the LNP will not be opposing this bill.



**Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (3.32 pm): I rise to contribute to this debate on the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. This bill seeks to facilitate the transition of certain regulatory services from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, DTMR, to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, NHVR. It also seeks to improve road safety, streamline and improve administrative and legislative processes and clarify some existing requirements, and I will touch on a few of these.

Firstly, it deals with accommodating the transfer of up to 135 full-time-equivalent employees of DTMR who are currently performing regulatory services over to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. Since 2017 the NHVR has progressively assumed responsibility for direct delivery of heavy vehicle regulatory services, which consists of enforcing and monitoring compliance with the heavy vehicle national law in participating jurisdictions under the NST program. Queensland is the final participating jurisdiction. Western Australia and Northern Territory will not be participating, for reasons of their own. It makes sense that employees who have been doing this work under TMR can transition to continue work as part of the NHVR, and this bill will facilitate this transition through amendments to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 and several other acts and regulations.


During the Transport and Resources Committee's public hearing process, questions were asked about the employees' rights and conditions. We were pleased to hear that staff will transfer to the NHVR on a voluntary basis. I will comment on the previous member's contribution because I was interested in what he had to say. The bill provides that all accrued rights to leave, such as sick leave, long service leave and recreation leave, will transfer across. Furthermore, the bill provides that the transfer of employment will not interrupt an employee's continuity of service, which is critical to calculating a staff member's entitlement to long service leave and other benefits. The bill expressly provides that the transfer will not affect the employees' benefits, entitlements and remuneration. DTMR also advise that staff who transfer will not be required to move localities—that is, from one city to another. I was interested in the contribution of the member for Chatsworth. He said that people had spoken to him saying otherwise. That was not our understanding. I am sure the intent is good and I am sure it will be worked through. I wish they had contacted the committee during the process, even in a whistleblower capacity, because we were very interested in hearing about that. I am confident it will be worked through, but it is good that it is raised and out there.

The bill also proposes a range of road safety amendments for the purpose of improving the safety of personal mobility device riders, cyclists and other path users. The bill introduces a new offence for riding bikes and PMDs without due care and attention on road related areas. These rules already apply to roads but will now extend to footpaths, bicycle paths, shared paths, malls, nature strips, median strips, road shoulders, dedicated cycle tracks, car parks and certain public trails. The department advise that the provision would ensure that careless riding can be enforced on all relevant infrastructure where PMDs and bikes are often used. Persons failing to comply with this new requirement would face a maximum penalty of 40 penalty units, which is just over \$6,000.

Currently the requirement to stop and render assistance to an injured party applies to a crash on a road. Riders are also currently required to exchange their name and address in such situations. The bill will expand these obligations to anyone involved in a crash no matter where the crash occurs—that is, extending to other road related areas. The committee noted concerns from cyclist organisations regarding the bill's proposal to introduce a requirement for PMD and bicycle riders to ride with due care and attention on road related areas; however, as a committee we supported the view that the consequences of riding without due care and attention can be equally severe, regardless of where incidents may occur, particularly given that the road related areas are also used by pedestrians of all ages and abilities. We agree that rider obligations should be applied consistently regardless of the type of vehicle or location of offending, considering these laws already apply on roads, and it is just extending them to the road related areas.

The bill also introduces a safety duty for public passenger services so that there will be a consistent risk-based safety duty approach across all road-based public passenger services accompanied by a requirement for operators and booking service providers to have a plan to manage safety. The Queensland Bus Industry Council had issue with this extending to buses and the potential duplication of rules, and we made a recommendation about that.

There are a number of minor and technical amendments proposed in the bill that were largely uncontroversial. Our committee recommended that the bill be passed. There was no statement of reservation from the non-government members. I would like to thank the members and secretariat of the Transport and Resources Committee for their work and collegiate attitude. I sincerely enjoyed my time on this committee and its predecessor committees. I think over the years we have done some great work together. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (3.37 pm): In rising to address this bill, which the LNP does not oppose, I want to say that this is yet again a bill full of missed opportunities. The first missed opportunity is providing certainty to employees of the Department of Transport and Main Roads whose positions will be impacted when the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator assumes direct responsibility for the delivery of heavily vehicle regulation services in Queensland. Under its National Services Transition program the NHVR has been progressively assuming the responsibility in other jurisdictions, commencing in South Australia in 2017. In fact, Queensland will be the final participating jurisdiction to transition regulatory services to the NHVR. That means our minister and our Department of Transport and Main Roads have had plenty of opportunity to learn how to smooth the transition path, based on the experience in every other state.

As part of the transition, up to 135 full-time-equivalent Queensland TMR staff who currently undertake heavy vehicle enforcement will be able to transfer to the NHVR. This bill enables the minister to transfer the staff and the vehicles while protecting staff entitlements. TMR's General Manager of Land Transport Safety and Regulation, Mrs Robinson, has advised that, following an extensive consultation process with the impacted staff and the Together union, departmental staff will go to the regulator on an entirely voluntary basis. However, the opposition has been contacted by TMR staff, as the shadow minister pointed out, saying that it does not tell the whole story. According to these staff, if they choose not to go to the NHVR and a position is not available within TMR, they are being classed as displaced employees and are being forced to consider relocations to a different part of the state or else to leave the Public Service altogether. I imagine that this is particularly so for heavy vehicle inspectors, as this is a highly specialised role, and no doubt other positions will be impacted. The affected employees say that the consultation been marked with poor communication by TMR which has increased stress and uncertainty. The LNP is calling on the minister to act urgently to give these employees and their families certainty.

The rest of the bill is concerned in one way or another with matters pertaining to road safety. Indeed, improving road safety is one of the objectives of this bill. Again, I see a missed opportunity in the patchwork approach. A number of people have been affected by injury and maiming. The road toll in 2023 was 277 fatalities. The road toll statistics during the COVID lockdown years must be considered somewhat artificial. However, we can say with certainty that in 2023 the road toll was higher, by 58 fatalities, than the pre-COVID road toll in 2019—a 26 per cent increase. The next highest road toll increase is in Victoria, which suffered a much smaller increase of 11 per cent. In contrast, New South Wales and Western Australia both achieved decreases.


Clearly, in Queensland we are doing something wrong. However, there are several things that we can do. Road maintenance is undoubtedly a contributor to the problem in my neck of the woods. We seem to be continually fighting to see where road maintenance funding goes and continually arguing against insufficient road funding. This week, Mackay's *Daily Mercury* reported that the \$400 million upgrade to Central Queensland's beef road corridors, which I am a big supporter of, scheduled to commence next to year, has now been pushed back to 2028 or the never-never. Those are vital arterial roads for Queensland's highly productive agriculture and mining industries so they earn a lot of dollars for the Queensland economy. They are also used daily by school buses, local residents and tourists. In 2022 the federal LNP government committed to the funding. It took Senator Matt Canavan's forensic questioning at a Senate estimates hearing to discover that it has evaporated.

I can tell the House now that the roads that we are talking about are important to Queensland. I travel those roads all the time. When you drive from Emerald out to Alpha, the stretch between Emerald and Bogantungan, just before you get to the Drummond Range, is desperately in need of fixing. Not only do a lot trucks use that road; so do a lot of tourists. People who have only driven around Brisbane will buy a brand new Land Cruiser and a big caravan and go out on those roads and we have seen issues where people have come to grief. The state Labor government needs to make sure that we get the beef road corridors up and going—not in 2028; start it next year—because they are vital for our agricultural communities.

There are other issues. For instance, the scuttlebutt in Central Queensland is that the Callide Power Station repairs were delayed because CQ bridges could not support the weight of the new generator that they needed to transport from the port to the powerhouse. This is important. Not only is it affecting roads; it is affecting power. We have to make sure that regional Queensland has suitable roads for locals and also the agricultural industry and the mining industry. I call on the minister to look at the \$400 million beef road corridors commitment and put it back on the table. Come June when the budget is handed down, I want to see a commitment to Central Queensland that the beef road corridors are back on the agenda. That is important.

In my part of the world, inadequate road funding is seen as a major contributor to the road toll. We have done a lot around logbook hours for learner drivers but we have done nothing around towing licences for grey nomads. I was horrified to read an expert opinion that 75 per cent of caravans are so overloaded with gear that their insurance is void if they are involved in an accident or cause one. Someone who might normally tootle around the suburbs of Brisbane holds a driver's licence that allows them to hook a fully loaded and modified caravan to a V8 and take off on rural roads. Essentially, they are driving a high-powered unbalanced long vehicle. We have to make sure that those roads are put back on the agenda.

Finally, I wish the minister all the best. I implore him to, please, put this back on the agenda for next year and get the federal government to commit to the \$400 million in funding so that we can start to improve roads in Central Queensland.

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (3.43 pm): I rise to speak to the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Firstly, I acknowledge the important work done by the heavy vehicle industry. Our entire state and each and every one of us relies on the work of heavy vehicles, the drivers and their families. I acknowledge and commend them and the mighty TWU for their work in representing this important workforce, ensuring the sector is as safe as it can be for drivers.

The Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 was introduced into the Legislative Assembly on 12 October 2023 and referred to the Transport and Resources Committee for consideration. This bill will facilitate the transition of certain regulatory services from the Department of Transport and Main Roads to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator and improve road safety, streamline and improve administrative and legislative processes, and clarify existing requirements. The committee recommended that the bill be passed and there was no statement of reservation.

During the course of the inquiry, through the 10 submissions that we received and various public hearings, the committee heard from representatives from motorists, cyclists, surgeons, the tourism industry and the Queensland bus industry. Despite the comments made by the member for Gregory, this bill ensures the transition of certain regulatory services from the Department of Transport and Main Roads to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, including—in case the member for Gregory missed what we talked about in the hearings—the transfer of some staff and all employee benefits, entitlements and remuneration will be preserved for the approximately 100 employees who have chosen to be transferred with the bill. At no stage did any employee of DTMR make representations to the committee nor did any employee make a submission. All the indications that we received were that they would be taken care of and given an opportunity to work for the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator—unlike the comments made by the member for Gregory.

I am going to continue to talk about the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, unlike the member for Gregory who decided to go off on a tangent and talk about other things. Since 2017, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator has progressively assumed responsibility for the direct delivery of heavy vehicle regulatory services, which is enforcing and monitoring compliance with the heavy vehicle national law. In participating jurisdictions, under the National Services Transition program, Queensland will be the final participating jurisdiction to transition. Western Australia and the Northern Territory have chosen not to participate.

The bill facilitates this transition through amendments to the Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 and several other acts and regulations that will allow the minister to create a ministerial transfer schedule that will identify the TMR employees and assets to be transferred to the NHVR and identify Public Sector Act 2022 directives that apply to the transferring staff. It will also complement the operation of the Commonwealth Fair Work Act 2009 provisions to preserve transferred employees' benefits, entitlements, remuneration and rights to superannuation, recreation leave, sick leave, long service leave and other leave. Further, it will provide authority for an NHVR authorised officer to undertake state-based non-HVNL regulatory services to maintain efficient and quality service delivery for industry and support post-transition information access arrangements between TMR and the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator.


The bill incorporates amendments to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 for the next phase of the reforms for personal mobility devices, or PMDs, to enhance safety in Queensland, with future PMD reform phases focusing on preventing drink driving. The proposed amendments in the bill respond to the rapid uptake in the use of PMDs and the ongoing need to protect vulnerable users of road and road related areas by expanding the application of careless riding offences to PMD and bicycle riders on road related areas such as footpaths and bikeways, and requiring PMD and bicycle riders to stop and render assistance following a crash and to give particulars including their name and address following an incident.

In the beautiful bayside that I represent, there has been a significant uptake in the use of PMDs, both rented and privately owned, and cycling. I am a novice cyclist and I enjoy riding in my beautiful electorate as do many others from across Queensland. Popular rides include the Esplanade, the Moreton Bay Cycleway and through Lota Reserve to Chelsea Road. They are great rides, except of course if it is high tide on the causeway. It is part of the Moreton Bay Cycleway and it floods at high tide. People with bikes, prams, scooters or personal mobility devices have to pick up their devices and wade through the tide to complete the Moreton Bay Cycleway. Unfortunately, the Brisbane City Council has indicated little interest in doing anything to sort out the problem.

On the flip side, though, it is really wonderful to see so many people getting fit, being out and enjoying using PMDs and bicycles. Improving safety is always a great thing. The bill provides amendments to the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 to apply a consistent risk-based safety duty approach across road-based public transport passenger services, accompanied by a requirement for operators and booking service providers to have a plan to manage safety. Further, audit and direction provisions have been updated to ensure they apply consistently across these services.

The bill also includes a number of minor and technical amendments including an amendment to the School Transport Assistance Scheme to ensure TMR can confirm enrolment details of students attending non-state schools to facilitate payments to assist students getting to and from non-state schools.

I thank the committee secretariat for their work and acknowledge the work of Shane King, the member for Kurwongbah and former chair of the committee. He did a great job. He was very well respected by all on the committee and across the industry. I am relatively new to the committee. The member was a great mentor and a great role model. Thank you very much. I commend the bill to House.

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (3.50 pm): I acknowledge the new Minister for Transport. I certainly wish him all the best in the role and look forward to working together with him and all members of this House to improve things for Queenslanders. The key policy objectives of this bill are: to facilitate the transition of regulatory services from the Department of Transport and Main Roads to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator; improve road safety; and improve administration and legislative processes.

Under the National Services Transition program, the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, NHVR, has progressively assumed responsibility for direct delivery of heavy vehicle regulatory services in states and territories other than Western Australia and the Northern Territory. The authorised officers of the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator have the power to enforce and monitor compliance with the heavy vehicle national law. Impacted staff have been involved in the engagement process through this bill to ensure the continuance of regulatory services. This bill proposes to allow the minister to create ministerial transfer schedules for transferring of employees, with the intention to preserve employee benefits, entitlements and remuneration. To maintain efficient and quality service delivery, it is critical that support for employees is continued in Queensland post transition to the umbrella of the NHVR. This, in turn, will minimise the effect on those employees and also heavy vehicle operators.

For the most part, this transition does assist heavy vehicle carriers working across borders, with them now to have a single central regulator to deal with. There does, however, need to be an informative and inclusive education campaign included for all stakeholders.

The further amendments to be moved by the new Minister for Transport are implementing changes that the federal government recently signed off on as part of the Safer Freight Vehicles package. This changes the Australian Design Rules requirement for heavy vehicles. These changes certainly deserve elaborating on. These changes come from the impact analysis of options for maximum overall width—analysis completed by the federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts in June last year, *Safer freight vehicles*. This is a whopping 154-page document that I have been trying to flick through since the new amendments were made.

The Safer Freight Vehicles package increases the standard legal truck width limit from 2.5 metres to 2.55 metres for new trucks fitted with the latest safety technology. This brings us into line with general trucking widths in Europe, where the limit is 2.55 metres. I note that European refrigerated transport is allowed to be up to 2.6 metres wide. Meanwhile, in America the limit is 8½ feet, or 2.59 metres. The analysis states—

The supply of safer heavy goods vehicles is further restricted by the absence in the ADRs of exclusions for various types of devices for indirect vision (i.e. mirrors and cameras) and blind spot information systems (e.g. for the detection of vehicles, bicyclists and/or pedestrians) from the measurement of vehicle width and/or length.



This purpose of this IA is therefore to consider the case for increasing the maximum allowable width for freight vehicles in Australia, together with changes to allow various devices for indirect vision ... and monitoring devices to detect other road users ... to be excluded from vehicle width and length measurements.

This consideration is now for the most part being implemented, which I certainly support and is a good move. That said, I formally request the Minister for Transport consider working with his interstate colleagues to further get us in line with the United States and fully in line with the EU. This will increase the supply of trucks available for purchase and use on Australian roads. In turn, this will make freight businesses more competitive, helping with the current cost-of-living crisis. I note, as was raised in the impact analysis, that there are concerns for the Australian manufacturers of trailers by doing this. That is proof that Australia is drowning in red tape, restricting our manufacturing abilities in this country, which is a shame. Let's reduce red tape and other costs, including electricity, so that we can be more globally competitive and so that we do not need government intervention to keep our manufacturing alive.

In our move to continually improve road safety, I place on record further requests to improve and widen rural roads. Many local and regional roads across Callide and Queensland are well overdue for upgrades. This week we learned that the federal Labor government is kicking the can down the road, delaying important heavy vehicle route upgrades which would no doubt improve road safety and allow for wider freight vehicles. They have pushed \$400 million in funding for our beef roads out into the never-never. This funding would have certainly made these roads wider and safer for freight vehicles.

Of this \$400 million, \$300 million was to seal 457 kilometres of roads across Central Queensland, including the Fitzroy Developmental Road. The remaining \$100 million was to expand heavy vehicle corridors along the Burnett, Leichhardt and Dawson highways. These are major highways that cross the electorate of Callide. All I can say is: let's get on and build these beef roads. You only need to drive those roads once to know how far behind the government is on maintenance and critical safety upgrades. On the one hand we have Labor governments making big announcements on heavy vehicle safety, and on the other they are cutting funding on critical heavy vehicle routes.

I place on record my thanks to all truck drivers across Queensland and Australia who have to drive along all of these roads—and any road for that matter. I might hold my multicombinational licence but, as members can imagine, I do not have much time to put it to use these days. With the NHVR changes, I hope that the expanded organisation uses its powers to advocate for these routes to be upgraded. I also note that the Monto Mount Perry Road and the Mundubbera-Durong Road could be significant heavy vehicle freight routes if they received the road and safety upgrades they need. I formally request the Minister for Transport to allocate funding to get these roads upgraded with priority.

This bill and amendments are a step in the right direction and, as foreshadowed by the shadow minister for transport, the member for Chatsworth, the LNP will be supporting this legislation that has many critical and much needed changes. That said, there is a long way to go to reduce red tape within the heavy vehicle industry. Many trucking companies share with me their frustrations in getting freight permits to go down rural roads and across bridges that they travel very regularly. These permits are issued by the NHVR.

A specific example of red tape in the heavy vehicle industry is encountered every day by Biloela company Lee Crane Hire. This company has around 350 employees and about 100 cranes supporting industry, including government projects. They travel far and wide across Central Queensland. For many of the bridges they use, a single-use heavy vehicle permit must be applied for each crane for every trip. Lee Crane Hire has tried hard to work with the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the NHVR for a more suitable arrangement over the last few years, to no avail. This process is a huge burden on this business, and they spend many man-hours to ensure they have cranes ready to go to the various jobs they have.


The other thing of note is that they currently have eight cranes out at the Callide Power Station working on repairs to the C3 and C4 generators. When their larger cranes are required to go out to the power station, they need to apply for these permits which can take up to a month to get—and we wonder why the Callide Power Station rebuild has had so many delays! It can be directly linked to Labor's own red tape in this instance.

A report by CICA, which is the Crane Industry Council of Australia, in November 2021 measured some of the delays with this crane permit system which showed that between June 2020 and September 2021 there was a cumulative 365 years spent waiting for these single-trip permits to be approved in Queensland. I will say that again: companies spent a whopping 365 cumulative years

waiting for these permits in Queensland. In talking to crane companies, there has been no notable improvement in this process since. I implore the minister and the staff transitioning across to NHVR to work to make significant improvements to this process.

Further on road safety, unfortunately in Queensland the road toll remains high. As a result, it is vital that transport related legislation continues to evolve with emerging technologies and changing risk profiles and that road users are given every opportunity to correct their behaviour through more timely notifications. Road safety is vitally important and any measure to genuinely improve road safety I wholeheartedly support.

Changes to technology were one of the requirements in this bill, but as I am running out of time I will just say that I am looking forward to working with all members of this House to continue to make Queensland a better and safer place in all aspects of life.

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (4.00 pm): Well, that was entertaining! I rise to speak in support of the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. This bill is to facilitate the transition of certain regulatory services from the Department of Transport and Main Roads, DTMR, to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. This will give uniformity and consistency for the heavy vehicle industry in Queensland. The bill will also assist to improve road safety, streamline and improve administrative and legislative processes, and clarify existing requirements. It will bring a lot of services online to help the heavy transport sector carry out their work with minimal disruption for compliance.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as you are no doubt aware, we as a government are continually trying to reduce the state's road toll which impacts so many families across the state. I want to acknowledge the former minister for transport and main roads, Mark Bailey, for his continual efforts and messaging through media and different social media platforms to spread and reinforce the important messages about road safety. I would also like to thank the Department of Transport and Main Roads for the continual messaging about road safety. A life lost on our roads is one life too many.

The Heavy Vehicle National Law Act 2012 established the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator, the NHVR, to administer the Heavy Vehicle National Law, HVNL, which is contained in the schedule to the act. The HVNL is a single national law for the consistent regulation of heavy vehicle operations and has been adopted by all states and territories other than Western Australia and the Northern Territory. This gives consistency for the heavy transport industry to do business across borders, except, like I said, in the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

The NHVR, its authorised officers and its delegates have the power to enforce and monitor compliance with the HVNL. The NHVR also has the discretion to determine the manner in which heavy vehicle regulator functions are performed in particular jurisdictions. Following the commencement of the operational provisions of the HVNL in February 2014, the NHVR relied on state and territory agencies to deliver most of its frontline heavy vehicle regulatory services under a service level agreement with each jurisdiction.

Under its National Services Transition program, the NHVR has progressively assumed responsibility for direct delivery of heavy vehicle regulatory services in South Australia, Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and New South Wales. Queensland will be the final participating jurisdiction to transition regulatory services to the NHVR.

To ensure the continuity of regulatory services in Queensland post transition, following an engagement process with impacted staff and relevant unions, up to 135 full-time-equivalent employees of DTMR who are currently performing regulatory services may transfer to the NHVR. To facilitate this transition, the bill proposes to allow the minister to create ministerial transfer schedules for transferring employees and vehicles, and Public Sector Act 2022 directives that will apply to staff choosing to transfer to the NHVR and complement the operation of Fair Work Act 2009 provisions to preserve transferred employees' benefits, entitlements and remuneration. That is what good Labor governments do. We make sure staff are treated fairly. We do not cut, sack and sell like those on the other side of the House. The bill also proposes to provide authority for the NHVR authorised officers to undertake state-based non-HVNL regulatory services to maintain efficient and quality service delivery for industry and support post-transition information access arrangements between TMR and the NHVR.

As the Miles Labor state government continues with record investment in road infrastructure—such as my new \$96 million Townsville Connection Road on Stuart Drive and the \$99 million investment on Bowen Road Bridge duplication—road safety is one of the key points with this investment and many more like this across the state of Queensland.


**Mr Harper:** Not as good as Riverway Drive, though.

**Mr WALKER:** It is nearly as good as mine. That is the road to nowhere! Despite record investment in a wide range of road safety initiatives, the number of people losing their lives or being seriously injured on Queensland roads continues to be unacceptably high. To realise the commitment of zero deaths by 2050, Queensland's transport related legislation must continually evolve to accommodate changing risk profiles within the community, cater for the adoption of new and emerging technologies, and ensure that enforcement authorities have appropriate powers and can impose meaningful sanctions to positively impact behaviour change to improve safety for all users of roads and road related areas.

One area of interest for me was personal mobility devices, PMDs. One of the fastest growing and emerging technologies that has had rapid uptake in Queensland in recent times is e-scooters. As much as I like e-scooters, in Townsville we continually see e-scooters being used inappropriately and dangerously. That is one reason I support this bill. Amendments to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management—Road Rules) Regulation 2009 were progressed in 2022 in response to the emerging popularity of the PMDs in Queensland. To facilitate these changes, PMDs were reclassified as vehicles under the regulation. Previously they were considered pedestrians.

Following those amendments, further review of provisions in the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995, the TO(RUM) Act, identified the following issues with the act: section 84(2), which relates to the driving of vehicles other than motor vehicles without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for other road users, does not apply to road related areas such as bike paths and footpaths; section 92, which imposes duties on drivers and riders to stop and render assistance in the event of an incident resulting in death or injury, does not apply to drivers of vehicles other than motor vehicles on road related areas such as bike paths and footpaths; and section 93, which requires the drivers and riders of vehicles to provide certain information including their name and address in the event of a crash, does not apply to PMD riders.

The bill extends the scope of these provisions to enhance the safety of PMD riders and other members of the public that those riders may interact with. There is much more in this bill which I sincerely support. I will leave it there. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (4.08 pm): I rise to make a small contribution to the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. This is a pretty simple, logical, sensible sort of bill. Its main objective is to transition the regulatory services to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. That has happened in all of the other states. Queensland is the last state to get to this point.

This is about interstate freight services. Toowoomba has a lot of logistics hubs and a lot of companies that are driving interstate all the time. They are very used to this regulator. Having consistency for people who are crossing state borders on a regular basis—a couple of times a week basis—I think is only sensible. In doing this, some 135 TMR staff, I am advised, are planning to go across to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. This bill gives the authority to do that. I think it is all very sensible with regard to the heavy goods side of things.

There are a couple of things I would like to say about heavy goods vehicles, particularly in and around Toowoomba. As I said, Toowoomba is very much a logistics hub not only for people who are trying to get goods to the port for export but also for people who are trying to distribute down to Melbourne and up to the Northern Territory. A lot of that traffic will come through Toowoomba, so our main freight network is of critical importance. Through the neglect of this government over a long period of time we have seen that the Bremer is now a bottleneck. Heavy goods vehicles can only cross one side of the four lanes at 60 kilometres an hour. It is restrictive and it is difficult. It is slowing down all of the traffic from every part of Western Queensland into the capital and all of the traffic from the capital interstate and into Western Queensland. It is causing issues. I would encourage the government to get on with doing its job and maintain the freight network to a high standard. Multiple years of neglect have landed the heavy freight network in this situation and it adds to every single thing we buy, move and sell. The cost goes up just a little bit, but it compounds every time a vehicle has to slow down to get through the bottleneck that has been created as a result of this government not maintaining its critical assets.

Whilst we are talking about not maintaining critical assets I also want to talk about the Toowoomba bypass. This road network was designed to take out over 20 sets of traffic lights for heavy goods vehicles. It was supposed to improve the capacity of our freight network to deliver and improve its efficiency. For an extended period of time now we have seen that because the eastbound lane was not built correctly traffic has to slow down, and again this adds to the cost of every single product that moves. You would think that if it is eastbound it is only products we are moving to the capital. It is not,

because the same vehicle has to get to the capital to come back. Every time you add minutes to the journey you add to the cost of the product, and the cost of the product is borne by every single person who consumes just about everything that is delivered via truck all over Western Queensland. In a cost-of-living crisis, having a government that maintains its road assets at peak levels is critical. This government has been terribly negligent in doing that, particularly in and around Toowoomba and west of Ipswich. These two examples compound and affect every single fuel truck and every single delivery that comes into my community and other communities out west. It adds cost because of the inability of the government to maintain those things. I would call on the government to expedite their efforts and get both of those things back as they should have been if they had been correctly maintained as quickly as possible.

There are a couple of other things I want to mention around the heavy goods freight network, particularly as we head west from Toowoomba. Toowoomba is a service centre for gas fields, grain trucks and beef and cattle movements, and a lot of these heavy goods have to go over bridge networks out there in Western Queensland. As they repeatedly take heavy goods vehicles over those bridges—with a permit—the life of each bridge reduces. What has been happening is that with the heavy goods vehicles and wide load vehicles that are required—and it does not matter whether we are talking about wind turbines or other things—as you try to move these around eventually bridges reach their engineering capacity and they say, ‘You can no longer cross here.’ Then all of the traffic gets funnelled to another bridge and slowly, as more traffic gets funnelled to that because they cannot use the previous one, it shortens the life of that bridge. If you do not fix and upgrade these crossings, eventually you are going to run out of the ability to distribute these things. These are all things we are depending on for energy and export, so the minister needs to focus and have a serious look at what is going on in Western Queensland when it comes to our heavy goods vehicle network and its capacity to do its job.

As the new regulator comes into place there will be different widths, heights and different carrying capacities. All of that needs to be calculated in order to work out how many times these permits can be issued to cross certain parts of the network, and a maintenance program that keeps the network open and operating needs to be put into place.

There are a couple of other things I will talk about very briefly. It is interesting to go from the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator to the CBD BUG and users of e-scooters. There was a diverse set of views from various stakeholders. The Queensland Tourism Industry Council talked about better communication for tourists who come up here and use e-scooters so they understand the rules that exist here in Queensland and do not cop fines simply because they are naive to the legislation that will now govern their use on our road network. I think it is important that the government listens to that and provides some level of capacity for tourists to understand. We do not want people coming to Queensland, breaking the laws and endangering themselves or other people—that is the worst-case scenario—or even copping a big fine, going home and telling everybody how rubbish their holiday in Queensland was because they copped a big fine for doing something that may be legal in another jurisdiction but is not legal in ours. Therefore, as it changes these things it is incumbent on the government to make sure it communicates that to users.

Overall, the bill is noncontroversial. It empowers TMR to transfer staff. I think it will help logistics companies, many of which are based in my community, to comply in a more simple and convenient manner because it aligns across all of the state borders. I think all of that is good. I would just reiterate to the minister that our heavy goods road network needs serious investment so we can maintain the productivity and efficiency of Queensland road users who are exporting and bringing wealth into the state. They need to do it efficiently and in a productive way. Other road users import goods for us to buy and distribute them into our community, and we also want them to do that as economically as possible. We do not want the government’s inadequacies to add to the cost-of-living crisis which has been caused by this government.



**Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (4.18 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. I would like to focus my contribution on the amendments in this bill to the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act. Everyone here in the House knows this is one of my personal favourite bills, so strap yourselves in. The amendment focuses on personal mobility devices and bicycle riders.

Personal mobility devices include e-scooters, and I would like to focus on these amendments not only because I am an e-scooter user from time to time, as well as my kids, but also because it represents to me that the TORUM is a living and breathing act that expands to address new modes of transport. Currently, in the TORUM there are a number of definitions which are key to being able to enforce road safety. The first requires an understanding of the difference between a road and a road related area.

The next is to understand the difference between a vehicle and a motor vehicle. Understanding these definitions is central to enforcing traffic laws because each comes with certain offences and the application of certain police powers.

Currently, the offence to drive other than a motor vehicle with due care and attention—section 84 of the TORUM—requires the concerning act to occur on a road. For the information of members, a road refers merely to the carriageway—yes, that is the current legal term: the carriageway—and that extends from kerb to kerb, from gutter to gutter, the bitumen. For an e-scooter rider—or cyclist for that matter—to be charged with riding without due care and attention, they actually must be on the road, on the bitumen part. If they are driving like that on the footpath, they are not currently captured.

The amendment being considered is to expand the offence section to cover those non motor vehicles on a road related area. A road related area encompasses not only the road, the bitumen, but also the footpaths and the verge. I liken it to boundary line to boundary line. It includes the road, the gutter, the footpath and the grassed or paved areas right up to the fence line; everything in between is a road related area.

This amendment means that e-scooter and bicycle riders will be required to ride with due care and attention or with due consideration for other road users anywhere—that is that road related area. I applaud the inclusion of this amendment. As an e-scooter user, I have no issue with such a requirement to drive with consideration for other users. As a pedestrian here in the city and in other recreational areas, I hope to see greater consequences for those who ride these devices and put pedestrians at risk. I note that many of the stakeholders in the relevant groups also supported this amendment because it actually legitimises the use of e-scooters and other devices as a form of transport. A legitimate form of transport does come with rights but it also comes with responsibilities.

In a similar vein, amendments in section 92 and 93 of the TORUM will now extend to e-scooters and cyclists. Section 92 imposes on drivers to stop and render assistance in the event of an incident resulting in an injury or a death on a road or road related area. However, that is for drivers. Currently, that requirement does not extend to vehicles other than motor vehicles. This is where the definition of vehicle and motor vehicle comes into play. Whilst e-scooters are motorised, they do not fit into the definition of a motor vehicle because they do not reach the threshold for cc. Therefore, it falls into the definition of vehicle.

Currently, a cyclist or e-scooter rider involved in an incident is not legislatively required to stop and render assistance in the event of an incident resulting in injury. This amendment will change that. We do note that there has been an increase in incidents involving e-scooter riders either as the instigator of a crash or at the wrong end of a crash. Section 93 requires that drivers and riders of vehicles—so bicycles are actually currently included—must exchange details if involved in a crash. Most drivers here would be familiar with the protocol that if you are involved in a crash you exchange your name and address, and if it involves a vehicle you exchange driver's licence details and possibly insurance details if there is an injury or likely claim.

However, currently the users of personal mobility devices are not required to do that. Again, considering the frequency that these devices are being involved in incidents where there is an injury—noting that there is no identifying particular on an e-scooter, such as a rego or anything like that, so it is not like you are able to get the rego of someone involved in an incident on an e-scooter who rides off—making this a requirement is a great amendment. I do like the fact that these users not only are now seen as legitimate road users but are having to comply with the responsibilities of every other road and road related user.


There have been a lot of comments recently in relation to breath testing riders of e-scooters and similar. I would say that police can currently charge not only cyclists but also e-scooter riders with riding under the influence in certain circumstances. It is not the case that these people would be riding intoxicated and the police have no power to deal with it. They do under certain circumstances. In fact it is an offence under section 79(7) of the TORUM, which states—

Any person who, while under the influence of liquor or a drug, drives or is in charge of any horse or other animal on a road, or drives or is in charge of any vehicle (other than a motor vehicle) on a road, or attempts to put in motion any vehicle (other than a motor vehicle) on a road, is guilty of an offence.

That is what we call the UIL, which is the high range. There is no current power to do a random breath test, much like there is not for any cyclist, or any horse rider for that matter. However, if police observe the riding behaviour of the individual or feel the general demeanour display indicia of being under the influence of alcohol, that rider may be arrested and transported to a police station where they may have their breath analysed and be charged if found to be under the influence.

There have been a lot of contributions in relation to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator. I was not a member of the committee at the time so I have not been able to turn my eye to that. I do not have a heavy vehicle licence; light rigid is as good as I get. Driving the prison vans needed just a light rigid. For those of us who are seeing the burgeoning use of the personal mobility devices—keeping in mind that they are different from e-bikes; you have to go back to the definition of what is a vehicle—I certainly note that this is part of a push and there will be ongoing and further changes in relation to that to improve safety for both riders and other road users.

I note that the education process is required. I do note that there is a requirement for tourists who use the hire schemes to see what all the rules are on their devices when they commence their hire. Basically, one might like to think that it is common sense—that doing something stupid is probably not the right thing to do and there may be consequences for it. I support trying to get some uniformity between states, particularly if it enhances the tourism aspect. Those of you who spend any time in our tourist areas along the footpaths and bike paths, particularly around Surfers Paradise, know that some people seem to treat those devices as their own little play device and they certainly put other pedestrians et cetera at risk. I welcome this bill. I welcome the amendments that enhance the responsibility of those people who ride those devices. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (4.28 pm): I rise to address the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. This legislation was introduced into the Queensland parliament on 12 October 2023 by the former minister for transport and main roads. It was subsequently referred to the Transport and Resources Committee for further examination. On 24 November 2023 the Transport and Resources Committee tabled its report No. 43 with two recommendations, including that the legislation be passed. The stated objectives of the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill are to: firstly, facilitate the transition of certain regulatory services from the Department of Transport and Main Roads to the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator; and, secondly, to improve road safety, streamline and improve administrative and legislative processes, and clarify existing requirements.

In my contribution today, I want to focus on this legislation's road safety objectives. In particular I recognise as outlined by the Transport and Resources Committee that this legislation will facilitate the following—

... expanding the requirement under the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 ... to require personal mobility device ... and bicycle riders to ride with due care and attention and reasonable consideration of other road users to also apply on road-related areas, such as footpaths, bicycle paths, shared paths, malls, nature strips, median strips, road shoulders, dedicated cycle tracks, car parks and certain public trails

This legislation will also insert a new section into the transport operations act for the purpose of consistently managing safe interactions between vehicles and vulnerable users and recognise that personal mobility devices and bicycles are frequently used on road related areas where careless riding poses a significant risk to users such as pedestrians, including people with mobility impairments. This legislation will also seek to provide a consistent safety duty regulatory framework for road-based public passenger services.

I acknowledge that several bodies that made submissions on this legislation suggested that the definition of riding a bike or personal mobility device with 'due care' was not clear and that this legislation should be amended to specifically define what constitutes due care including specific guidelines for e-scooter riders.

Debate, on motion of Dr Rowan, adjourned.

## MOTIONS

### Olympic and Paralympic Games

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (4.30 pm): I move—

That this House endorses immediate action against the Brisbane 2032 Summer Olympics ('the Brisbane Olympics'), namely by:

1. immediately commencing the necessary steps to cancel the Brisbane Olympics and redirect the \$7 billion of funds towards improving state government services and infrastructure and nation-building projects in regional Queensland.

Regional Queensland has always asked for just one thing, and that is its fair share. Regional Queensland right now has an ailing health system, road networks that are falling apart and an energy network that is failing—I will get to that in a second—and we need significant money spent in regional Queensland just to bring things up to the standard of living here in the south-east corner: Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast. Regional Queensland has been asking for these things for as long

as there has been a divide between the north and south. We heard from regional Queenslanders here in 2021 that the state government's commitment was not towards them but towards making sure it was securing the Olympics, to make sure Brisbane could have a massive party to show the rest of the world how fantastic this state is. Queensland is a fantastic state, but you have a party when things are going well.

Things might be going well here in Brisbane for every one of the MPs that will not back this motion tonight, but the fact is that we in regional Queensland are suffering at the moment. Our hospitals are in dire need of upgrades. We have regional hospitals that still do not have CT scanners. People are unable to get into a dialysis chair so they can receive the renal services they have been calling for. Mount Isa is in desperate need of a hospital upgrade and a dialysis unit. Charters Towers Hospital needs \$300 million spent on upgrades because the building is so old that they cannot even install a CT scanner in there at the moment. They need to spend \$300 million to upgrade the hospital or build a new one.

No new dams have been built in North Queensland. We have a water security problem. It is very easy to forget that right now while it is raining, but when there is no rain and we are in drought again in a couple of years time we will be asking, 'Where are our dams?' There is no commitment to improving agriculture in North Queensland. The only thing we ever seem to hear from Brisbane is attacking agriculture. Regional Queensland is asking for its fair share.

What could this money, this \$7 billion, be spent on if we were to scrap the Brisbane Olympics? We could be spending money on things like addressing the youth crime problem. Let's do that first. With regard to relocation sentencing, we have heard some good language from the state government this week—and we thank the Premier for that—but we want to see money spent on this. We cannot talk about locking more kids up and getting them off the street if we do not have somewhere to put them. Having a pie-in-the-sky plan and putting something up in Cairns in 2027 that is not costed and is not budgeted for is shameful.

Duplicating the Bruce Highway is something that everyone in this House should be concerned about before hosting the Brisbane Olympics. \$7 billion could duplicate the Bruce Highway between Townsville and Cairns—saving lives and increasing the ability for freight to move up and down the coast. For the member for Mackay, the government could duplicate the highway from Townsville to Mackay if you want to spend your money a little further south. \$5.4 billion would have built Hells Gates Dam, yet we are more worried about having a party for two weeks in Brisbane.

I compare this with what happened on the Gold Coast with the Commonwealth Games. The place did not see an economic benefit even there. We had restaurateurs going broke those weeks because they overspent making sure they had enough food and enough staff on board to accommodate the people who would come. They did not come. I was up in Townsville at the time—I came from the tourism industry—and we were expecting them. I sat through some of the meetings where they said, 'You will see this influx of people come to North Queensland and want to spend money in your tourism businesses.' Those tourism businesses reported an almost zero increase in visitation due to the Commonwealth Games.

Regional Queensland does support the Olympic Games, but it wants to support the Olympic Games when we can afford to do so. We want to make sure that regional Queensland is getting its fair share. That is where the money is being generated in the state. \$15 billion of coal royalties is coming from regional Queensland. Spend the money you want to spend on the Olympics up there, to improve the lifestyle and improve the economic ability to earn for this state through nation-building infrastructure before putting money into the Gabba redevelopment and throwing parties in Brisbane to appease voters down here.



**Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (4.35 pm): I rise to oppose the motion. The government will not be supporting this motion and will vote it down. In fact, I am proud to be part of a government which is committed to delivering this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The economic benefit to Queensland has been estimated at way over \$8 billion, largely driven by estimated increases in the value of tourism, trade, health and volunteering—the exact thing the member is saying is so required in his part of this great state.

The Olympics are the world's greatest sporting event. We will host them right here in Queensland in 2032—not tomorrow but in 2032. Sports-mad Queensland has so many amazing Olympians and Paralympians—Cathy Freeman, Susie O'Neill, Kieren Perkins, Sally Pearson, Libby Trickett and Simon Patmore, just to mention a few. I cannot wait to see who our future stars will be in 2032. Proudly, right here in Queensland, on the world stage, we will deliver the best games.

It is very short-sighted to be looking at this from the prism of, 'What's in it for me up in North Queensland?' because \$7 billion over the years up to 2032 pales into insignificance at the \$90 billion Big Build that we have over the next four years—\$7 billion compared to \$90 billion. I remind the House that the majority of that is being spent in regional Queensland, in the area represented by the member for Hinchinbrook. Let me remind him: it is \$90 billion over four years; however, it is still not enough. What do we do? Let's cancel everything. Let's walk away from the world stage. Let's damage Queensland's reputation on a whim. Let me say: this government has a very balanced and considered view. We won the games and we will deliver them—the best yet to come.

I remind the member also that the federal government is co-funding these games. It is a fifty-fifty split of the \$7 billion. That is \$3.5 billion from the government. This motion is somehow suggesting that we take the whole \$7 billion. If 50 per cent is funded by the Commonwealth government, they may have something to say if it is not delivering the greatest sporting event this Earth has seen.


The games will leave a lasting legacy and benefits for Queensland, in both the cities and the regions. In terms of infrastructure, we already have a \$90 billion investment, and this will make sure we can continue the legacy of fantastic facilities, transport networks and all of the other tourism and visitation advantages that we will gain from hosting the games in 2032.

While not pre-empting the outcome of Graham Quirk's review of the venues, I can safely say that many regional venues will receive upgrades to host the Olympic Games. These are regional areas like Toowoomba, Townsville, Cairns, as well as the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Moreton Bay and the Scenic Rim. These are fantastic areas.

**Mr Millar:** What about Longreach?

**Ms GRACE:** Yes, I know members would love to see it in all their areas, but at the same time you have to be realistic. They may not be coming out to some of those areas that are being yelled out to me from across the chamber.

I had the pleasure of meeting Graham and his co-reviewers, Michelle Morris and Ken Kanofski, yesterday. They are diligently working hard on this. I am not going to pre-empt the outcome, but they have years of experience amongst them. Michelle has a very good background with the Tokyo Olympics. I asked, 'Are we the only city where venues have been looked at?' She looked at me and laughed and said, 'Minister, there is not anywhere where the Olympic Games have been held that these issues have not been debated. The process that this government is going through is second to none.' I am very proud to stand here as the minister responsible for delivering these games. We will not be supporting the motion. This is an exciting road ahead. I support the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (4.41 pm): I would like to place on record my very strong support for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. You might have heard of 'go for gold', but I am 'Joe for gold'. I wear these Olympics as an absolute badge of pride and every single Queenslander should bear them as a badge of pride. I am pretty good at darts. I probably should not boast, but I reckon I could probably take on most people in this House. We all know that I am never going to win an Olympic medal in any sport, but I tell members this: I will wear as a badge of pride the fact that our state has managed to get the Olympics. Our state is absolutely punching above its weight. The IOC and the world has shown confidence in us to deliver these games and we should show that confidence in ourselves.

I spent my childhood in Charters Towers, Magnetic Island and Townsville. I spent a fair bit of that time watching cricket coming from—where else—the Gabba. I remember how proud we were to have such amazing sport in our state. We did not sit around lamenting the fact it was not in Charters Towers; we just loved the fact it was here in Queensland. I am old enough to remember when State of Origin kicked off and I remember how quickly it grew. We did not sit around in Townsville and Magnetic Island saying, 'Why isn't that here in Townsville?' We sat around saying, 'Isn't it fantastic to be a Queenslander?' That is exactly what we said. This pedalling of bush versus city is an absolute nonsense. The proposition being put forward in this motion represents a false dichotomy. The Olympics and the Paralympics—or something else; we can have it all, because we are Queenslanders.

Let us examine the Olympic and Paralympic Games versus regional Queensland. I am proud to be part of a government that has prioritised regional Queensland. In the 2023-24 state budget, 65.5 per cent of capital investment was for outside of Brisbane—\$13.3 billion in the financial year. Nearly twice the amount that this motion notes is being spent on the Olympics and Paralympics over the next 10 years has been allocated to regional Queensland for one year. It is twice in one year what we are spending in 10 years. This should probably make me extremely cranky as a Brisbane MP, but, in fact, it makes me extremely proud that I am part of a government that fundamentally understands that when any part of Queensland succeeds, we all succeed. We are proud to put Queenslanders first in this state.



Let us think about those regional investments: CopperString, Works for Queensland—how many jobs has that created—the Townsville stadium, the Cairns Convention Centre, cluster fencing, Indigenous land and sea rangers. Let us not forget the schools, the hospitals, the police, fire, and ambulance stations, the social housing and the boat ramps. Let us not forget the boat ramps! Let us not forget that the members for Hill, Traeger and Hinchinbrook will stand outside those shiny new hospitals, schools and police stations to get their photos taken and take credit for standing up for their communities. But who funded them? It was the Miles Labor government. This list could go on and on.

The Premier today outlined in his ministerial statement the significant development of industry going on in Gladstone. It is not just happening there; it is happening in Mackay, it is happening in Townsville and it is happening in Cairns. It is happening right around this great state. We have been doing this way before we won the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and we are not going to stop because we have the games.

This false dichotomy—sadly—is not just being pedalled by the KAP; it is also being pedalled by the Greens. Lots of people in many areas say that we should not spend money on the Gabba—if we do go down that path—but instead should spend that money on hospitals. Once again, the amount of money that was proposed to be spent on the Gabba is absolutely dwarfed by what we spend on health in one single year. We have spent \$25 billion this year on health to rebuild hospitals like the PA Hospital and the QEII Hospital—\$25 billion is 10 times what we were proposing to spend on the Gabba over 10 years and it will be spent in one year. That is incredible. Anybody who makes this argument is pedalling a false dichotomy. We are great economic managers; we have the capability to do this. This will be massively beneficial to all Queenslanders. If we get behind this together, all Queenslanders will be there when the curtain rises to celebrate the Olympics.

*(Time expired)*



**Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (4.46 pm): I rise in support of the motion calling on the Queensland government to cancel the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. No significant public polling was ever done to test Queenslanders' support for these games, but there can be little doubt that the games are increasingly viewed as extravagant and wasteful, particularly by those in the regions. The fact is, most Queenslanders are simply too worried about the cost-of-living emergency, the shocking state of our roads, exploding population levels and the worsening housing crisis.

Last week, IOC president, John Coates, publicly advised the government to scrap its plans for replacing the Gabba with a \$2.7 billion Olympic stadium. Coates was quoted in the *Courier-Mail* as saying that the Gabba rebuild risked turning people against the games altogether, and admitted that the Olympic movement was 'on the nose in Brisbane'. Even Labor must admit that spending \$2.7 billion to replace a perfectly good stadium—while there are critical shortages in crisis accommodation facilities and affordable housing—is pretty hard to justify. An extra 1.2 million people are expected to call Queensland home by 2032, bringing the state's population to 6.5 million. There are growing fears that the state will not cope with this population influx and the surge of visitors in the lead-up to the games.

In 2023, a damning survey revealed that most Brisbane residents have no faith in the city's transport network. Almost 80 per cent of residents say that they are not confident the transport network will cope with the influx caused by the games. Brisbane residents rated the quality of the SEQ motorways and congestion levels as 'the worst' and said that 'reducing traffic gridlocks is their No. 1 priority'.

Queenslanders are currently facing the worst housing crisis the state has seen in generations. The Olympic build will force housing costs higher, robbing the market of vital materials and labour. Then, there is the massive corruption risk posed by the games. In 2021, Labor introduced the Brisbane 2032 arrangements bill, which provided conflict of interest exemptions for elected officials that are appointed to the games' organising committee. The CCC said, 'We have serious concerns with this aspect of the Bill, as it presents corruption risks' especially as this body is 'likely to be involved in the management of substantial public funds'. This bill also amended the RTI Act exempting the organising committee from the state's right to information laws.


In 2022, an exemption was granted to the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee from having to prepare any financial statements for the 2021-22 financial year. According to the 2022 report by the Auditor-General, the exemption was in response to requests from the then premier. The committee, he said, should be required to submit financial statements and the annual report for the most recent years of 2022-23. I did ring the Audit Office and they are putting in a report. There was a report before the end of last year and there will be a report in the next couple of months.

Whether another exemption was sought and granted, we did not know at that time. To top it off, the then deputy premier announced last year that no independent watchdog would be set up to oversee the games' multibillion dollar infrastructure program, as had originally been planned. So it is exempt from conflict-of-interest rules, exempt from our RTI laws, exempt from submitting financials and exempt from independent oversight. What could possibly go wrong?

I would like to acknowledge the amazing job done by the member for South Brisbane, whom we are all praying for at the moment, who stood up for her community and called the government out over the extreme cost of these games and the lack of consultation and pointed out that the plan to destroy a neighbourhood school and park for a four-week event was absolutely ludicrous. I could not agree more.

Right now Queensland is experiencing unprecedented levels of financial distress. Last month QCOS released a report showing that working families in Queensland are spending \$200 more than they earn each week just on bare essentials. Petrol, gas, electricity, bread and milk are up 10 per cent. This is on top of the record high rents and soaring lending rates. It is beyond foolhardy to be tipping billions of dollars into building these extravagant stadiums and sporting venues. Even Victoria's dreaded Dan Andrews could see that. Labor should take a page out of their Victorian comrade's book and scrap the entire project—lock, stock and barrel.

I wholeheartedly support the motion. I think we should look forward to the 2032 games and realise that our financial position may not be what we think it will be. Situations are changing—and even the government say that—daily on a worldwide scale. That is why there are continual cost blowouts of up to 100 per cent from this government. I think we need to be realistic and have a look at scrapping the games.

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals) (4.50 pm): I rise to speak against this motion. The way it is drafted, this motion is about a choice—one or the other. Why can we not have both? In Townsville we can have it all and we deserve it all. I am proud of the huge investments we are making in the infrastructure areas in Townsville and right across North Queensland, and I am happy to highlight what we are doing in Townsville.

A project that the member for Hinchinbrook and his fellow KAP members would be familiar with is CopperString. I know that they are huge supporters of this project, and I welcome that support. The support we are giving to CopperString is \$5 billion. This is an absolutely huge investment for the future of North Queensland. In fact, it is the biggest build in North Australia. This is a nation-building infrastructure project and Townsville will be the epicentre of it. People have called this project a game changer. I disagree: this project is the game. It is the whole game. It is the big enchilada. It will help unlock huge opportunities for renewable energy right throughout North Queensland. As the Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals, I know how important CopperString is to the North West Minerals Province. There is potentially \$500 billion of critical mineral deposits in the region, and this reliable high-powered voltage line will mean more projects and more jobs for North Queensland.

Recently on a trade mission to the USA, I learned that investors were already very aware of CopperString. They were hugely aware of the potential this will mean for the ESG credentials for those commodities. Dozens of local businesses are already benefiting from the CopperString project and a further 450 businesses, including 250 from regional Queensland, have registered their interest to work on this project. There have been 50 work packages released for expressions of interest covering a range of activities and services such as engineering, construction, environmental management, logistics, camp construction, haulage and communications, just to name a few.

It is our progressive coal royalties that mean the Miles government can invest in publicly owned infrastructure like CopperString and other important facilities in regional Queensland like the new Moranbah Hospital. We know that Moranbah is a town at the heart of our steelmaking coal resources sector and we are proud to be delivering this new hospital for that community from those coal royalties. As part of our Big Build, we are also investing \$530 million to upgrade Townsville University Hospital. This major expansion will deliver an additional 143 hospital beds and support 1,270 construction jobs, with BESIX Watpac awarded the tender for work last year. In fact, we are investing a record \$1.2 billion for health care in the Townsville region—an increase of 59 per cent since coming to government.

We are delivering water security for Townsville after the federal member for Herbert, Phil Thompson, and the former federal LNP government squibbed on their election commitment and failed this city when they failed to fund stage 2 of the Haughton Pipeline Project. I am sure the member for Hinchinbrook remembers that one. We invested \$215 million into stage 1 of the pipeline and stepped in to commit \$195 million to stage 2 of the project after Phil Thompson backflipped on his election

commitment and walked away, taking the \$195 million with him. Where is the money? This entire project is supporting hundreds of jobs and delivering water security for the city which is essential for Townsville's future.

It does not stop there. Queensland Country Bank Stadium is another proud legacy of this government. 'Build it and they will come,' is what we said, and that is what is happening. It was built by North Queenslanders for North Queenslanders. In fact, this Friday night the NRL All Stars match will be held in Townsville, helping to bring visitors and millions of dollars into the local economy, which is fantastic for our businesses. Of course, what is happening next month? Pink is coming—two concerts in Townsville at the stadium.

The stadium is world-class and in fact will be used for our football matches for the 2032 Olympics, focusing thousands of eyes—in fact, millions of eyes—from around the world and locally on Townsville. There is potential for massive exposure on the international stage for Townsville and I am excited about those possibilities.



**Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (4.55 pm): I fully support the motion that was moved by the member for Hinchinbrook, which states—

... immediately commencing the necessary steps to cancel the Brisbane Olympics and redirect the \$7 billion of funds towards improving state government services and infrastructure and nation-building projects in regional Queensland.

I really believe that my constituents would 100 per cent support funding that they have been denied for decades going back to the regions. Today I was reminded that I was elected 20 years ago. Coming down to Brisbane for the first time, I could not believe and was quite amazed when I saw all of the massive infrastructure projects here in Brisbane. There was not one but two \$60 million footbridges—this is going back 20 years—a \$500 million sports stadium, a \$1.8 billion second Gateway Bridge, the \$4.8 billion Airportlink and tunnels constructed everywhere. Now 20 years later, we have the \$7 billion Cross River Rail.

When we went back to rural and regional Queensland there were railway station closures. We would see the government close down a railway station. Then the next minute the lad porters and the stationmasters lost their jobs and their children had to be pulled from school because there were no jobs there. Next minute the corner store would close down and then the hotel would close down—all from one railway closure. Then we saw the maternity services close down and mums had to drive 500 kilometres to a major city and stay in a motel for three weeks to give birth to their baby. We had potholes on most of our single-lane highways and there was nothing in the way of nation-building projects.

We have worked hard and come a long way to close this gap and now we are going to have the Brisbane Olympics. People would have to be delusional to believe that regional Queensland is going to be better off; they need only look at the track record.

The last time we held an Olympic Games was the Sydney Olympics in 2000. Yes, it did put Sydney on the world map. Yes, it was good for the city and infrastructure projects. It is now 24 years later and it will be 32 years since the Sydney Olympics when the Brisbane Olympics kicks off. However, it is a completely different world now compared to what it was back then. We did not have the cost-of-living crisis we have today. We did not have the housing crisis we have today. We did not have the unaffordable insurance like we have today. We did not have the skyrocketing fuel and electricity prices that we have today. It is a completely different world.

While we are down here talking about the Olympics, Far North Queensland has just come out of a major disaster where five major highways were cut off, sending residents, businesses and the farming community to the wall. At this present moment none of them are talking about the Olympics. We have been calling for an upgrade to the major arterial roads in regional Queensland for decades. Instead, the government wants to—and this is why we have been calling for this—spend \$7 billion on the luxury item of a two-week party in the south-east corner which no other city in the world wanted. If this goes ahead, we know that it will take our contractors away from North Queensland. The funds will be directed to the Olympics and away from our sporting clubs, our infrastructure projects and our schools. It will all be put on the backburner.

We have been calling for these vital infrastructure projects that are very important to our region. We could spend the money to fast-track the inland highway that links Cairns to the Tablelands. For 30 years we have been pushing for that. The Bridle Track will tunnel through the range and take only 30 minutes, not an hour and a half, saving the 44 closures a year. What did the state government and federal government do? They spent money on bringing in speed monitoring cameras as the way to

solve the 44 range closures. The North Johnstone Transfer is a pipe connecting the North Johnstone to the Barron—something that was pushed 55 years ago—to supplement the farming industry. I wanted to bring all of these issues to the attention of the House, but time has run out.

*(Time expired)*

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

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

### Miles Labor Government



**Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (5.06 pm): I move—

That this House:

- (a) notes the concern throughout Far North Queensland at the increased incidence of crime, failure by the government to combat cost-of-living increases and the government's inability to address the region's health crisis; and
- (b) calls on the members for Barron River, Cairns and Cook to support their communities to ensure laws favour victims rather than offenders, the state government reduces the pressure its own activities impose on cost-of-living increases and adopt policies that restore health services throughout the region.

This week we have been treated to the spectacle of those opposite pretending that the last 10 years just have not happened, that they were a figment of our imagination, that Anastacia never existed, that the Palaszczuk government never existed. The Palaszczuk what? Palaszczuk who? Anastacia who? It is like they are saying, 'What's gone on? What's happened for the last 10 years? What's happened? Where's it gone?' We have heard words like 'refreshed' and 'renewed'.

**Mr Nicholls** interjected.

**Mr JANETZKI:** I take the interjection: Anastacia has moved on to greener pastures in Whistler. We have heard words like 'refreshed' and 'renewed'. I have another word for this charade that the Palaszczuk government never existed: it is 'rubbish'! It is absolute rubbish because this government cannot run from its record. What we see time and time again from this government already just in its first or second month is that it is a recycled government, it is a reheated government and it is just plain rotten. Whatever it is that new Premier Miles is selling, Queenslanders just are not buying it. They are just not buying it, and we wonder why. Past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour and what we have seen over the last 10 years—and the people of Queensland know it in their bones and the people of Far North Queensland know it too—is a record of failure. It is a record of dismal failure. Tonight across cost of living, power, crime and housing my colleagues will run through in greater detail the litany of failures.

Let us think about crime. There has been a 107 per cent rise in car thefts since the election of this Labor government and a 70 per cent rise in unlawful entry into homes, and the member for Barron River voted for all of it. He voted for all of it. There is someone else who we know voted for all of it too, and that is the Premier—the breach-of-bail repeal, the catch-and-release introduction laws, the absolute failures and the ups and downs of the crime plans and their failures. They all voted for it. In housing, social housing has dropped 19 per cent in the last five years. Home ownership in Cairns is at 51 per cent. Queensland is at the bottom of the ladder at 63½ per cent. Cairns is even worse at 51 per cent, and the member for Cairns has been there for all of it. When it comes to health, when this Labor government started ramping was at 6½ per cent in Cairns. It is now at 35 per cent. One thing I want to draw the attention of the House to is that when it comes to health services the litany of failures in the Far North continues there too.

I turn now to media releases. We know this government is addicted to media announcements, glossy brochures and unfunded promises in the never-never, but this one that I am about to talk about takes the cake. In 2017 there was a media release for a \$5.6 billion overhaul for the Cairns Ambulance Station and Operations Centre. That has not been built—an absolute nothing! We just have media releases, and do members know who the health minister was at the time? It was the current Treasurer—the king of unfunded promises, the king of glossy announcements, the king of funding promises beyond the never-never. What hope does the Far North have? I will tell members: we are the team with the right priorities for Queensland and we have two candidates on the ground—Bree in Barron River and Yolonde in Cairns. We are looking forward to going up and helping them this week coming. I will be there on Saturday with Yolonde. We will be up there meeting people. We are all going to arrive and spread across the tropical Far North, because it is time. Instead of having little mice from Cairns down here in Brisbane, we are going to bring some lions. We are going to get Bree and Yolonde down here.

*(Time expired)*



**Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (5.11 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'notes' be omitted and the following inserted:

'Queenslanders', including those in Far North Queensland, views regarding community safety, the national cost-of-living crisis and access to health services;

- (b) notes the Labor government's strong investment in community safety, including supporting victims of crime and delivering more police resources;
- (c) notes the delivery of more than 1,450 FTE positions in the Cairns HHS and Torres and Cape HHS since 2015;
- (d) notes the strong investment by Labor governments in new and improved hospital facilities and services in Far North Queensland;
- (e) notes the record cost-of-living relief being provided by the Miles government;

and condemns the LNP for:

- (i) promising to cut 90 police from the Far North region
- (ii) sacking approximately 402 health workers in the Cairns and Torres and Cape HHSs;
- (iii) having an express policy of lifting wholesale power prices and attempting to sell Queensland's electricity assets which would have increased electricity prices;

and commends the members for Barron River, Cairns and Cook for their ongoing support of their communities, including during the recent natural disasters.'

It was great having one of 'da boys' from Toowoomba South lecture our hardworking members from Far North Queensland about our investments. I am not sure who is running the parliamentary strategy of those opposite, but whoever it is needs to reconsider what they are doing, because going after the members for Cairns, Barron River and Cook, who have helped deliver the largest ever investment in health care in Far North Queensland, is probably not the best idea. Thanks to these hardworking Labor members there are more than 1,450 more healthcare workers in the Far North than there were when we came to government. It is thanks to these hardworking Labor members that we are expanding the Cairns Base Hospital by 64 beds, including a new 32-bed surgical centre, and it is thanks to these hardworking Labor members that we have seen investment in the Cairns HHS budget increase by 95 per cent compared to what they received from those opposite. Why? It is because the members for Cairns, Barron River and Cook are passionate advocates for their communities. That was on full display during the recent natural disasters. They care about helping their communities when their communities need it most. They do not just go about whipping up fear for the nightly news.

We know that those opposite do not care about Far North Queensland. Why would they have sacked 306 health staff in the Cairns district and why would they have sacked over 96 staff in the Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service? Why would they have gutted \$45 million from mental health services? They were the first government in Queensland's history to take funding away from mental health. What has been the response on this side of the House? A mental health levy and now a \$1.6 billion investment in Better Care Together, a mental health levy those opposite do not support. When we talk to communities in Cairns, across the cape or in Barron River about how we are supporting people with their mental health, including young people doing it tough, we remind them that we have a record investment with a mental health levy and that if those opposite win government that is all at risk. What will those opposite do with that mental health levy? They will absolutely walk away from it because that is what they said they would do when we introduced it.

If the LNP cared about the Far North it would not have cut funding from local NGO services like Diabetes Queensland or the Royal Flying Doctor Service. The Royal Flying Doctor Service up in the cape and the Torres needs funding. Those opposite would have us believe that those days are over, but it is not true because we have recently heard the member for Burnett talk about how the staff are overpaid. We have heard the member for Mudgeeraba call regional health workers duds. She has still not apologised. And who could forget most recently the member for Mudgeeraba saying that she aspires to the Newman government's record on health. After all, the member for Mudgeeraba was the first nurse Campbell Newman sacked.



**Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (5.16 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Toowoomba South. The residents of Cairns and surrounds have been taken for granted by this Labor government and Labor members for far too long. The issues that have been confronting the residents have been laid bare as a result of the recent flooding. Many of the issues should have been addressed many years ago. Many home owners have been calling for the local MPs to help find a solution to the ever-rising cost of home insurance. Many have been facing home insurance bills in excess of \$10,000. Sadly, many have found this cost simply unaffordable and have cancelled their policies. These home

owners now have their homes in ruins and are facing repair bills that will take many years for them to repay. Those whose homes are unfit to remain in until repairs are done are now looking for alternative accommodation, but, as is the case in most of Queensland, the Cairns region is suffering a housing shortage as a result of this Labor government's failure to release land for housing whilst the members for Cairns and Barron River make excuses for this failure. This has seen many of these home owners living in caravans and tents, as this is the only option they have. Housing availability was at less than one per cent before the floods and now is non-existent.

The rebuild of the Cairns region is massive: housing, roads, bridges and other infrastructure. Where are the tradies and civil construction workers going to stay while these repairs are being done? Will they need to bring their own tents? Speaking of roads and bridges, there is one road in particular that cannot go without a mention—that is, the Kuranda Range road. Residents and businesses have been calling for action on this road for years—calls the local MPs have continued to ignore. This road is a vital link to the towns of Kuranda and Mareeba amongst others and the agriculture industry located on the Tableland. For those who have not travelled this road, it is a two-lane, winding road that climbs the Kuranda Range, most of it through heritage-listed rainforest. Often, the road is either closed or down to one lane due to vehicle accidents, heavy vehicle rollovers or land and rock slides. This has a direct impact on productivity and the cost of getting produce either up or down the range. All too often that cost is borne by the producers.

Last year, this state Labor government released a statement that the road did not need an upgrade for at least 30 years. The members for Cairns and Barron River were loud in their support of that position. From my many visits to Cairns I know and can assure the House that they are the only ones who support that position. Indeed, I travelled that road with the transport committee little more than a week ago. I am sure all the members of the committee who were on that trip would be concerned that the road may not survive another three months let alone 30 years. A number of sections have disappeared down the cliff and will be under traffic control for many months to come—if there are no more weather events.


This is another fail that is affecting the hip pocket of everyone who relies on the road for domestic or industry travel. It also affects the ability of emergency vehicles to respond to events in Kuranda and beyond. There is no 24-hour police station in Kuranda so officers must respond from Cairns. That is simply not good enough for someone suffering a break-in or a domestic violence situation. Unfortunately, the Cairns district has one of the highest incidence of domestic violence in the state. This also affects ambulance response times.

**Mr Harper** interjected.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Thuringowa and member for Nanango, cease your quarrelling across the chamber or you will be warned. My apologies, member for Condamine.

**Mr WEIR:** Residents face the prospect of being held up by roadworks along the range and then ramped once they reach the Cairns Hospital. For too long, the good people of Cairns and district have been let down by the members for Cairns and Barron River. However, there is a light on the hill and there is a solution for the people of Cairns and district. That solution is the great candidates that the LNP have already selected for election in October. Yolonde Entsch for Cairns and Bree James for Barron River will give the community the representation that for so long they have been longing for and that they deserve.

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (5.21 pm): I rise to speak against the private member's motion that was introduced this afternoon. When it comes to health, every day I will stand with Labor to fight for the best interests of my community. Our government is throwing everything at the health system to make sure that Queenslanders get the world-class health care they deserve. We are building the new beds and employing the frontline staff our state needs to keep up with demand. The LNP continues to show that they are more interested in spreading fear and misinformation about our health system in the community than they are in seeing real solutions.

I will always fight for better health services and outcomes for communities across the Cook electorate. On this side of the House, we know that how we build hospital capacity is by investing in our hospitals and investing in more beds, and that is exactly what we are doing. We have delivered upgrades to the Thursday Island Hospital and expanded services to include a CT scanner, a hydraulics

project and a central reverse osmosis unit. We have upgraded the Murray Island Primary Health Care Centre. We have invested an additional \$2.02 million in integrated ear, nose and throat services including outpatient services in the community being expanded to approximately 30 outpatient clinics per year.

The Cooktown Multipurpose Health Service has now been recognised as a training post. This allows registrars to undertake part of their core vocational training in training facilities, delivering high-quality holistic and culturally safe health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It also encourages the long-term retention of general practitioners in our communities.

We have established the Torres and Cape HHS Public Health Unit, which offers a range of services including communicable disease control, immunisation support, health surveillance, tuberculosis management and public health promotion and education. That is in addition to the redevelopment of the Mossman emergency department, a \$1 million upgrade to the Mareeba Hospital operating theatre, the restoration of vital endoscopy services and the installation of a brand new CT scanner. We have committed \$250 million for the expansion of the Cairns Hospital, which will deliver 96 new beds and include a new state-of-the-art surgical centre with 32 beds.


There is so much that Labor and members on this side of the House are doing to support health in communities throughout Far North Queensland. I look after one of the most complex communities in Far North Queensland. To stand here and listen to those opposite talk about health and what Labor is not doing in Far North Queensland is just ridiculous. Those opposite talk about health workers as being duds and not worthy of entitlements. That is just shameful.

In partnership with the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council, the Care Coordination Service Centre is a one stop shop for complex patient support. It has been developed as a single point of contact for patients to help them navigate the health system. That is critical for patients in my electorate. It means that vulnerable patients from across the Torres, cape, Cairns and hinterland regions can access the care that they need at the right time and closer to home.

Our rural and remote health facilities do an incredible job serving their communities, but some are ageing and the time is right to update and replace them so that they can continue to meet the needs of their communities. Our \$1 billion Building Rural and Remote Health Program is doing just that. The \$14.8 million Cow Bay Primary Health Centre is a huge win for my community in the Cow Bay and Daintree area. We know that this new centre will mean that accessible and modern health care can be delivered for generations to come.

Residents of the Daintree and the Cook electorate should be assured that our Labor government is delivering on its commitment to improve rural health facilities across Queensland no matter where you live. That is a vast contrast with those opposite. The LNP knows only cuts. When they were in charge, 430 frontline health jobs were cut from the Far North. More than \$2 million in funding was cut to nine local community health organisations. In addition, \$16.4 million in funding was slashed from the 46 statewide community health organisations that provide local services in this area.

I am proud to stand with Labor. I am proud to stand on this side of the House and I am proud to support communities in Far North Queensland and across Queensland, all day, every day.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.26 pm): The communities of Far North Queensland have been completely forgotten by this state Labor government and nowhere more so than when it comes to crime. Last week I was in Cairns and North Queensland. Firstly, I want to thank everyone who came to the youth justice hearings that were held so that we could hear your stories, so that we could hear about the crime problems plaguing the Far North and so that we could hear about what those communities need when it comes to the youth crime crisis that is ripping through North Queensland. The LNP's outstanding candidates, Bree James and Yolonde Entsch, were there to support their communities. They were there listening to what their communities had to say. They were there supporting their communities on the youth crime crisis.

Can members guess who was noticeably absent from those hearings? Can members guess who did not turn up to support or listen to their communities? The member for Cook, the member for Barron River and the member for Cairns! They were noticeably absent. They were not there. They were not listening. What that tells us is that those members have a complete unwillingness to stand up for their communities when it comes to crime.

The Labor members should have been there because non-government stakeholders talked about how crime is out of control in the Far North. We heard about how bad the watch house crisis is getting in Cairns. We heard from Genevieve Sinclair, the CEO of Youth Empowered Towards

Independence, which visits the Cairns watch house every day. She said that children are being held in the Cairns watch house in environments that health services cannot manage and that Youth Justice cannot manage. Genevieve told us that, over the past six to eight weeks, they have had workers in the watch house for four or five hours at a time when the number of children being held has reached 18. Eighteen kids have been held there for two to three weeks. That is a complete indictment on this state Labor government. Let us not forget that we have the watch house crisis because this state Labor government created a generation of young criminals and then had to override the Human Rights Act in order to hold them because they did not plan. Now they are holding them in watch houses. It is completely shameful.

On top of this, there is the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, where night mode is happening all too often, where most of the young offenders are on remand and without therapeutic intervention, and where about 96 per cent of them reoffend. Detention needs to be a place for rehabilitation. It needs to be a place to intervene in a young person's cycle of crime. But under this state Labor government it is wholly failing these kids and failing the communities of North Queensland.

Under this state Labor government, the number of serious repeat offenders in Far North Queensland has almost doubled in the space of two years—from 48 in 2019 to 81 in 2023. Since Labor came to power in 2015 and watered down our laws, we have seen: unlawful use of a motor vehicle increase by 107 per cent; unlawful entry increase by 70 per cent; robbery increase by 306 per cent; and assaults increase by 257 per cent. This government is trying to tell us that crime is going down! It is clear from these statistics that this state Labor government has failed these communities every step of the way. It has failed the communities and failed the young offenders.

The LNP has a clear plan to keep our communities safe: increase the number of police on the beat through retention and attraction; restore consequences for action by removing the principle of detention as a last resort from the Youth Justice Act; divert young lives from crime by reforming early intervention; and fix the broken child safety system and residential care system that is leading children on a trajectory of crime. Another thing this committee heard during the inquiry is that child safety and residential care are utterly broken. The intersection of child safety and residential care with youth justice is absolutely broken, but this state Labor government refuses to acknowledge that. The government is whitewashing the data in relation to this.

If you are not prepared to acknowledge a problem, how are you going to fix it? These kids are in the care of this government. They are under child safety orders in the care of this government. The government is refusing to acknowledge that that is part of the problem. They are not turning their lives around; they are ending up in the justice system, and that is the fault of this state Labor government. There is a clear choice for the people of Barron River and Cairns: they can vote for Bree James and Yolonde Entsch in October 2024.

*(Time expired)*



**Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (5.31 pm): Well, well, well. Here we go again! I was sitting there earlier trying to work out why this motion was coming up. I thought, 'What is it that the MPs in Far North Queensland have done that has suddenly drawn the ire of the entire LNP? Why is it us? Is it our turn?' Members opposite have obviously put the blowtorch on Townsville from time to time. I think even Bundaberg was given a go. I was trying to work out, 'Why us? What did I do?' Then I realised: they are going on a holiday. They all are coming to Cairns on a holiday, so they are ramping it all up. That is what this is all about. That is cool; I am okay with that. Members opposite are welcome to come up and spend some of their hard-earned money in my electorate. That is really good. I am happy to see them. It was at the Cairns regional parliament that the LNP last ran one of their anti Far North Queensland rant motions. I suppose our turn has come around again.

I am very proud to come from the Far North. I am very proud to represent an electorate in the Far North. I am very proud of what Far North Queensland stands for, with our iconic people, lifestyle, amazing landscape and amazing backdrop. I am also proud to be joined by my FNQ colleagues and friends in this House: the members for Cairns, Cook, Mulgrave and Hill. Between the five of us, we look after an incredibly large and diverse landscape—a landscape that was severely tested by Mother Nature barely a few months ago with a rain bomb at the tail end of Cyclone Jasper which dumped over 2½ metres of water over catchments in different parts of Far North Queensland. Certainly, the bullseye landed right in the Barron River electorate.


The LNP has failed to win the seats of Cairns, Cook and Barron River three terms running. Come October, it will be three months shy of 10 years since the LNP held any of these seats. The next northern LNP member is in the Burdekin. When I look at the speaking list I see the members for Toowoomba



South, Condamine and Currumbin. These people are from the New South Wales border! I might as well be getting a lecture from the Victorian Liberal Party on how to run things in Far North Queensland—seriously. Voters in the Far North acted with haste in 2015 to chuck this lot out. The voters of my electorate remember Campbell Newman well.

I want to mention some of the comments by the member for Condamine about the Kuranda Range and the flooding and damage that occurred. I commend the great work of state agencies after the event, particularly the staff of RoadTek. As employees of TMR, they led a massive team of civil construction companies to clear the most incredible volume of landslide debris in some of the most challenging work sites that I ever have seen. On the Captain Cook Highway north of Ellis Beach, there was a 300-tonne boulder on the road that they had to blow up with explosives. There was another 100-tonne boulder hanging up about 40 metres which they had to use excavators to try and get to. It was incredible work. On the Kuranda Range, there was incredible work from RoadTek crews to get that road open. It is one of the most challenging geological places on which a road can be built. That mountain has been trying for a long time now to throw the road off the side. It is only our hardworking crews that can keep it there.

The LNP talk a big game when it comes to the cost of living and electricity prices, but I saw Ergon, Energex, Powerlink and CleanCo all ramp up their workforce to come to Far North Queensland and put the lights back on. That is a workforce I believe was being fattened up for sale when the LNP were in government. We have to wonder what things would be like up there now if overseas companies owned all of those assets. Would all of those people come up to Far North Queensland or would the lights still be off?

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (5.36 pm): After the feeble, soulless defence from the member for Barron River, is it any wonder the people of Barron River feel abandoned? He asks what he has done to earn our ire. The answer is: nothing! He has done nothing. The people of Far North Queensland and the people of Barron River know that Craig Crawford does nothing.

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

**Mr MICKELBERG:** Communities in Cairns and Barron River feel abandoned. Residents feel abandoned. Small and family businesses feel abandoned. They feel abandoned by Labor members who are more focused on their own political advancement than on listening to and fighting for their communities.

**Mr Crawford** interjected.

**Mr MICKELBERG:** The member for Cairns—I hear him laughing—is fond of rattling off a little saying about having two ears and one mouth. Unfortunately, the cries of his community and the cries of the Far North fall on deaf ears—the deaf ears of Labor members of parliament more inclined to take their orders from Brisbane than listen to the calls for help from the community members they purport to represent. If they did listen, they would know that Far North Queensland residents are at breaking point under the combined impact of skyrocketing electricity and insurance prices, crippling crime, 33 per cent ambulance ramping and woefully inadequate roads such as the Kuranda Range Crossing.

Thankfully, residents of Cairns and Barron River have hope. Hope is on the horizon—hope in the form of local representatives who will listen to the community, hope in the form of local representatives who will take the fight up for the Far North, hope in the form of the LNP's committed candidate for Cairns, Yolonde Entsch, and our hardworking candidate for Barron River, Bree James.

Last week I spent three days in Barron River with Bree, listening to residents in Palm Cove, Smithfield, Trinity Beach and Speewah. At a community meeting in Speewah, residents told me that they feel abandoned. They told me that they have never seen the member for Barron River and they feel as though he does not care about the chronic issues that their community is facing—with unreliable electricity, with crime, with concerns about road safety, with patchy telecommunications and with constant closures on the Kuranda Range Crossing.

Fighting back tears, one Speewah local mother told me of her fear at watching her son choke, of trying to call triple-0 but not being able to get through, of panicking at the thought that she could not get out because the roads were flooded and of preparing to do CPR on her struggling son. Thankfully, that resident was able to help her son without access to the help that she so deserved, but locals fear that the next emergency may not end the same way.

Locals also fear the impact of young criminals who steal cars and break into small businesses. One business owner told me of young criminals pulling a knife on him over Christmas and of spending more and more on CCTV and security measures to keep his community safe. They feel abandoned and they feel like the state government and their local member simply does not care.


Adam told me about the impact that closures on the Kuranda Range crossing were having. He told me that every day residents up the range need to have a backup plan just in case they get stuck in Cairns and they cannot get home at the end of the day. Adam said he is fed up with the member for Barron River's lack of action. Residents told me they are worried about the Barron River Bridge. Residents up the range are at their wits end after years of review and bandaids. Apparently we are doing more consultation. What they want is action. Adam said to me—

I don't know what it takes. Does someone have to die before they put money into replacing the bridge? You can't really put a price on somebody's life. It needs to happen as soon as possible.

The weight of skyrocketing electricity prices on Far North Queensland small and family businesses is pushing owners to the wall as well. I met with Andrew from Cardzilla in Cairns. He told us that the cost of his electricity charges had increased 55 per cent in the last 12 months. No small business can afford to pass that on.

Michelle and Laurie Woods have invested in solar for their small business but their power bill has gone up 30 per cent. Now they are paying over \$12,000 a month. When they hear the member for Barron River say that power prices have not gone up it is a slap in the face. Increasingly, small and family businesses across the Far North are giving up. They are closing their doors under the combined weight of record power prices, skilled worker shortages, rampant crime and insurance premiums that are going through the roof. The consequence is that communities like Speewah, Palm Cove and Trinity Beach lose the small businesses that are the fabric of their communities.

What is the response from the members for Cairns and Barron River? We get announcements, hollow words and glossy brochures, and they are blaming a government that has been in the wilderness nine years to this day. Nine years ago to this day this government came into power, yet they are blaming a government from nine years ago! That is absolutely ridiculous. That is not listening to and fighting for their communities. The Cairns and Far North communities deserve better than the weak local representatives they currently have.

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (5.41 pm): It is certain that the new PA system has been tested now! There has been a lot of talk this week about the electricity supply industry. As a qualified electrician who has come up through the ranks of that industry and Queensland government owned energy corporations, I have witnessed how those opposite have dealt with energy workers and electricity prices. How far back do we want to go? I remember Joh sacking and removing the rights of a whole lot of them. The current mob did a fair bit of that too.

Who can forget when they decided to close Swanbank E Power Station and two units at Tarong Power Station? I do not think those decisions were made about system security or lowering costs. That was three turbines the LNP decided to close for the sake of it. What was their reasoning? We heard the member for Nanango say that it was because they needed to drive up power prices. They turned turbines off and reduced the available supply of power to increase the price of power. They certainly succeeded. Electricity prices increased by 43 per cent. That is not to mention the 160 workers who lost their jobs as a result—160 workers. They were my mates and their families. The LNP have never shown any remorse or even offered to apologise for that. It is absolutely disgusting. Everyone stood up in this place and talked about Energex and Ergon workers and what heroes they were. They sacked 160 of them and have not apologised. That is disgusting. That is not to mention the 1,300 jobs Queensland lost in renewable energy projects.

Why did they want to increase power prices for everyday Queenslanders? It was so they could increase the sale price of Queensland's state owned power stations. They wanted to fatten them up before they carved them up and sold them off. They did this knowing the impact it would have on Queensland households. I will say it again: the price of electricity went up 43 per cent. It did not work. They succeeded at driving up the average household power bill by \$440. Did they do anything to help Queenslanders who were suffering? Did they even offer to help Queenslanders who were suffering? No, they did not. They did not offer them a single cent in rebates or relief, so it is a bit rich for them to come in here whingeing about power price rises when they inflicted power price rises without even a ham sandwich for consumers—nothing.

They have already flagged that rebates will be axed when, or if, they are re-elected, saying that they will focus on 'structural relief'. We all know what that is code for. Given the chance, the LNP will slash power rebates for pensioners and sell our power assets just like they did last time because they have no plan except to cut, sack and sell. That is all they know. The member for Toowoomba South said during his contribution, 'The best indicator of future performance is past performance.' I listened well. Their past performance was asset sales, so I am glad he has admitted that.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr KING:** You want to talk about asset sales? The LNP sold \$10 billion of assets when they were in power last time. I got that from the *Australian Financial Review*. I have tabled it again and again. Did they apologise? No, not one bit.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, members! Members to my left, I know you are not used to having the member for Kurwongbah on that side of the House. I thought you would give him a much nicer welcome than that. I would ask that you constrain yourselves so that Hansard is able to hear the member's contribution.

**Mr KING:** I am feeling very welcome, Mr Deputy Speaker. In 2015, in the aftermath of losing his seat and government, the opposition leader said that the Newman government 'failed to sell its message' on 'tough reforms' like 'asset leases'. Remember that asset leases was a term used by the former member for Callide, Jeff Seeney. He is on the record as saying leases were a sneaky way to undertake asset sales. He said that on 23 March 2010. The opposition sells its messages the same way it sells Queensland's assets.

As we have found with privatisation in other states, private corporations will shut down power stations and sack workers for the benefit of their shareholders. Maintenance and reliability suffers and ordinary Queenslanders pay for their profits. Only a Miles Labor government will keep our state owned power assets in public hands and keep putting downward pressure on electricity prices.

One of the ways we are doing that is through our Battery Booster program. With 150 rooftop solar installations every day, Queensland has the highest rate of rooftop solar installations in the nation. It is clear that Queenslanders are keen to embrace renewable energy and the economic and environmental benefits that come along with it.

By the end of last year, 827,000 homes and business had solar panels on their roof. The new Battery Booster program, which this government officially launched on Monday, invites eligible Queenslanders to make the most of Queensland's sunshine to help keep household power bills down. That is why I am proud to be speaking on this motion tonight.

(Time expired)



**Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (5.47 pm): One of the greatest pressures in the cost-of-living crisis we have at the moment is on housing and the costs associated with that. Unfortunately, in this state over the last nine years the housing situation and the cost of housing has got worse and worse. Minister Enoch was in the housing portfolio initially. Then it was Minister de Brenni, then back to Minister Enoch and now Minister Scanlon. We have had four iterations of ministers in the last nine years. The situation has not got better; it has actually got worse. It does not matter what stage of housing you are involved in—whether it is trying to buy a new home, whether it is trying to rent or, if you are a vulnerable person, whether it is trying to get a social housing property.

Unfortunately Cairns and Far North Queensland have not been immune from those pressures. Mr Deputy Speaker, do not take my word for it. The statistics speak for themselves. When it comes to trying to get a new home in the Cairns regional LGA, over the last eight years there has been a 94 per cent reduction in lot approvals—a 94 per cent reduction in lot approvals. Is it any wonder it is more difficult and more expensive to buy a new home in the Cairns area? When we look at trying to rent a property, over the last eight years the vacancy rate in the Cairns region has decreased from 3.1 per cent to 1.2 per cent. If you are trying to rent a house in Cairns, you will realise how difficult it is.


If you get one then you have to pay for it. In the last eight years, rent in Cairns has increased by 48 per cent. They are last year's figures, so I can only imagine that figure is worse now. The cost-of-living crisis is hitting Cairns in the housing sector like it is everywhere else across the state. Those who do not fit into that category, those who cannot afford to buy a new house and are struggling

to rent a property, are looking for social housing. The social housing figures are even more staggering. Over the last eight years there has been a 19 per cent increase in those looking for a social housing property in the electorate of Cairns, and in Cook there has been a 60 per cent increase in the number of people looking for a social housing property. Do not worry, because the Queensland state Labor government has the solution with the social housing big build! They tried to use a bit of alliteration with the Bs. I can think of another 'B' that can be added on to 'Big Build'. Have a think about what it might be. Just think about it. The Big Build is baloney. Why is it baloney? It is because over the last nine years this government on average has increased social housing by 200 extra properties per year. They expect us to believe that 200 is going to be 2,000 properties that are going to be built per year.

**An opposition member:** By when?

**Mr MANDER:** That is in how many years time? By 2046, so that is 22 years time. They are unbelievable in so many ways. They are giving false hope. The great consolation renters have is that they have a minister who is a renter as well and she understands renters. She understands the struggle of trying to put rent together. Forget the fact that she is on \$350,000 a year and forget the fact that she has a car and chauffeur to drive her around—she understands how difficult it is to pay the rent every week. Thank goodness we have a minister who can relate to renters! It does not matter where you live in this state, you are affected by the cost-of-living crisis. The only answer is to show Labor the door in '24.

*(Time expired)*

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.52 pm): It is insulting to see the hard work and investment this Labor government has delivered for the Far North disparaged by those opposite, including the member for Everton. I am very pleased to speak after the member for Everton, who was, of course, the housing minister in this state when we saw social housing go backwards. He comes in here this evening talking about housing in Queensland and has the audacity to have a go at our government. He was the housing minister in this state when we saw social housing go backwards. It did not increase; it went backwards by 428 homes in this state.

I know that the members for Cairns, Barron River and Cook have worked tirelessly to deliver better outcomes for locals in Far North Queensland since their very first day on the job, and they have been very successful. Those members have been part of delivering the largest ever investment in health care across Far North Queensland. They have been part of a government that has hired 1,450 frontline health workers in the regions since 2014—a government that is delivering 96 new beds for the Cairns and hinterland region and a state-of-the-art surgical centre. We are redeveloping Atherton Hospital with a new emergency department, maternity ward and helipad. On top of this, we are also providing an \$11 million funding boost for maternity services in Cairns to safeguard the world-class birthing services that regional women expect and deserve.

We are also delivering our \$1 billion Building Rural and Remote Health Program. I am incredibly proud of this program, which is designed to make sure that our rural and remote health facilities can continue to provide world-class health care with updated and replaced facilities. In the Far North it is delivering the \$14.8 million Cow Bay Primary Health Centre. It will include a new surgical centre with a short-stay unit featuring improved clinical spaces for visiting specialised staff. It means the region will be better equipped for health emergencies whilst a parent is awaiting a helicopter retrieval.


Our Miles government is delivering these projects and hiring frontline health workers because we believe in delivering better health care closer to home for all Queenslanders, no matter where they live. That is something I am incredibly passionate about and will continue to drive in this portfolio as assistant health minister.

Now let us take a look at the approach of those opposite. The member for Broadwater and the LNP ripped over \$1.5 billion in funding from Queensland Health. They cut funding to community organisations that provide critical support to locals right across Queensland, and across just one term of government Campbell Newman and the member for Broadwater sacked 306 frontline health workers in the Cairns and Hinterland HHS as well as 96 health workers in the Torres and Cape HHS. Any local in the Far North will assure you that those cuts were a huge loss to the community. The reality is that under Campbell Newman and the LNP over 400 frontline health workers were sacked from regional and remote communities in the Far North. We know that these communities need and deserve equal access to health care.

Now we have the member for Mudgeeraba calling regional health workers duds. It has been hundreds of days and the member for Mudgeeraba still has not apologised for the words she used when she came in here and described our healthcare workers as duds. Meanwhile, the member for

Burnett does not think they deserve fair workplace entitlements—a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. It is clear that absolutely nothing has changed. The only plan the LNP has for Queensland is a plan to cut, sack and sell.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): I want to acknowledge a former member of this House who is in the gallery: the former member for Kallangur, Mary-Anne O'Neill.

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (5.57 pm): Talk about running out of puff! She had one minute left on the clock to defend her government's legacy. What would that legacy be in Rockhampton, member for Keppel? The worst ambulance ramping outside of the south-east corner at 43 per cent. Why is that important for the member for Keppel? She is the assistant health minister.

I will move on to the motion. Seriously, I cannot wait to get Bree James in this place as the member for Barron River. The current member for Barron River was sitting there saying, 'What did we do? What have we done?' Obviously the answer to that is 'nothing'. Not only has he done nothing for his community; he has done nothing to fix up his webpage either. We thought we should google it. That is right: Craig Crawford MP is still the 'Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Minister for Disability Services'. I am happy to table that.

*Tabled paper:* Extract from webpage, printed 14 February 2024, titled 'Craig Crawford MP State ALP Member for Barron River' [190].

Obviously the length of time he spent in Melbourne did not give him enough time to look after his community, fix up his webpage and deal with the problems that are facing Far North Queensland. It is an absolute disgrace. Let's get to the issues at hand. On top of the fact that they have a ghost of a member in the member for Barron River and the member for Cairns, what are the issues facing the Far North region?

**Mr Mickelberg:** Under-representation.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** That is exactly right, because the member for Cairns and the member for Barron River do not believe there is a cost-of-living crisis going on in this state. They do not believe electricity prices have gone up. They need to get out and talk to their communities. They need to talk to the local business owners in the heart of the Cairns electorate who sat down with me with tears in their eyes because their electricity bill had gone up by 25 per cent. Yet on the news that night—

**Mr Healy** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Talk about 'come in, spinner'. The member for Cairns has just acknowledged that Andrew Fraser, the former treasurer, and Anna Bligh, the former premier, stitched up Queensland for those energy prices, and he knows it. I am not going to talk about what happened over a decade ago because that is all the member for Cairns has got to defend his legacy.

The price has gone up 30 per cent. Tell that to the business owners who are trying to sell coffee. They had tears in their eyes because their rent had gone up and their power bill had gone up by 30 per cent. What did the member for Barron River say that night on the news when he was trying to defend why the Callide Power Station had been offline for something like 970 days? He said, 'Well, that's got nothing to do with power prices going up.' Come on! Seriously! Not only has the Queensland Auditor-General said it has made power prices go up; the Queensland Competition Authority said power prices have gone up. Every expert in the industry has said that power prices go up, yet these jokers think, 'There's nothing to see here with power prices.' People cannot afford to pay their rent. Why are they renting? Because under this government we have the highest rate of non home ownership. Come on! What have those members been doing?

I had to sit in this House and listen to the member for Cook talk about health services. Come on! How long has it been since a baby has been able to be born in Cooktown? I can tell you. Cooktown was the 38th maternity service shut by Labor. Shameful, shameful, shameful. What did the LNP do when we were in power? We opened Cooktown maternity. Thank you, Lawrence Springborg. We paid nurses because the doctors and the nurses were not being paid under the former government. The member for Cook sits there and proudly talks about her government's record in health. I say to the member for Cook that it is shameful that mums have to travel down to Cairns weeks in advance, with all of the flooding and everything that went on with the roads not being fixed. What a shameful record. I say reopen the Cairns—sorry, reopen the Cooktown maternity centre—

**Mr Healy** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** He can laugh about it, but say that to the constituents of his electorate who have to put up with everyone going to Cairns to give birth.

*(Time expired)*

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! The House will come to order. I have a clean warning sheet here and we are going to get there without getting a name on it, I hope.



**Hon. MP HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Sport) (6.02 pm): I am very pleased to stand and make a sensible contribution because I think that is what we need. I want to begin by apologising to all of those people who have turned up here in the gallery. There is a sensible voice in politics and it is on this side of the chamber. I want to remind everybody of the member for Broadwater's speech when he was in Cairns some time ago. He said—

I rise to support the Path to Treaty ... I do so in the hope that it can be the catalyst for true accountability of government—a catalyst for materially improving the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this state. Path to Treaty is a genuine opportunity for our state to improve the lives of Indigenous Australians.

When you stand in the middle of Cairns and you make those sorts of statements and then you come down here and do a backflip, your credibility is absolutely shot to pieces. Make no mistake about it, there are people in Cairns who are looking forward to seeing you all. I have a lovely speech that I want to run through but before I do that I want to touch on a couple of impressive things that the *Cairns Post* has been doing of late. The front page says, 'LNP policy under fire: opposition youth crime stance scant on detail'. That is quite an interesting headline.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member, we will not use that as a prop.

**Mr HEALY:** No, I have a better one, Mr Deputy Speaker. This is even better. This is when the LNP candidate in Cairns was asked by the journalist what gold standard early intervention looks like. Guess what she said. Nothing. She disappeared for three days. They could not get hold of her. She is a fantastic voice for the people! She could not even be found. This is just the *Cairns Post*. Then they talk about David Crisafulli. They talk about the member for Broadwater—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Use correct titles.

**Mr HEALY:** They talk about the opposition leader having nine media releases about crime in 18 months, calling for action on crime but providing absolutely no detail whatsoever.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, member for Buderim!

**Mr HEALY:** Most people in the gallery would understand, as most people on this side understand, that in the absence of a policy, in the absence of details, it is quite easy to go for the personal attack. Your personal attack reflects your inability to be able to form a policy. The really good one here from the *Cairns Post* has a caricature of a bloke looking at the LNP candidate for Cairns and he says, 'So does the LNP have a plan for youth crime?' The LNP candidate says, 'A very effective one!' and it is to 'blame Labor'. That is your policy. That is it. And then your candidate went missing.

**Mr Mickelberg** interjected.

**Mrs Gerber** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. I was so close. Member for Buderim and member for Currumbin, you are warned.

**Mr HEALY:** Like I said, in the absence of details or policy, they use personal attack and it is very immature. It is consistent over there.

**Mrs Gerber** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Currumbin, I have not even finished writing it on the sheet and you are interjecting again. You can leave the chamber for one hour.

*Whereupon the honourable member for Currumbin withdrew from the chamber at 6.06 pm.*

**Mr HEALY:** We have made significant investments. For people from this part of the world to come up to our part of the world and start telling us how things work, I find that unique. The people in the Tropical North will find that unique. Regardless, we need people coming up for tourism so we welcome you all to Cairns. We would like you to stay as long as you can and invest as much as you can. We have great hotels. We have great facilities and resources. We have hundreds of millions of dollars of investments. We have over \$100 million in education. There is a huge investment across the region. You only have to see the ongoing investment in both government and the private sector. We are absolutely booming. At the end of the day, I think what should come out of this is your ability to look at yourselves and think: are we worth a policy?

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

**AYES, 49:**

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

**NOES, 33:**

**LNP, 33**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

**AYES, 49:**

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

**NOES, 33:**

**LNP, 33**—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House:

- (a) notes Queenslanders', including those in Far North Queensland, views regarding community safety, the national cost-of-living crisis and access to health services;
- (b) notes the Labor government's strong investment in community safety, including supporting victims of crime and delivering more police resources;
- (c) notes the delivery of more than 1,450 FTE positions in the Cairns HHS and Torres and Cape HHS since 2015;
- (d) notes the strong investment by Labor governments in new and improved hospital facilities and services in Far North Queensland;
- (e) notes the record cost-of-living relief being provided by the Miles government;

and condemns the LNP for:

- (i) promising to cut 90 police from the Far North region
- (ii) sacking approximately 402 health workers in the Cairns and Torres and Cape HHSs;
- (iii) having an express policy of lifting wholesale power prices and attempting to sell Queensland's electricity assets which would have increased electricity prices;

and commends the members for Barron River, Cairns and Cook for their ongoing support of their communities, including during the recent natural disasters.

## Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders



**Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Leader of the House) (6.14 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That, notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders:

1. the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works be permitted to immediately move a motion without notice regarding housing;
2. the following time limits to apply—
  - (a) Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works—5 minutes
  - (b) Leader of the Opposition (or nominee)—5 minutes
  - (c) all members—3 minutes
3. with the question put no later than 6.55 pm; and
4. the automatic adjournment commences at the conclusion of the debate of the minister's motion.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

## Housing



**Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works) (6.15 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. notes
  - (a) nationwide housing pressures are impacting the ability of Australians to purchase their own home and afford rental payments;
  - (b) Queensland is particularly exposed to housing pressures due to significant interstate and international migration;
  - (c) the Miles government's Homes for Queenslanders plan delivers a comprehensive plan to address housing and rental affordability as well as addressing homelessness and social housing supply;
  - (d) that the former Newman government sent social housing construction backwards and cut QBuild jobs;
  - (e) that Peter Dutton and the federal Greens are blocking the passage of the Albanese government's Help to Buy legislation that would help more Queenslanders purchase their first home.
2. calls on the LNP Leader of the Opposition to stand up for Queensland and tell Peter Dutton to vote for Queenslanders to be given more opportunities to own their own homes; and
3. condemns Peter Dutton and the Greens for standing in the way of affordable housing.

Our Homes for Queenslanders plan is a big plan backed by big investment to deliver our big build. It is about building more homes faster, supporting Queensland renters, helping first home owners into the market, boosting our big social housing build, and working towards ending homelessness. It is a plan backed by many. The CEO of the Queensland Council of Social Services said—

Today Steven Miles and Meaghan Scanlon MP showed that they listen. We asked for a housing plan that has ambitious social housing targets, more funding for frontline services and better protection for renters. Today this was delivered.

She also said—

Facing this challenge takes courage, and it takes ambition. These targets that the Miles Government, together with our hardworking Housing Minister, are announcing today demonstrate just that.

The Property Council of Australia said—

Homes for Queenslanders, and in particular incentivised infill initiatives, show that Government has listened to industry feedback and to build homes needed to respond to the housing crisis.

We need all levels of government to play their part, and measures like the Albanese government's Help to Buy scheme will make it that little bit easier for low- and middle-income earners to buy their own home. We want to introduce that enabling legislation into our parliament to make sure Queenslanders can take advantage of that scheme as quickly as possible. We could do that if the mates of those opposite would stop blocking it in Canberra with the Greens political party. Some members may remember that in October last year the Leader of the Opposition told the Queensland Media Club that an LNP government would 'look at' a shared equity scheme. That appears to be a bit out of step with his federal colleagues, because since then we have seen Peter Dutton, every Queensland LNP MP and the Greens all team up to delay this bill from passing through the parliament. What have we heard from the Leader of the Opposition? Absolutely nothing. He has backflipped on what was supposedly his signature policy at the Media Club. It is pathetic.

The real test of leadership is standing up for what you believe in, even when it is hard. Of course, at every opportunity the Leader of the Opposition fails that test. He says that he is for more home owners getting into the market. He could make that happen right now if he just picked up the phone and talked to Peter Dutton. It is weak, just like it was weak when he said nothing when his mates in Canberra blocked more investment in social housing. They said nothing when their mates discontinued the National Rental Affordability Scheme. They said nothing when the LNP discontinued the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing. If he will not stand up to the LNP in Canberra, he will not stand up for Queensland. It was only a day—

**Mr Mander** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order, member for Everton. If you want to get on the speaking list, there are plenty of opportunities, I would say.


**Ms SCANLON:** I would love to hear from the member for Everton. It had only been a day after we had released the housing plan and he said it was too much—too much—which is in keeping with their past record because, of course, the Leader of the Opposition made the conscious decision when selecting the shadow cabinet to appoint the very man who sent social housing in this state backwards by 428 homes. He axed the social housing construction program by 90 per cent. He cut 1,600 QBuild



workers, the very people who build, maintain and repair properties. He even cut tenancy support services. So devoid of ideas is the member for Everton that he spent half of his speech talking about the fact that I am a renter rather than talking about any actual ideas in this House.

I am very proud of this government and our record investment in social and affordable housing. The only risk to Homes for Queenslanders is the LNP.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (6.20 pm): The year 2024 sure feels a lot like 2023. It is the same bad stunts, the same faces that have delivered the same chaos and crisis, and a very bad government. The only thing that has changed is they have all moved up one in the pecking order. They come in with the same nonsense that we have seen time and time again.

There is a reason the housing minister has come in here today to speak about the speech at the media club—because nobody heard it. It was drowned out. I will tell members why it was drowned out. It was drowned out because of ‘jobs for mates’. It was drowned out because of a failure to have any form of compliance in the way the Public Service should run. It was drowned out because of an unspeakable tragedy because of a youth crime crisis that is running through this state. That is why—despite all the bluff and bravado—the housing announcement fell flat. It fell flat because Queenslanders have heard it all before. They have heard announcements to fix the youth crime crises, and they have got worse. They have heard announcements to fix the health crisis, and it has got worse. They have heard announcements to fix the housing crisis, and it gets worse.

**Mr Brown** interjected.

**Mr Minnikin** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! Members for Capalaba and Chatsworth!

**Mr CRISAFULLI**: You know that there is a problem with the argument when the first thing the minister says is that ‘this is a nationwide problem’. When you constantly try to defend that it is everywhere else, you never look in the mirror and see what you can control. Here are a few things that the minister could do rather than asking about a parliament many hundreds of kilometres away to the south and talking about a government that has not been in power for over a decade. Here are some things the minister could do.

**Mr Brown** interjected.

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

**Mr CRISAFULLI**: The minister could unlock the land supply this government has starved the state of for the last decade. The minister could find a way to energise the housing sector in this state. Queensland is the only state in the last decade where there are fewer community houses today than 10 years ago. The minister could find a way to deliver social housing on time and on budget because, despite all the announcements, the figures are clear. That is that, over the course of this government, they have added just 220 extra social homes per year. That is an abject failure.

I know that this government might want to try to find all manners of other people to point the finger at, but that is a pretty long lead way. When you have a decade to fix the problems that you believe are there and they compound, something must change. I hear the minister talk about Indigenous communities. Let me tell you a little fact about Indigenous communities: there has been \$1 billion spent in social housing, and the number of properties have gone backwards. How can you look our First Nations people in the eye when there is less housing? How can you talk about hope, opportunity and the ability for young people in Indigenous communities to go to school when there is tragic overcrowding because this government has delivered less housing? It has gone backwards.

**Ms Scanlon**: It is not true.

**Mr CRISAFULLI**: I take the interjection from the housing minister who says it is not true and ask her to read the Auditor-General’s report and to read the question on notice. Unfortunately for the minister, her record is on display. The LNP has a vision for this state where home ownership matters, where social housing matters and where community housing matters. We intend to make sure that all elements are part of the puzzle because at the moment there is a feeding frenzy in the property market. It is created because of failures across all of the things that this government controls: failure to release enough land; failure to get the community housing sector energised and happening in this state as we have seen in other states; and a failure to deliver social housing on time and on budget.

The minister can come in here and attempt to hit refresh, but, in the end, Queenslanders have seen this playbook for 10 years. They have seen announcements, they have seen reshuffles, they have seen reheats and they have seen re-announcements. In the end, it is the same bad government. Queenslanders sleeping rough know it. Queenslanders wanting to own a home know it. In October Queenslanders can change it.

**Mr Bailey** interjected.

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



**Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (6.25 pm): We have seen the usual personal attacks from the weak Leader of the Opposition. When he has nothing, he goes the ad hominem. He has a go at every single one of our ministers and occasionally has a bit of a swing at a backbencher or two. It is his standard issue because he knows that he has absolutely nothing. I am glad, though, to see that we have his support for our groundbreaking Homes for Queenslanders plan. Every point he listed from energising the community housing sector—that certainly seemed energised in the wake of the announcement of our Homes for Queenslanders plan—to building more social housing faster, to supporting people who are facing homelessness is included in our Homes for Queenslanders plan. I look forward to seeing the Leader of the Opposition's support our plan when the pieces of legislation related to it come before this House.

We absolutely know that Queenslanders are under pressure when it comes to housing. They tell us every day. We do not blame people for wanting to move to Queensland but it does create pressures on the system. Those housing pressures, as the Leader of the Opposition acknowledged, are right across the system and right across the country. That is why the Premier and Minister Scanlon have been putting absolutely everything on the table to provide more support to Queenslanders. We are listening, and we are on the side of Queenslanders. We are putting our money where our mouth is with an additional investment of \$3.1 billion investment right across the housing system.

I note that one of the Premier's first actions after his appointment was to visit people who are experiencing homelessness in Musgrave Park to help them to connect with services. Housing is tough, but we are working on every possible solution—from youth foyers to our housing big build and from building more module homes to our 20 per cent uplift in homelessness services. That is what Queenslanders deserve. What they do not deserve is a dirty duo of the Greens political party and the LNP teaming up to block Queenslanders getting into housing when they need it most.

In this House we see the Greens party in action. We see how they give wailing speeches about housing, then trot off home to their electorates to campaign against social and affordable housing in their own backyards, currying favour with their NIMBY donors. Who can forget the member for South Brisbane picketing a building site when new housing was being built because something about it did not tick her particular box? If you are in the Greens party, nothing says standing up for Queenslanders like standing in the way of workers who are trying to build more homes. Nothing says cynical politics like stopping people being able to obtain a new home by blocking the federal Help to Buy legislation which aims to get 40,000 people—including those from right across Queensland—into new homes.



**Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (6.29 pm): It was great to hear from the assistant minister for housing. I hope she has been practising the five points that she failed to remember in her car crash of an interview. She was practising on the way—'I knew you would ask me this question'. Why didn't you learn them if you knew you would be asked the question? It is absolutely embarrassing. Let's talk about the record of the LNP when I was the housing minister.


**A government member** interjected.

**Mr MANDER:** I take that interjection from the minister. When I was housing minister there was no housing crisis. When I was minister we did not walk down the street and see people sleeping on the side of the road. When I was housing minister we did not go down to the park and see tent after tent of homeless people. When I was housing minister we got the social housing waiting list down to 17,000 households. That is the record that I am proud of and that is the record that is true.

What have we seen since then? All we have seen from those opposite is smoke and mirrors and announcement after announcement, trying to sell to the public that they have built thousands and thousands of extra houses. What have they done? Over the last nine years they have delivered an average of only an extra 200 houses per year—0.6 of a house per day—and now in their big build baloney they expect us to believe they are going to multiply that by 10. This is a minister who continues to peddle false hope.

We have been speaking to the sector as well. They all want to know what the government's strategy is—where are they going to get the labour from, where are they going to get the construction companies from, when is this going to come to some sort of reality when they have a 22-year vision that will mean nothing? The only person who may still be in the House at that time is my learned colleague next to me, and he can keep the government accountable at that time. In 22 years time they are expecting a tenfold increase.

What can we judge them on? We can only judge them on their record of delivery or, in their case, non-delivery. There is the \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund. It may as well be \$10 million for the number of houses they have produced. Not one single house has been built from the Housing Investment Fund 2½ years after it was announced. Maybe by the end of this year we might get 32 units. Those opposite need to be judged on their record. All they can do is make announcements, and those announcements are a cruel hoax.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (6.31 pm): I rise to support the motion, which is about addressing the issues we have today with housing. Those issues were not there when we were elected in 2015. What rock have those opposite been living under to suggest that this is an issue that has somehow been bubbling away for ages? The member for Everton tries to convince us of the utopian situation when they were in government: 'It was utopia. There were no issues, there was no crime, there was no housing problem and health was running beautifully.' What a load of baloney. No government can guarantee what the member for Everton gets up and tries to spruik in this House. It is absolute Disneyland.

I remember being on our regional forums and I asked the forum members from around the state, 'How many of you were raising housing issues 14 months ago?' Do honourable members know what the answer was? None—not one of them. We face this issue because Queensland is the place where people want to be. We are not alone in what is happening with housing. Those opposite should come out from under their rocks. It is not only happening all around Australia; it is happening internationally. It is a side effect of the pandemic.

These are issues that have happened, and we are the government with the plan to address them. We do not have some ridiculous notion like they do over there where they say, 'Trust us because we were in government; we did it all. There were no issues and everyone was happy.' I saw the worst backlash against the Campbell Newman government from people living in social housing—and the member for Everton and the Leader of the Opposition sat around that cabinet table—that I have ever experienced in my years of being in this place. They were afraid of homelessness. They were afraid of being turfed out of their homes because they went to look after a loved one who needed care. They were afraid to even go on holidays because they would have been evicted by those opposite. Those opposite should not come in here and lecture us about housing. They should not even think about it for one second, because we have a minister and a government that are concentrating on the issues that are facing us.


For those in this House who do not know, 330,000 people have moved to this state since 2020, since we were elected. That is putting pressure on housing and we have a plan to respond to it. Those opposite say that we should have built them 10 years ago. What a load of baloney. You did not build them when you were in government 10 years ago, and here we are now expected to already be doing it. Do not come in and lecture us. You have no plans, you have no vision and you have absolutely no idea.

**Mr Minnikin:** Through the chair. Through the chair.

**Ms GRACE:** I will take my direction from the Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): You will put your comments through the chair.


**Ms GRACE:** I will put my comments through the chair. Those opposite have no vision and no plan.

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (6.34 pm): The more things change, the more they stay the same. Just when we thought we had seen enough of these motions and they would have ended with the Palaszczuk Labor government, we had the Leader of the House step into it. I remember that in the last couple of sitting weeks of last year it was about coal royalties, health and crime. It does not matter; the new Leader of the House has walked straight into it. We knew we had Blocker's brain running Queensland, but now it looks like we have Blocker's brain running parliamentary process as well.

Let's go to the record. The member for McConnel just talked about all the reasons it is not the Miles government's fault and it is just a recent problem. Do honourable members know what is not a recent problem? It is Queensland having the lowest rate of home ownership in the country. That has been growing over the decades, most of which—30 of 35 years—has been under Labor Party rule. Queensland has the lowest rate of home ownership in the country at 63½ per cent, with the top of the country at 71 per cent. What did the Labor government do about home ownership for so long? There were crickets. It was back in 2008 when Andrew Fraser issued a media release saying they would end stamp duty payable by first home buyers. That was when the median house price was \$500,000 in Brisbane. Nobody mentioned it for 15 years. The Treasurer had not mentioned home ownership this entire term of government until the Leader of the Opposition appointed me shadow home ownership minister because we are determined to make Queensland top of the pile for home ownership in this country. If a young person aspires to attain home ownership, they should have an opportunity to achieve it.

The government's failings across the housing portfolio are writ large as to why they will not talk about home ownership. Just look at some of the failings: the \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund that has not built a single home; a Griffith student university accommodation plan that took \$2 million from the taxpayer and did not deliver a single home; Catholic land that had been set aside—there are crickets about that as well. Nobody has heard anything further about that. We have seen lot approvals and building approvals drop by 30 per cent under this government. We have seen a social housing waitlist continue to blow out. We have seen social housing investment as judged by the Productivity Commission at the lowest per capita in the country. We have seen 220 social homes built per annum by this government over the course of the last 10 years, yet they make us believe that by 2046 we will see a transformation of social housing. This motion is flawed and this government's policy around home ownership and social housing is flawed, too.

*(Time expired)*

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (6.38 pm): I rise to support the motion and to talk about people in my community who are facing homelessness, who are facing vulnerability. I speak to those people every single week. At Christmas I spent hours going around and talking to those in vulnerable places, and on Australia Day I again spent hours talking to those who are homeless in our community and who are vulnerable, and they are not interested in hearing the rhetoric of the LNP. They are sick and tired of not being able to hear any plan from the opposition. They want a government that is getting on with the job, and that is exactly what this Miles government is doing. One of the ways we are doing that, as we saw last week, is a 20 per cent boost to our NGOs, making sure that Regional Housing Ltd, Salvation Army and St Vinnies are able to provide those wraparound supports for people needing housing and looking to ensure they can get into home ownership. I really want to thank all of the staff involved in those NGOs and our Department of Housing as well.

I want to reflect on the member for Everton when he said that there were not people living in tents when he was the minister. I will remind him of something: in 2013 after the floods in Bundaberg, there were people who were homeless. They were living in tents. They were out on Salter Oval. Do members know what they got from the LNP? They did not get a house; they got their marching orders from the Public Service. There were nurses in the tents who were homeless because of the flood, and those opposite sacked them. They sacked them—nurses, midwives, radiographers; public servants who did nothing but show up day after day after day for their community. The LNP went into their tents and gave them their marching orders. As far as the member for Burnett is concerned, the shame is all over him because he was the member. When those workers went to him and said, 'Please, if you can't find us a house, at least let us keep our jobs,' he said, 'That's not my job.' The member for Burnett has clearly been watching Scott Morrison. He does not hold a hose and he does not hold a hope for people in Bundaberg, because what is his plan? There is no plan!

We know that the right priorities that the LNP keeps spruiking consist of three pages. It has three pages of a housing plan. The Homes for Queenslanders plan is articulate, it is clear, it has a vision and it has a goal. How many pages is it? It is 35. That is 32 more than the LNP. To be fair, when you have a look at a count, those opposite only have 34, so there are actually more pages in our policy document than they have members in the Queensland parliament. That is how much of a shame and a wreck this LNP is. It has no plan. In fact, imagine getting elected, being a part of a government that sacks QBuild workers and then remembering: 'Oh, that's right. I used to be the head of QBuild in Bundaberg.' That is the member for Burnett's record. He got elected and he sacked all of his mates and he sacked homeless people in tents.



**Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (6.41 pm): I want to speak about housing in terms of this motion when it comes to some of Queensland's most disadvantaged, and that is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. All we have to do is have a look at what this government has said in previous debates when the minister has said, 'We're doing the work here with regard to policies and service delivery. We know that closing the gap is so incredibly important. That's what you see in the actual service delivery of education, health and housing.' Let us have a look at this government's record—not our government's record but the record since 2018. For estimates last year in a prehearing question on notice on 20 July 2023 the question was asked—

With reference to Question on Notice ... 285 ... will the Minister provide an updated figure on the amount spent on Indigenous Housing since 2018?

The answer was—

... the updated figure is \$1.655 billion.

Not million—billion. \$1.655 billion is the amount of money spent on Indigenous housing since 2018. When we then look at the Productivity Commission and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare statistics, in 2018 state owned and managed Indigenous housing was 3,292. By 2022 there were 3,229 state owned and managed Indigenous housing units—down 63. Remember, we spent \$1.655 billion and Indigenous housing is down by 63. For Indigenous community housing there were 5,224 in 2018 and then down to 5,184—down 40—four years later. This is after spending \$1.655 billion!

Yesterday the national Closing the Gap report came out. When we look at 19 different areas, there were four that were complete failures. When we look at the issue of housing in terms of the right housing and infrastructure, it is clear that in Indigenous housing the target is not on track. The target was to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders living in appropriately sized and not overcrowded housing to 88 per cent, and it is not on track. If we look at the Productivity Commission report, Queensland has the highest number of households that are overcrowded—in 2022, 23.5 per cent. What is this government doing with its money? What on earth is it doing? When it comes to the housing plan, what we have heard from commentators is that setting more rules, more compliance and penalising landlords is not going to get us more properties. It is clear that this government is big on plans, big on spending but very poor on delivery. Only the LNP will make sure that we have more access to housing for Queenslanders.




**Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (6.44 pm): I rise to support the motion and, in doing so, I want to talk about Isobel. Isobel lives in my electorate. She is a renter. She is in her 50s and until recently she was renting with her husband. Her husband was diagnosed with a degenerative disease and his mobility took a turn for the worse, impacting heavily on his housing needs. Despite respectful requests to their landlord, Isobel was unable to make reasonable modifications to their rental. Isobel spent the final months of her time with her husband arguing with agents, attempting to enact her rights and eventually searching a tight rental market for a new home and saving for a second bond.

Isobel's story is not isolated. Queensland's domestic migration has led to unprecedented housing pressures and it is for Queenslanders like Isobel that the Miles government has introduced its landmark Homes for Queenslanders plan. This plan is bold and the most ambitious plan that I can recall seeing across any Australian jurisdiction in my life. It is a plan to build a million homes and a plan to unlock land and support gentle densification so that we can grapple with the wicked problem of building more housing while protecting greenspace. It is a plan to work with councils to enshrine housing targets and, critically, a plan to back renters, offering renters greater dignity and certainty through reforms like a portable bond scheme so renters can transfer their bond without having to save thousands of dollars. We will create a new code of conduct to crack down on harmful practices in the rental sector and all forms of rental bidding will be banned.

This rental package builds on our previous rental reforms like minimum housing standards, limiting without grounds evictions, protections against retaliatory actions and limiting rent increases. These reforms mean that people like Isobel can focus on living their lives without the stress of having to worry about whether or not she has a roof over her head. These reforms mean that those who are renting while they are saving to buy can focus on permanency without worrying about how long their tenancy will last.

This is in stark contrast to the actions—or inactions—of other parties. Federally right now we have political parties blocking the Help to Buy shared equity scheme. How do you say déjà vu without saying déjà vu? This is a scheme that would help eligible homebuyers to enter the market sooner. Renters often talk to me about their ambition to own their own home. Any political party standing in the way of that—any political party slowing that process down to gain political mileage—needs to

re-examine its priorities. Queenslanders need housing and housing options now, not in three months time when a political party has had the time to run a few petitions and harvest people's personal details for political gain. The Miles government is working towards ending homelessness here in Queensland and we ask all political parties to get on board.


 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (6.47 pm): This government does not just ignore the perilous situation of housing in Brisbane; it is ignoring it in places like my electorate of Southern Downs as well. Goondiwindi in my electorate, along with the other major centres of Warwick and Stanthorpe, are experiencing an extreme shortage of housing. In fact, Goondiwindi has the lowest availability of housing in the entire state. That is having massive impacts on my communities. When I last wrote to the minister last year she replied to me. At the time Minister Enoch said that there were 100 houses planned for the south-west region that I inhabit and that four of them were going to be for Southern Downs. I commend her for her honesty in confessing to such a small figure, but in places like Warwick and Stanthorpe and Goondiwindi and Millmerran we need housing now and it is not being delivered. The government talks a big game. It is always talking about how much it spends, but the fact is that it delivers almost nothing.

A local community group in my electorate, Killarney Memorial Aged Care, had a very comprehensive proposal to deliver community housing—low-cost social housing—in my electorate of Southern Downs. I organised through the minister a meeting with the department and it went nowhere. It went nowhere. We had an opportunity there with all the ducks in a row to get started on something that would now be housing desperate people in my electorate of Southern Downs, yet the government has done nothing about it. I am talking about the Killarney Memorial Aged Care project to create low-cost social housing across the road from that facility. What sorts of impacts does this have in my electorate of Southern Downs? Apart from the fact that people are on the streets, it also means that businesses cannot get staff. In fact, even schools and police stations and hospitals cannot get staff. We are talking about public servants who have to turn down a job that they have accepted because they cannot get accommodation in my electorate of Southern Downs.

If you are running a nursing home in Southern Downs—at Kaloma in Goondiwindi or Akooramak in Warwick—what do you do if you do not have staff? You shut beds. In my electorate there are beds that are physically available in these nursing homes with huge waiting lists but there are no staff to service them because they cannot find the houses. That is the impact in my electorate of Southern Downs. I know that in Millmerran they are struggling to recruit teachers. They are struggling to recruit teachers in Goondiwindi. I have talked to principals who have said that they have had a teacher lined up to start a job and they have had to turn the job down because there was not any housing.

Unless this government stops talking and starts building—and I mean really building, not just talking about announcements and funding—the situation will get worse. I ask the government members to take their blindfolds off and look when they walk down the main street—


*(Time expired)*

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (6.50 pm): Queenslanders know that the LNP do not like the government helping Queenslanders get housing. The LNP want to let the free market rip. Ordinary Queenslanders would sink or swim. Queenslanders know that the LNP will stand in the way of any action that stands in the way of the free market ideology that they treasure. Queenslanders know that the LNP have stood in the way of every action to give Queenslanders the help they need to get the housing they want. For example, they blocked the federal government's shared equity scheme. That would help 40,000 low- and middle-income people into their own homes. At the federal level they have blocked NRAS; they have ripped that up. They have ripped up the funding agreement for First Nations people as well. It is shameful. The question is: if they ever got into power in Queensland what would they do with the prefabricated house factory that QBuild has at Eagle Farm? They do not like it. They would flog it off. They would sell it at the first opportunity.

Compare the record of the LNP with ours. As member for Cooper and the member for Pumicestone said, we have the Homes for Queenslanders plan. I thank the minister for that. That is an absolutely outstanding plan. We have also announced \$160 million to help renters in Queensland. That includes a portable bond scheme which will be welcomed by many people in my area. We are taking action to unlock supply. There are 500 lots that the department own that they are looking to develop. We are fast-tracking changes to local planning scheme updates so that we can unlock those lots that are all ready to go.

The numbers show the disdain that the LNP have towards government backed housing. Since 2015, 5,000 public housing homes were added to our roll. We now have 75,400 public and community homes for Queenslanders, thanks to this government. When the LNP were in power the numbers went

backwards. There were 428 fewer homes and a cut of 90 per cent to that budget. We heard the member for Everton say that he was proud of his record. He was proud that he kicked people off the housing list. That is what those opposite are proud of. Queenslanders know that if you want action on housing the LNP are not your friend. They will not help you.

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (6.53 pm): I associate myself with the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition as to why we are having this debate here this evening: the presentation by the Premier at the Media Club absolutely fizzled so the housing minister is trying to resurrect it for him. Let me give members one other reason we are having this debate tonight, and I foreshadowed it yesterday in the debate of the business program motion. That is, this government does not want to debate the integrity bill. Under normal conditions that bill would have got at best three hours debate tomorrow. By taking another 50 minutes out tonight, we are going to be lucky if there is two hours worth of debate on the integrity bill before it is guillotined tomorrow.

What aspect of this debate tonight is going to change anything for those people living in tents on Tomlinson Road at Caboolture that you can see as you drive along the D'Aguilar Highway, the boundary between the electorates of Pumicestone and Morayfield? How will it do anything for them or the people in my electorate living in tents with their kids in Cruice Park? I heard someone in the housing sector say that all of the announcements we are getting from the government are about the 'wow' and not about the now. All of the announcements, the figures, the numbers, the plans, all projected 22 years into the future, delivering more houses than this government can deliver—their track record shows that they can only deliver 200 a year; they are not going to deliver 2,000 a year—are all about the 'wow' and not about the now.

Where is the advocacy from the member for Pumicestone for those people in her electorate and mine who will have their houses bulldozed in the middle of a housing crisis and who are going to have a 120-metre highway cut right through the existing urban footprint and future growth corridor? How many more houses could be built if that highway was not on the route proposed by Transport and Main Roads?

The people of Queensland are wise to this government. They know that they are bereft of ideas and that all they have are announcements, because they cannot deliver. They are not resolving the problem now for those living on our streets. I want to reflect on the words of the member for Theodore, who asked how this is going to help those people living on the street outside the hotel we are all put up at. This debate will not resolve that. This is nothing more than a sham. It is a stalling tactic because they have no real plan and they do not want to debate the integrity bill.

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

**AYES, 49:**

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


**NOES, 33:**

**LNP, 33—**Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

Resolved in the affirmative.

## ADJOURNMENT

### Northern Transitway

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (7.01 pm): I would like to start my contribution to the adjournment debate by reading a direct quote from a Facebook post and then I will table the document. The post states—

People tell me more needs to be done to tackle congestion on Gympie Road, so today we are taking action.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member, I would prefer that you do not need to speak over the top of the din. Everyone leaving the chamber will please do so quietly as a courtesy to the member on his feet.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** It continues—

A re-elected Palaszczuk Government will deliver continuous dedicated bus lanes during peak hours all the way from Chermiside to Kedron—without losing any of the existing lanes. This \$53 million Northern Transitway will reduce congestion right across the northside and in the Aspley electorate, meaning people will spend less time in traffic, and more with their families.

*Tabled paper:* Extract, dated 16 November 2017, from a social media page of the member for Aspley, Mr Bart Mellish MP, in relation to congestion on Gympie Road [191].

That was written by the member for Aspley. This time it is not the member for Miller; it is the member for Aspley, Minister Mellish. What is it with Labor? Like trying to mix oil and water, it does not work. This was a \$53 million project that now, according to QTRIP, has blown out to over \$172 million. There is a recurring theme here, whether that is under the former minister or the new minister. I say 'new' because—guess what—the training wheels are well and truly off as he has been part and parcel of this since 2017, which was when the Facebook post is dated.

The reality is this: the project has blown out from \$53 million to \$172 million. It was meant to be finished in early 2023. The source document, the Northern Transitway community update dated April 2021, states, 'Main construction activities will follow and continue through to early 2023' and here we are in early 2024. They are absolutely hopeless when it comes to delivering projects on time and on budget.

What do the small business people along Gympie Road say? We must remember that the project now stops short. The bit from Rode Road to Hamilton Road has been stopped. Roughly one-third of the project is simply not happening. The manager of the Chermiside Motor Inn, Santhosh, is going absolutely ballistic over disruption. Peter Lincoln, who owns the post office and newsagency on Gympie Road, and Padua College, which the member for Aspley may have heard of, have been impacted. A local disability centre has had its designated bus stop shifted numerous times, with no warning, leaving clients confused as to where to get on and off the bus. The water supply has been turned off without adequate notice. That information is meant to be listed on the TMR website. There is only one problem: the website is not accurate. That is causing disturbance and issues for retailers who are trying to pay rent but have no customers coming in. The Northern Transitway project is another disaster although not in the making; it is a disaster right now under the minister's watch.

### Logan Metro Football Club



**Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (7.04 pm): Last month the Woodridge community was dealt a heavy blow when the clubhouse of the Logan Metro Football Club was destroyed by fire. That was a devastating blow for a club that is an important part of our community. In our community of cultural diversity, Logan Metro stands as an example to all because everyone is welcome and everyone has a place at Logan Metro. Whether you are new to Australia, Queensland, the Woodridge electorate or football, Logan Metro welcomes all. It is one of the beautiful melting pots that makes the Woodridge electorate the most dynamic place in Queensland.

To see the clubhouse razed to the ground was heartbreaking. The club lost almost everything: jerseys, soccer balls, football boots, MiniRoos equipment and the canteen. The only thing that survived was an Argentinian national football team jersey that had been gifted to the club and that miraculously came out of the fire almost unscathed. Given its significance, I have offered to have the jersey reframed so that once again it can take pride of place in the club's future clubhouse.


As always, it has been incredible to watch the Woodridge community in action, working to get the club back on its feet. The club's committee and volunteers, the Woodridge community and everyone have come together to offer a helping hand. That is the Woodridge way. All for one and one for all. The work that club president Sam Escobar and his father, Samuel, have put in since the fire has been astonishing. Secretary Elsa Yanes and treasurer Will Rivas have been sensational, too. I make special mention of Logan City Council division 2 councillor, Teresa Lane. Teresa has been working hard with officers from the Logan City Council and our government to help the club get back on its feet.

I am also proud that the Queensland Labor government has been able to help with \$5,000 in sponsorship for the club's sign-on day last Saturday, through the Department of Tourism and Sport. I thank the Minister for Tourism and Sport, Michael Healy, who is with me in the House tonight, for his department's sponsorship and his support of the club. It is greatly appreciated. I know that Minister Healy's department has been working constructively with the Logan City Council to help Logan Metro with its plans for a new clubhouse.



It has been wonderful to see our community come together to help support this important club. While it will take time to heal, I look forward to helping Logan Metro Football Club get back on its feet, back together and back to full strength as soon as possible.

### Highfields


 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.07 pm): I rise to talk about a great community in the northern part of my electorate, Highfields. For some time, Highfields has been one of the fastest growing areas of Queensland. As it has grown, services have grown. When we were in government we built a high school, and the fire station now needs upgrading.

Today at Parliament House, I hosted the United Firefighters Union at a meeting with the minister and other people involved in the fire service, including the chief. What came out of that meeting that was good is that we are hoping to reach a position where the long-term service delivery that the people of Highfields need will be provided. They need a fire station. In the long-term that fire station will be a 10/14 station, but we do not necessarily need that right now. Commitments have been made but what we are looking for is a long-term solution, which is going to involve a land swap. Council needs to come to the party and swap a block of land so that we have a suitable block of land to build a station that will eventually provide a 10/14 service, giving A-class coverage to all of the people of Highfields. I thank the minister for the meeting. It was a good meeting. I look forward to that progressing in the direction that both the union and the community of Highfields would like. As that community grows, more and more pressure will be placed on the wonderful auxiliaries that have been there for so long.

I first bought in that community in the late nineties. It has been an auxiliary station for such a long time. They have provided wonderful coverage and a service. I know that, going forward, everybody wants to see a composite where both permanent and auxiliary firefighters have a facility that can meet the community's needs and can work together to provide the service communities are looking for. The real key in all of this is to make sure that as the Highfields community grows we provide the emergency frontline services required to the adequate standard. That might mean that we need some temporary facilities in the short-term that are not exactly perfect, but that is okay if we have a long-term plan.

I look forward to working with the union and getting the minister to come and have a look. We need to make sure that this fire station is delivered in the long-term for the people of Highfields. I thank everybody for today's very productive meeting. I look forward to letting the people of Highfields know that, long-term, their fire service will be exactly what they pay for and deserve.

### Hervey Bay, Gambling Community Benefit Fund

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (7.10 pm): Hervey Bay has a diverse range of community groups. I am proud to say that the passion and commitment that these groups show has resulted in almost \$1.8 million being delivered over the past few years to local community organisations to build better infrastructure and provide better services to the people of Hervey Bay under the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. The Gambling Community Benefit Fund goes directly to helping regional communities such as Hervey Bay by providing funds for local organisations so that they can keep supporting our communities to engage with each other.


One of the successful recipients of the last round of funding was the Fraser Coast Men's Shed, located in Hervey Bay. Last year, Fraser Coast Men's Shed president Laurie Hunt advised me that the Fraser Coast Men's Shed was not going to be able to continue its lease in its current location and would have to find a new location. The Fraser Coast Men's Shed provides a range of activities to its members including a very well constructed active model trains display as well as its accompanying beautifully crafted township. Finding a new fit-for-purpose location was not going to be an easy task for them. Undeterred, the Fraser Coast Men's Shed continued to fundraise, applied for funding and continued its regular meetings thanks to the generosity of shed member Ray Drysdale, who continues to host the group until a new shed is available.

Round 118 of Gambling Community Benefit Fund funding will assist the group to build a new 12-by-six-metre shed with a grant of over \$34,000 on land that has been subleased at the Hervey Bay Uniting Church. The shed has also been supported by Hervey Bay RSL sub-branch, with funding for lighting, power and air-conditioning also being sought through them. I am told that the group will be meeting with a builder on Thursday to finalise shed design and that, should all go well, the first sod for the new shed will be turned in late March, with a completion date by the end of May.

This is a great example of how my community has pulled together to relocate a fabulous group that gives so much to its members by providing an outlet for men to indulge in their collective passions and share a camaraderie that supports one another, particularly as some often go through a very bad patch before coming to the shed as members.

I want again to congratulate Laurie Hunt and the group for their work in securing the grant and raising the funds needed to keep the Fraser Coast Men's Shed running. It is clear that when the Miles government supports local organisations they support each other. That is exactly what the Fraser Coast Men's Shed does for our community. I take this opportunity to thank the Miles government for continuing to deliver support to the Hervey Bay community through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund.

### Bodies Corporate

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (7.13 pm): I rise to speak on the unintended consequences from the Miles Labor government's hasty body corporate legislation introduced and passed in this place last November. I table two emails to my office and an article by Paul Weston titled 'Developers using new body corporate laws to get vulnerable unit owners to sell'.

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 11 February 2024, from the member for Surfers Paradise, Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, to the Surfers Paradise Electorate Office, enclosing a letter from a constituent, Mr Martin Snide, regarding a Gold Coast development group and building inspector [\[193\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Letter, undated, regarding developer group Red Vespa Pty Ltd [\[192\]](#).

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, dated 6 October 2023, titled 'Inside story: Developers using new body corporate laws to get vulnerable unit owners to sell' [\[194\]](#).

Last year, I pointed out how important this is to bodies corporate in my electorate because, along with Southport, we have the most bodies corporate in all of Queensland. The unintended consequences are becoming evident: that the law is being used by some rapacious developers. I refer to constituent Martin Snide, who has lived in his family home in Broadbeach for 25 years and who is now threatened with legal action if he and his family do not sell their home to a developer group. In the letter I received on 31 January he states that he—

... received an email from HWL Ebsworth Lawyers advising us that they act on behalf of the developer group Red Vespa Pty Ltd and they had entered into contracts to purchase 9 of the 12 units in our block and wanted to terminate the Body Corporate because we are 3 dissenting owners and did not agree to selling our home to the developers.

He goes on—

The developer has entered into contracts with 75.3% of the total of the contribution schedule lot entitlements and stated in the email that "If you fail to provide a satisfactory response by the deadline outlined in our letter, the majority owners will proceed in the way outlined therein ..."

Here we have a situation where the developer, Red Vespa Pty Ltd, without owning a single lot, is attempting to control the body corporate and spend the sinking fund on reports to terminate the scheme. Prior to this legislation, we were warned that some developers and real estate agents may use deceitful, unlawful tactics to influence bodies corporate and deceptively take people's homes from them.

Further allegations involving the same property are that a developer, the Andrews group, employed a building inspector, John Groom, to illegally complete a building report on Martin Snide's building on 24 January whilst an injunction had been granted by the BCCM against this for 12 months, dated from 10 January 2024. It is alleged John Groom photographed a leak in new plumbing works for a unit and then quoted \$19,000 to repair the leak; however, the owners were advised about the leak and had a plumber fix the leak for a total cost of \$550. It is alleged the same building inspector included false information about asbestos in the building—however, there is no asbestos registry for the building—in addition to reporting the fire doors were not up to code and needed replacing at a cost of \$45,000; however, the fire doors in the building were replaced in 2018 for \$23,545.

I have mentioned the article by Paul Weston. Main Beach Association president Sue Donovan says that her group has received calls from concerned residents regarding the 75 per cent rule. She says—

From correspondence that we have seen, some developers are exploiting the uncertainty of what protections the final Bill will provide for unit owners unwilling to be forced out of their homes.

### Toombul Shopping Centre; Housing



**Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation) (7.16 pm): An important issue to my community—and one that I have spoken about a number of times in this House—is the future of the Toombul Shopping Centre site in Nundah. Since its loss in the February 2022 floods, I have heard from many in my electorate about how the loss has impacted them—whether they were retailers, workers in those shops or those who frequented the shops or services there—and how important it is that their voices are heard in what Mirvac, the owner of the site, chooses to do in the future. Before its loss, Toombul provided ease of access not just to retail options but also to important health services, particularly for many aged in my community and across the north side. It offered the power of choice of where locals shop for their groceries which we know is incredibly important in addressing the ever-growing duopoly of the supermarket giants and driving down prices at the check-out, something our Miles Labor government is acting on through our supermarket price inquiry.

We also know that our communities are calling for strong action on housing. We as a government are listening. We know that any site which can be utilised for more affordable housing is a site of interest as we look to tackle national housing pressures and work with private landholders to incentivise and fast-track housing development. It is a key pillar of our new Homes for Queenslanders housing plan. The Toombul site and its proximity to crucial services and public transport options provides Mirvac with an excellent opportunity to deliver on inaccessible services, on retail options, on green and public space and potentially, as some have called for, on affordable housing. This will of course be an economic decision for Mirvac—it is their site—but I can assure my community that I will continue to advocate for their voices to be heard and the needs of our local community and the north side community more broadly to be considered as they decide what the future of the site will look like. I acknowledge the CEO of Mirvac, to whom I regularly speak and who makes himself available, and all of his team as we talk about how we best utilise that site for a growing north side and a growing city.

The issues I have mentioned—cost of living and affordability of housing—are issues being deeply felt across all of Brisbane. We know that. They are issues of significant concern to my community. We know that these are the issues Queenslanders want us to deliver on. Our Homes for Queenslanders plan will see us engaging with landholders to unlock more land supply and making record investments to deliver more social and affordable housing faster. I acknowledge the significant investment that our government has made in my electorate of Nudgee, particularly in our suburbs at Nundah, in Zillmere and across Boondall, where we have been able to build more social and affordable housing so that families, singles and, in many cases, seniors have a safe place to live. Only a Labor government will do that.

### Relocation Sentencing



**Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (7.19 pm): I applaud the Premier's comments yesterday which indicated that parts of the Katter's Australian Party relocation sentencing policy are being considered to help draft a broader youth strategy for Queensland, but I must implore the Premier to get this right. His government must be focused on solving a practical problem and not just focused on their political problem. KAP is seeking bipartisan support on this policy, which is built on four main pillars: remote location, mandatory, fixed term and intensive rehabilitation.

Relocation sentencing would be a specific option available to the court when sentencing eligible repeat youth offenders. Remotely located facilities would be established to accommodate youth. Relocation sentencing requires a commitment from the state government to trial a pilot program with the intention to be rolled out across the state if successful.

The facilities must be government owned and administered and remain the responsibility of the department of youth justice. This sentencing option would be for children aged 10 to 17. Offenders ineligible would be those convicted of sexual or serious violent offences. Centres would have no more than 30 detainees per facility with a staff ratio of one to four in line with current Queensland youth detention centres. Favourable locations are rural and remote and replicate an agricultural setting.

Sentencing would be a minimum of six months and a maximum of 12 months. Detainees would live in secure, demountable building accommodation. Breaches of security or absconding would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Formal schooling facilitated by qualified teaching staff would be provided. Vocational training would be facilitated as part of the on-site functions of the centre, providing practical aspects including but not limited to mechanical, fabrication, agriculture and horticulture, or hospitality courses. Drug and


alcohol rehabilitation, mental health and cultural and life skill programs would be integrated into the therapeutic components of the facility. Detainees would be embedded in the day-to-day functioning of the centre with their routine to include basic roles such as cooking, cleaning and general maintenance.

Each child would undergo a full psychiatric and skills-based assessment at the six-month milestone to ascertain if they are suitable for release. If not, they would complete their full 12-month sentence. Upon release, each detainee would be under a strict community reintegration plan while on a 12-month parole framework. To reduce the risk of reoffending, departmental support would be extended to families and carers to ensure each child is either engaged in school, completing a trainee course or apprenticeship or participating in paid work.

Any breach of their parole conditions would see offenders triggering a court order which would see them return to a relocation detention facility to serve a full 12-month sentence. We are chasing bipartisan support on this policy that we see as a practical solution to Queensland's youth crime problem.

*(Time expired)*

### Lunar New Year


 **Mr MARTIN** (Stretton—ALP) (7.22 pm): Lunar New Year is always a very busy time in the Stretton electorate. We are home to people who have come from all over the world. There are many spectacular cultural celebrations that take place throughout the year in my community, and Lunar New Year is one of the best. It is a time of family reunions, delicious food, lion dances, red lanterns, honouring ancestors and asking for good luck. It is also a very popular time for young family members who receive good luck pocket money in red packets known as hong bao. This year we are celebrating the Year of the Dragon. Those born in the Year of the Dragon are said to be resilient, confident, naturally lucky and successful, with good instincts. Some also can wield great power. MPs born in the Year of the Dragon include the member for Cairns, the member for Macalister, the member for Cook, the member for Pumicestone and also Mr Speaker.

The members for Toohey, Mansfield and I have had the pleasure of attending numerous Lunar New Year dinners hosted by outstanding community organisations on the south side, including the QCUC, QCF, the Cathay Community Association, Sunnycare, the Queensland Federation of Taiwanese Associations, WAMCI, the Beijing Business and Arts Council, the Australia China Cultural and Economic Promotion Association, the Buddha's Light International Association, the Chung Tian Temple, the Shandong Association, the Singapore Club, the Malaysia Club, the Lions Club of Brisbane Chinese, the Hakka Association and the Hong Kong Australia Business Association Queensland Chapter. I would like to give a special mention to Buddha's Light Scout Group who were here at parliament today. Leaders Meng, Dylan and their scouts were here visiting parliament for the first time. Last Saturday they were busy raising money at the Chung Tian Temple.

All of these community organisations rely on hardworking volunteers who put their own time and effort into organising these community celebrations. Importantly, I am told that babies born in the Year of the Dragon and specifically this year—2024—are especially lucky as it is a wood dragon year, so much so that there is a population spike in China every wood dragon year. Congratulations to everyone expecting. However, I give fair warning to anyone born in the Year of the Goat. For anyone born in the Year of the Goat, the Year of the Dragon means bad luck for you.

I understand that the Leader of the Opposition was born in the Year of the Goat. According to his Chinese horoscope—and I will read this for *Hansard* as it is very important—'Your lucky streak will be interrupted by the presence of cursed stars, making them more susceptible to accidents, gossip and career downfalls.' If somebody could pass that on to the member for Broadwater, I am sure he would appreciate the warning. Maybe someone could pass that on to the member for Kawana as well. I am sure he would also be very interested. Happy Chinese New Year, members.


### Theodore Electorate, Weather Event

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (7.25 pm): I rise to talk about the storm event that hit my electorate on Christmas night. On Christmas night at 7.49 the Bureau of Meteorology issued a severe thunderstorm warning. Many residents were enjoying the lightning from their back decks, watching the storms rolling in—and it was one fantastic display, but they did not know what was coming. The force of the winds was truly incredible. Houses were ripped apart and trees were completely twisted around and ripped from their stumps. Residents were huddled in their bedrooms while their houses were literally dismantled around them.

Within 30 minutes of the storm passing residents went out to see the damage. They immediately brought out their chainsaws and started clearing driveways and roadways so that emergency vehicles could pass. The next morning the true state of the damage was revealed. Many houses were destroyed and a lady lost her life. Volunteers continued to clear the roadways to allow traffic to pass. Many areas had no mobile phone coverage and no internet so communication was impossible, and therefore they had no idea what was going on. A lot of places also had no power for upwards of 12 days. I want to say thank you to my rural fire brigades, the mums and dads, teachers, nurses, teacher aides—and I will mention Michelle, a lovely lady at my local school—who spent many days on end clearing roads so that traffic could move. Tradies with heavy vehicles and heavy machines cleared driveways. People looked after each other and looked after their neighbours.

To add to the issues on New Year's Day, we then had a flood. Houses that were already subjected to large amounts of damage were inundated with water through riverine flooding and also through their ceilings. To people like Brendan Gold, who is a first officer of Guanaba Rural Fire Brigade, and Matt Walker, who is a first officer for Coomera Valley Rural Fire Brigade: thank you. Thank you to your teams and for your efforts. To all those families who got out there and helped: thank you for all your efforts. To Gary, Marg and Nicole from Samaritan's Purse: thank you for your efforts. To the Energex crews who worked 12-hour shifts, day and night: thank you for your efforts. You have made a huge difference to my community. We will be forever in your debt. Thank you.

### Neighbourhood and Community Centres

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (7.28 pm): The electorate of Algeria is home to so many incredible community organisations that make a real difference for families feeling the pressures of rising costs of living in our community. One such organisation is the Acacia Ridge neighbourhood and community centre, known as Belong, which is operated by Communitify. Belong is a trusted, inclusive and respectful place for individuals and families across the Algeria electorate where the local community can connect with each other and with specialist staff and services to not only help people in need but also build an inclusive and thriving community.

Miranda Mallet and her dedicated team work hard every day to provide support for vulnerable households and find new ways to connect our community. Whether it is running the well-attended food co-op that sees hundreds of local people receive discounted and sometimes free-of-charge food and household items; hosting free community lunches; running regular English, citizenship, tutoring and art classes every week; or holding their annual Christmas appeal, where Christmas gifts and food hampers are provided to so many who might otherwise go without during the festive season, the team makes a real difference to people in Acacia Ridge and the Algeria electorate more broadly.

Whether it is Belong in my electorate of Algeria or neighbourhood centres across the state, our government recognises and acknowledges the important role these centres play in our community, especially at times of great need. That is why we have almost doubled the core operational funding of the 128 government funded centres across the state, including Acacia Ridge and also, importantly, locked in certainty by establishing five-year contracts. Moving to five-year contracts is vital for the sustainability of our state funded neighbourhood and community centres. Providing a level of funding certainty means that attracting and retaining quality staff is made easier. It also means that the community can be provided with consistency of service over the time it takes to help address what can be complex, long-term challenges.

Not only have we doubled the core operational funding; we have also expanded Emergency Relief Program funding—funding, I might add, that was callously cut by the LNP last time they were in government. This program provides support for vulnerable Queenslanders experiencing immediate financial hardship, providing access to food and transport vouchers, essential household items, food parcels and, where applicable, assistance with utility bills. This program has been incredibly important given the increasing cost-of-living pressures many Queensland families are currently experiencing. That is why our government has invested an additional \$3.3 million in the Emergency Relief Program funding in 2023-24. The Miles government understands the pressures that Queensland families are under, and of course we will continue to ensure we are addressing those through cost-of-living measures.

The House adjourned at 7.31 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, Kelly, King A, King S, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Lauga, Leahy, Linard, Lister, Lui, Mander, Martin, McCallum, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Molhoek, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke, 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