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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Subject	Page
PRIVILEGE	425
Alleged Contempt of Parliament, Apology	425
Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House	425
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Extract, dated 17 October 2018, from the <i>Record of Proceedings</i> , Queensland parliament, of a speech by the member for Kawana, Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, during the second reading debate on the Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018.	425
SPEAKER'S STATEMENT	426
Matters of Privilege	426
REPORT	426
Auditor-General	426
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Auditor-General Report 10: 2023-24—Managing Queensland's debt and investments 2023.	426
SPEAKER'S RULING	426
Unparliamentary Language	426
SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS	426
Release of Committee Documents	426
Same Question Rule	426
School Group Tours	427
PETITION	427
TABLED PAPERS	427
MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS	427
Termination of Pregnancy	427
Termination of Pregnancy; Women and Girls' Health Strategy	428
Women, Economic Security	429
Women, Bio Industries	429
Seniors	430

Table of Contents – Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Early Years Strategy; Women and Girls' Health Strategy	430
Residential Tenancies	431
Carroll, Ms K; Domestic and Family Violence, Police Service	432
Women, Manufacturing	432
Women, Innovation and Entrepreneurship	433
Women	434
PERSONAL EXPLANATION	434
Comments by Premier	434
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Letter, dated 31 May 2022, from the Acting State Archivist, Queensland State Archives, Ms Josephine Marsh, to the Office of David Crisafulli MP, Leader of the Opposition, regarding an RTI investigation.	434
PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE	435
Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner, Report	435
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner: Report on the results of the inspection of the records of the Crime and Corruption Commission pursuant to section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, December 2023.	435
HOUSING, BIG BUILD AND MANUFACTURING COMMITTEE	435
Alleged Unauthorised Disclosure of Committee Documents, Referral to Ethics Committee	435
NOTICES OF MOTION	435
Cost of Living, Select Committee	435
Inala Electorate; Ipswich West Electorate	436
Middle East	436
QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE	436
Infrastructure, Federal Funding	436
Infrastructure, Federal Funding	437
Women, Health and Cost of Living	438
Infrastructure, Federal Funding	438
Women, Health	439
Premier, Integrity	440
Electricity Prices	441
Premier, Integrity	442
Women, Housing and Homelessness	442
Premier, Right to Information	443
Social and Affordable Housing	443
Premier, Right to Information	444
Neighbourhood Centres	444
Police Service, Coronavirus Vaccination Mandate	444
Far North Queensland, Disaster Recovery	445
Departmental Office Accommodation	445
Early Intervention Programs	446
Gabba, Redevelopment	446
Community Safety	447
PRIVILEGE	448
Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House	448
CRIMINAL LAW (COERCIVE CONTROL AND AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; CRIMINAL CODE AND OTHER LEGISLATION (DOUBLE JEOPARDY EXCEPTION AND SUBSEQUENT APPEALS) AMENDMENT BILL	448
Second Reading (Cognate Debate)	448
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article, dated 6 April 2016, titled 'Gold Coast circus acrobat who transmitted HIV to partner has conviction for intentional infection overturned'.	449
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Article, dated 24 August 2018, titled 'The heinous crime that defined the policing career of Peter Dutton'.	450
Consideration in Detail	460
Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill	460
Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.	460
Insertion of new clause—	460
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Shannon Fentiman's amendments.	460
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Shannon Fentiman's amendments.	460
Amendment agreed to	460
Clauses 11 to 21, as read, agreed to.	460
Clause 22—	460
Amendments agreed to	460
Clause 22, as amended, agreed to.	460
Clauses 23 to 56, as read, agreed to.	460
Clause 57—	461
Amendment agreed to	461
Clause 57, as amended, agreed to.	461
Clause 58, as read, agreed to.	461
Clause 59—	461
Amendments agreed to	461
Clause 59, as amended, agreed to.	461

Table of Contents – Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Clause 60—	461
Amendment agreed to	461
Clause 60, as amended, agreed to	461
Clauses 61 to 63, as read, agreed to	461
Clause 64—	461
Amendment agreed to	461
Clause 64, as amended, agreed to	461
Clause 65, as read, agreed to	461
Clause 66—	462
Amendment agreed to	462
Clause 66, as amended, agreed to	462
Clauses 67 and 68, as read, agreed to	462
Clause 69—	462
Amendments agreed to	462
Clause 69, as amended, agreed to	462
Clause 70—	462
Amendment agreed to	462
Clause 70, as amended, agreed to	462
Clauses 71 and 72, as read, agreed to	462
Clause 73—	462
Amendment agreed to	462
Clause 73, as amended, agreed to	462
Clauses 74 to 82, as read, agreed to	462
Clause 83—	462
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to	464
Resolved in the negative	464
Non-government amendment (Mr Nicholls) negatived	464
Clauses 83 to 103 and schedule 1, as read, agreed to	464
Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals)	
Amendment Bill	464
Clauses 1 to 36 and schedule 1, as read, agreed to	464
Third Reading (Cognate Debate)	464
Long Title (Cognate Debate)	465
HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)	465
Second Reading	465
ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE	467
Report, Motion to Take Note	467
LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE	470
Report, Motion to Take Note	470
MOTION	478
Suspension of Standing Orders	478
EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL	478
Introduction	478
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024	478
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, explanatory notes	478
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights	478
First Reading	482
Referral to Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee	482
VICTIMS' COMMISSIONER AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE REVIEW BOARD BILL	482
Message from Governor	482
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Message, dated 5 March 2024, from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024	482
Introduction	483
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024	483
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024, explanatory notes	483
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights	483
First Reading	485
Referral to Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee	485
HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)	485
Second Reading	485
MOTION	496
Middle East	496
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to	498
Resolved in the affirmative under standing order 106(10)	498
Amendment agreed to	498
HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)	499
Second Reading	499

Table of Contents – Wednesday, 6 March 2024

MOTION	500
Cost of Living, Select Committee	500
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Bundle of photographs depicting a tie worn by the Premier, Hon. Steven Miles	512
Division: Question put—That the amendment be agreed to.	513
Resolved in the affirmative	514
Division: Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.	514
Resolved in the affirmative	514
HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2).....	514
Second Reading	514
ADJOURNMENT	523
Edwards, Mr T	523
Algester Electorate, Women's Week	523
Currumbin Electorate, Fight 4 Youth.....	524
Women and Girls' Health Strategy	524
Gympie Electorate, Power Supply.....	525
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Nonconforming petition regarding the upgrade and establishment of infrastructure to ensure a sustainable and reliable power supply in Curra and surrounds.	525
<i>Tabled paper:</i> Photograph depicting a Curra substation site.	525
Housing, Critical Response Teams	526
Noosa Electorate, Transport Infrastructure	526
Stafford Electorate, School Transport Infrastructure Program	527
Bremer River Bridge.....	527
Mundingburra Electorate, Investment.....	528
ATTENDANCE	528

WEDNESDAY, 6 MARCH 2024

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

Alleged Contempt of Parliament, Apology



Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (9.31 am): I rise on a matter of privilege. I note the matter of the photo that was taken in the House in October last year has been referred to the Ethics Committee. I wish to inform the House that it was me, having made a snap decision, who took that photo. I unreservedly apologise to the member for Pumicestone for the invasion of the member's privacy. In addition, I unreservedly apologise to the House for my indiscretion.

Yesterday I had some private matters that took my attention for a time. I became aware that the matter had been referred to the Ethics Committee late yesterday. I have reflected deeply on my actions and this morning, in contemplating them, I came upon the following Bible passage in 1 Corinthians 10:13—

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

I once again apologise to the member for Pumicestone and the House for my indiscretion.

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House



Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (9.32 am): Yesterday in the House the Minister for Health said in a contribution—

... the member for Kawana, certainly went on the record. He stood in this chamber and said that teenage girls who make the unimaginably difficult decision to terminate a pregnancy are 'taking the easy way out' and that people who make this decision are 'weak'.

I have gone to Hansard from 2018, which I table.

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 17 October 2018, from the *Record of Proceedings*, Queensland parliament, of a speech by the member for Kawana, Mr Jarrod Bleijie MP, during the second reading debate on the Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018 [298].

If ministers and members in this House are going to quote the record, they should do so accurately. I was talking about my wife and our firstborn child, Taylor, in my contribution. I said about my firstborn child—


She is a beautiful girl, and if my wife had been as weak as I was at the time we may not have Taylor.

Those comments made by the health minister are untrue, deliberately misleading and, above all, hurtful and personally offensive to me, my wife and my child. I will be writing to you, Mr Speaker, seeking a referral of the health minister to the Ethics Committee because the minister's quoting of the record is not accurate.

Mr SPEAKER: Can I provide guidance to the House. Matters of privilege should not be lengthy where possible. I understand that sometimes explanations are required. The way to prosecute an allegation or an argument is in writing to me to consider the matter, not here in the House at length.


SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Matters of Privilege

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I would like to make it clear once again for the information of all members that I do not condone the practice of requests sent to me for consideration of referral to the Ethics Committee being disclosed to the media before I have even had an opportunity to consider or respond to the matter. I have previously expressed to the House that I take a very dim view of those actions. They are discourteous to me, the House and the process.

REPORT


Auditor-General

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Auditor-General *Report 10: 2023-24—Managing Queensland's debt and investments 2023*. I table the report for the information of members.

Tabled paper: Auditor-General Report 10: 2023-24—Managing Queensland's debt and investments 2023 [\[299\]](#).

SPEAKER'S RULING


Unparliamentary Language

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in listening back to recordings and also having been made aware yesterday, there were comments made by the member for Maryborough which use unparliamentary language. I would ask at this time that he withdraw those comments.

Mr SAUNDERS: I withdraw.


SPEAKER'S STATEMENTS

Release of Committee Documents

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, today in accordance with standing order 20 the Legislative Assembly will release to the public previously unpublished minutes of its committees from 1993 that have been in the custody of the Clerk of the parliament for over 30 years. This is the sixth proactive annual release of committee documents.

The 118 sets of minutes being released today detail the business during 1993 of the Public Accounts Committee, the Public Works Committee, the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, the Committee of Subordinate Legislation and the Travelsafe Committee. Honourable members, the committee documents certainly are interesting. I think members will find them as interesting as I found them. Unfortunately, they do not capture the hairstyles of the time. The committee minutes released today and information about the parliament's publication scheme are available on the parliament's website.

Same Question Rule

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have considered the application of the same question rule to the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2022 and the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023. Members, in summary, the same question rule is enlivened by clauses 16 and 34 of the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill contrary to standing order 87. A motion to suspend standing order 87 would be required for these clauses to be considered by the House. I seek leave to incorporate my full ruling circulated in my name. Is leave granted?

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S RULING APPLICATION OF SAME QUESTION RULE TO CASINO CONTROL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Honourable members, I have considered the application of the same question rule to the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2022 and the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023.


On 26 May 2022 the Minister for Education, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing introduced the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The bill was passed with amendment on 31 August 2022. On 25 October 2023 the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence introduced the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

Standing order 87 provides the general rule of Westminster parliamentary practice that, once the House has resolved a matter in the affirmative or negative, the same question shall not again be proposed in the same session. Similarly, standing order 150 provides for the application of the same question rule in relation to amendments, new clauses or schedules of a bill. As previous Speakers have noted, the matters do not have to be identical but merely the same in substance as the previous matter. In other words, it is a question of substance, not form (Speaker Reynolds, Record of Proceedings, 9 September 2008, p. 2559).

Clauses 16 and 34 of the Casino Control and Other Legislation Amendment Bill propose amendments to provisions that are substantially the same as amendments previously considered and agreed to by the House in the same session of parliament. This is contrary to standing order 87.

Accordingly, I rule that the same question rule is enlivened by clauses 16 and 34 of the bill contrary to standing order 87. A motion to suspend standing order 87 would be required for these clauses to be considered.

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 Carmichael College in the electorate of Morayfield, Eight Mile Plains State School in the electorate of Toohey, Kimberley College in the electorate of Macalister and Redbank Plains State High School in the electorate of Bundamba.

PETITION

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

Registration Fees, SUVs and 4WDs

306 petitioners, requesting the House to double the registration fees for SUVs and 4WDs owned and housed in our major cities [\[295\]](#).

Petition received.

TABLED PAPERS

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

REPORT BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

[296](#) Report pursuant to Standing Order 169 (Acts to be numbered by the Clerk) and Standing Order 165 (Clerical errors or formal changes to any bill) detailing amendments to certain Bills, made by the Clerk, prior to assent by Her Excellency the Governor, viz—

Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2023

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

'Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2023'

Insert—

'Appropriation (Supplementary 2022-2023) Bill 2024'

MEMBER'S PAPER


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

Member for Mansfield (Ms McMillan)—

[297](#) Overseas Travel Report: Report on overseas visit by the member for Mansfield (Ms Corrine McMillan) and the member for Nanango (Mrs Deb Frecklington) to Tanzania to attend the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Conference, 6-8 December 2023

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Termination of Pregnancy

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Premier) (9.38 am): In 2018 Queensland took the important step of legalising access to termination of pregnancy. As the health minister at the time, I was honoured to be part of that historic reform despite the vehement campaign by anti-choice campaigners. No person makes the decision to terminate a pregnancy lightly. We want women to have the support and access to services they need at what is undoubtedly a challenging time. That is why our government has announced a funding boost for termination-of-pregnancy services as part of the Women and Girls' Health Strategy. That law reform removed the fear, the stigma and the uncertainty caused by

Queensland's then archaic laws, and now we have gone a step further. Soon we will release our Termination of Pregnancy Action Plan, which sets out our commitment to making sure Queenslanders have equitable access to safe termination of pregnancy.

That plan under our Women and Girls' Health Strategy is underpinned by a \$41.8 million investment. Importantly, this new funding will establish a virtual early termination-of-pregnancy service, which means people in rural and regional Queensland will have access to the same services their friends, sisters, cousins and aunties do in our cities. It is our government that made it easier to access oral contraception and UTI medication, it is our government that backed the removal of GST from sanitary products and it is our government that is ensuring all hospital and health services across the state commence appropriate care within 10 minutes of disclosure of a sexual assault by a patient at any of our emergency departments.

There is always more to do, but we have a strong track record of keeping Queensland women healthy and safe—a track record of investment, not cuts. In the three years prior to our government, programs for women were savagely cut—services like BreastScreen and DVConnect. There were tens of thousands of dollars cut from women's shelters, women's services and domestic violence support agencies. Keeping women and families safe is why we have invested more than \$1.5 billion in domestic, family and sexual violence services and programs, and we continue to make progress. We have already achieved more than 50 per cent representation of women on government boards ahead of schedule and continue to champion the progression of women into leadership positions, the most recent appointment being Sally Stannard—the first ever female director-general of Transport and Main Roads. Progress in the highest levels of our Public Service is contributing to a major reduction in the gender pay gap within the Public Service. In 2022 the gap was 7.64 per cent; by 2023 the gap had dropped to 6.31 per cent. This is in stark contrast to the 12.58 per cent gap recorded in 2014. This week we will see more policies put forward by our government and debated in this House—policies that put Queensland women at the forefront, policies that only a Labor government can deliver because we will always back Queensland's women.

Termination of Pregnancy; Women and Girls' Health Strategy



Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (9.42 am): Every woman and girl in Queensland deserves the right to safe and timely sexual and reproductive health care close to home. That is the commitment we have made in the Women and Girls' Health Strategy 2032. Prior to 2018, termination of pregnancy had been classed as an offence against morality under the Criminal Code of Queensland—a law written before women had the right to vote. The fight to allow access to this health care in this state has been long and hard fought by women for decades. Clinics were raided and attempts were made to prosecute doctors, but the simple fact remains that abortion is a health issue, not a criminal one. Today, because of the advocacy and determination of Queensland women, that simple fact is enshrined in our laws, but the journey to safe and accessible access to reproductive health care does not and cannot end there.

We have heard firsthand about the barriers that exist to accessing these services, particularly women living in rural and remote areas, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and women in full-time work. That is why I am pleased to announce that as part of the Women and Girls' Health Strategy our government will be investing \$41.8 million to deliver a five-year Termination of Pregnancy Action Plan. The action plan, to be released later this week, will support more equitable access to termination-of-pregnancy services for Queensland women no matter where they live. It will empower women with the information they need to understand their pregnancy options and pathways, access services and make informed choices. Incentives will include delivering a virtual termination-of-pregnancy service, better education and training for healthcare professionals, more social workers, more counsellors and more nurses.

Our government will always defend a woman's right to make choices about her sexual and reproductive health and we will always look to improve safe and timely access to these services because every single woman deserves access to healthcare services no matter where she lives. I look forward to releasing the action plan and providing more details of the investment later this week—one of our priority actions of the Women and Girls' Health Strategy. Speaking of the Women and Girls' Health Strategy, I want to acknowledge the overwhelmingly positive feedback that our government has received. I have heard from the Women's Health Services Alliance that—

... the commitment to inclusivity, accessibility, and empowerment will bring about transformative changes, creating a more equitable and supportive environment for women and girls.

Women's Health and Equality Queensland has said—

Everyone wins when you prioritise women's health. This Strategy is set to create a real difference in the lives of many women and girls in Queensland.

The Independent Education Union has welcomed the strategy, saying—

Our members cannot undertake their critical roles within schools and childcare centres if their health and wellbeing is not first prioritised ...

Family Planning Alliance Australia, representing family planning services nation-wide including True Relationships and Reproductive Health Queensland, sent thanks for—

... creating such a comprehensive and well-considered Strategy and Investment Plan.

Initiatives like the Women and Girls' Health Strategy matter. They are delivering the support and services Queenslanders need to live happier, healthier lives.

Women, Economic Security



Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (9.46 am): As women across Queensland face cost-of-living pressures, economic security has never been more important. Economic security fundamentally underpins all other elements of gender equality. That is why economic security is an overarching priority of the Queensland Women's Strategy 2022-27. This makes this year's theme for Queensland Women's Week 'Count her in' particularly relevant. 'Count her in' highlights the central role that women's economic security and empowerment plays in achieving gender equality. Better economic security creates more opportunities for women. Promoting greater workforce participation can help address the gender pay gap. That is why the Queensland Women's Strategy includes a commitment to gender responsive budgeting. Gender responsive budgeting means ensuring gender impacts are acknowledged. It means ensuring gender impacts are considered in policymaking. By measuring and understanding gender impacts, we have the potential to unlock greater productivity gains across our economy.

Starting with the 2023-24 budget, funding requests are assessed against the Queensland Women's Strategy to ensure they are delivering for Queensland women. It is through the discipline of this process that we are delivering our \$16 million package to improve the economic security of women. This package is focused on supporting women in male-dominated industries, on supporting women in business and innovation, and supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable women to better access economic opportunities for advancement. None of this is a distraction to the work of our government because it should be central to the work of all governments, because everyone has a role to play in achieving gender equality. I encourage all Queenslanders to take the time to acknowledge and celebrate the success and achievements of women and girls across Queensland not just in Queensland Women's Week but every week.

Women, Bio Industries




Hon. G GRACE (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (9.48 am): The Miles government is not only proudly creating jobs for the industries of today but also investing in the industries of the future. Key ways to do this are to bring existing businesses in emerging industries together to share expertise, provide funding, create networking opportunities and ensure regional businesses receive targeted support. That includes our emerging bioindustry, which the assistant minister and member for Mackay and I had the opportunity to witness firsthand last week at Mackay's biohub. We announced a new state development area of over 900 hectares at Racecourse Mill and Rosella which will accommodate the industries of the future in Mackay. As it is Women's Week, I am pleased to advise the House that my department's women in bio and health series has been a great success, sharing expertise and connecting women to attract and retain their talent in this fast growing sector. My department held its first industry forum for women in biomedicine and biotechnology in February last year and our next Women in Bio event is coming up in May.

On this side of the House, we support our emerging industries and we support women working within these industries, delivering the targeted professional development they have requested. Our \$1 billion Women and Girls' Health Strategy has some incredible initiatives to support Queensland women right now, but medical technology is always changing and the development can be rapid so I am pleased to advise the House that applications open today for the next round of our \$2.7 million Queensland Biomedical Business Attraction Program which will bring more world-class biomedical

projects to the Sunshine State. Following feedback we have extended the application window to 31 May. This round will provide up to \$1.5 million in grants for eligible Queensland-based entities to develop a biomedical product.

The program will raise awareness of Queensland's capabilities in the state's world-class biomedical sector and encourage interstate and international collaboration. Recipients in previous rounds include the University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology and Patheon Biologics which manufactures complex innovative drugs from cells. Through their previous grant they attracted a new international client. I look forward to announcing this round's successful recipients later this year. On this side of the House, we see women's health as a priority for government, not a distraction. It is clear the Miles government backs our businesses, backs our emerging industries and backs, more importantly, Queensland women.

Seniors


 **Hon. C MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (9.51 am): It has been a big few weeks as Queensland's Minister for Seniors. Last week we announced that grants are now open for events to celebrate this year's Seniors Month in October. This year's theme is 'Love getting older in Queensland', supporting older Queenslanders to share their love for connections, for sports and the great outdoors, for family and friends, for learning and caring for others and for volunteering. There is a \$100,000 pool for organisations to dip into for events and activities to celebrate Queensland seniors. This month-long program of events is part of our commitment to building an age-friendly community.

We know our population of older people is growing, especially in regional and rural areas. We know that for a significant number of Queenslanders growing old means growing loneliness. Around 53 per cent of our seniors are women. We know that women have also traditionally outlived husbands and partners, which can worsen loneliness. The health and wellbeing of older women in Queensland is a priority for our government, not a distraction. Social isolation has a profound impact on their emotional, mental and physical wellbeing. It can lower their quality of life and make existing health conditions worse, which is why I was thrilled to announce that the Miles government is providing an additional \$12.5 million funding over five years from 2024-25 for Seniors Social Isolation Grants. These grants are available statewide with a focus on additional investment for rural and remote communities, First Nations communities and areas where extra need has been identified.

Last month I was honoured to join some fabulous older Queenslanders at the Southern Gold Coast 60 and Better program on the Gold Coast to announce the grants. It gave me a wonderful opportunity to see firsthand the benefits of the Seniors Social Isolation Program. There were games of Scrabble and Monopoly being played, nature walks being planned and a terrific lunch club that I have been invited to go back to. Activities like these are happening across our state, from tai chi, yoga and Pilates to table tennis, chat circles and help with mobile phones and computer skills. These are just some of the practical ways that the Miles government is supporting our Queensland seniors. We have also embarked on our highly successful seniors expos and seniors savings pop-ups for 2024. I was pleased to join 120 of our seniors and pensioners at the Logan Diggers Services Club with the Deputy Premier and member for Woodridge for our first seniors expo. They loved the scones, but even more they loved the many savings and rebates available to pensioners and seniors—up to \$1,072 off their electricity, up to 50 per cent off their public transport, up to 50 per cent off their vehicle registration and a free pair of glasses every two years under the Spectacle Supply Scheme and so much more.

In the past three years more than 16,000 senior Queenslanders have attended one of these events. As the expos roll out across the state we also have the return of our very popular seniors savings pop-up events. They are starting at Westfield centres this month and will be in North Lakes, Chermside, Garden City, Carindale and Coomera. These pop-ups give seniors the chance to meet with a Queensland government cards and concession specialist and will be set up across the state in 2024. The Miles government values the incredible contribution older Queenslanders make to our state and their wellbeing is one of our highest priorities.

Early Years Strategy; Women and Girls' Health Strategy

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Youth Justice) (9.55 am): The Miles Labor government knows that a child's early years are absolutely critical in determining whether that child has a positive life trajectory. The evidence is overwhelming that positive early childhood experiences have long-term economic and social benefits, lower the possibility of youth offending and positively influence employment outcomes across an individual's life span, which is

exactly why we place such a focus on putting every measure in place that we possibly can in those early years. It is why the very first major announcement made by the Premier coming out of his very first cabinet meeting was about putting Queensland kids first: our Early Years Strategy, flagging action across every government agency and partnerships with the community. It is why we have invested \$645 million over four years for our Free Kindy initiative, which started this year and provides for 15 hours a week of free kindy for every four-year-old, and it is why, through our Early Childhood Workforce Strategy, we place a heavy emphasis on programs which ensure young Queenslanders are being taught and cared for by a qualified and capable workforce—a workforce which is predominantly female.

It is under that workforce strategy that new opportunities will be provided to early childhood professionals to develop and advance their careers through targeted qualification initiatives. On that note, I am so pleased to announce today more than \$33 million in new initiatives to further unlock the potential of early childhood educators and to build the workforce. There will be new opportunities provided to early childhood professionals to develop and advance their careers through targeted qualifications initiatives, including up to \$2 million to pilot a practicum placement scheme this year. We know that one of the huge barriers to early childhood workers training to advance their careers is the need to take time off paid work to do so. This has always been a challenge. However, in the current context of significant cost-of-living pressures, it is even more of a barrier.

For the first time payment to student teachers participating in school-based placements will be provided, but also a qualification pathways program for close to 2,000 early childhood educators, which will see the government partner with nine organisations to deliver scholarships to help fund tuition costs associated with training; upgraded qualifications for certificate III, diploma, bachelor and graduate diplomas in early childhood; \$2.3 million to fund two planning days in 2024 for every eligible long day care service delivering a kindergarten program; and expanding the successful Remote Area Teacher Education Program. By expanding this program, more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be supported to become early childhood educators. We know that the Women and Girl's Health Strategy, which the Premier and Minister for Health announced this week, will have enormous benefits for the early childhood workforce. We have had such strong feedback from stakeholders to that effect. The Minister for Health quoted Terry Burke from the Independent Education Unit. I want to repeat that quote—

Our union welcomes extended support provided to women and girls in the form of more free women-focused care ...

Our members cannot undertake their critical roles within schools and childcare centres if their health and wellbeing is not first prioritised

As the minister with a portfolio that overseas such a highly feminised workforce, I, along with everyone on this side of the House, see women's health as a priority of government, not a distraction.

Residential Tenancies




Hon. MAJ SCANLON (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works) (9.59 am): Last week I joined the member for Bundaberg to meet Amy. She told us about her challenges trying to find a safe place to call home. Between balancing her and her husband's work and raising children, through no fault of their own they found themselves homeless. Thankfully our amazing RentConnect officers were able to help them find a new home in Bundaberg. She said, 'Before we were living day to day, whereas now we can see the future.' One-third of Queenslanders are renters—many of them women—and we know many are facing the challenges of national cost-of-living pressures: people like Kim who was renting her home for 15 years but after her rent increased she faced the prospect of having to leave and compete in a really tight rental market.

That is why, as part of the Homes for Queenslanders plan, we are backing renters with a \$160 million rent relief package plus better rights and protections to make it fairer and easier to find, get and keep a rental because this government knows that you cannot have safety and economic security without a home. This will see more funding for services such as grants and subsidies to help people pay rent, with eligibility to be expanded to help even more Queensland renters. We are also increasing funding to help women and children fleeing domestic and family violence to buy whitegoods and beds and pay for removalist trucks so they can move into a new home. Our plan will double the number of RentConnect officers to help more Queenslanders. The reform is welcomed by Q Shelter which said that it will be quicker for people to get the help they need to access the rental market. We know how valuable this support is because it works. For Kim, whom I mentioned earlier, our support meant that she was able to stay in her home, cover bills and top up her bond.

Stories such as those of Kim and Amy are why we are bolstering our support for Queensland renters through our Homes for Queenslanders plan. It is about giving renters a fair go and providing cost-of-living relief while introducing tough legislation to make it fairer, safer and easier for renters. Whether it is housing or health care, supporting women is a priority of our Labor government, not a distraction.

Carroll, Ms K; Domestic and Family Violence, Police Service

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (10.00 am): In this Women's Week it is important to highlight the priority that this government puts on the health, safety and wellbeing of women. It is a priority for the government and not a distraction. Certainly when it comes to the Queensland Police Service's responses in support of the safety, health and wellbeing of women and girls in the community, this government supports the Queensland Police Service 100 per cent and is encouraged by the efforts that the Queensland Police Service is making around enhancing responses, particularly to domestic and family violence.


In this Women's Week I start by highlighting a trailblazer for women, the former commissioner of the Queensland Police Service, Katarina Carroll. She is an outstanding Queensland, a very special human being and, as I said, a trailblazer for women in our state. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to her. Last Friday, I was fortunate to be at police headquarters to participate in the commissioner's piping out ceremony.

As we all know, Katarina Carroll led the Queensland Police Service through one of the most challenging periods in the state's history. During the pandemic, the Queensland Police Service led the way in protecting Queenslanders, supervising our borders, roads and airports and ensuring that our hotel quarantine operations were safely conducted. It was very clear to all Queenslanders that Katarina Carroll cared deeply for the community and for the members of the Queensland Police Service. Her contribution to public life and her commitment to serving the community for over 40 years was exemplary. As I said last week, it takes a special type of citizen to serve in the role of a police officer. To be the leader of those outstanding citizens reflects the character of the person who holds that office. Katarina Carroll certainly is an outstanding citizen.

I also highlight the government's support of the Queensland Police Service in responding to domestic and family violence, particularly when it comes to new training, more resources and specialist services that the Queensland Police Service is engaging with. For example, I highlight the investment in the Ipswich area where we are rolling out HRTs, high risk teams, and additional supports for the front line. Recently, I joined the Premier to announce that the Miles government will be providing additional funding for the Queensland Police Service to support more police in the Ipswich police district. There will be 47 extra personnel positions, two additional mobile police beats and 10 additional police vehicles for the Ipswich police district, not only supporting the Queensland Police Service's responses to community safety but also underpinning the great work that they are doing in supporting women and girls and their safety in the Ipswich and broader communities.

Once again, I highlight this government's priority for the health and wellbeing of women and girls in Queensland. That will always be a priority for the government, not a distraction.

Women, Manufacturing

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.04 am): Our investment in manufacturing continues to grow because we back our local manufacturing industry. We have made significant progress working with industries to deliver more jobs, more investment and more opportunities in Queensland after significant cuts and job losses under the Newman years. However, we know that there is always more to do, especially when it comes to getting more women into manufacturing.

From the shop floor to leadership positions, women add so much to the manufacturing industry in Queensland. Research and businesses tell us that having more women leads to a better workplace culture that is more diverse and innovative and creates greater resilience in those businesses. Our manufacturing sector is one of the state's top 10 job-creating industries and already employs over 180,000 people. More workers are needed and more women are needed in manufacturing. Women make up over half the population but only one-quarter of the manufacturing workforce. We are committed to getting more women into manufacturing because it is a vital growth sector for us. That is why we were the first government to deliver a strategy to specifically attract more women into the manufacturing sector.

This week, I will be attending our 50th Women in Manufacturing breakfast for International Women's Day. Over 500 women will attend that breakfast. It marks the first birthday of our Women in Manufacturing Strategy in Queensland. We have delivered close to 50 events, connecting women and men in manufacturing with women entering the workforce and the sector or aspiring to be in the sector. Those events have been vital in helping us to build connections, networks and mentoring opportunities for the next generation of women in manufacturing. More than 3,325 women and men have joined us at those events, opening up job opportunities and building vital support networks. On International Women's Day it is more important than ever to recognise the significant contribution that women make in manufacturing and the opportunities for the whole industry that come with a gender-equal work force.

I am particularly excited that on Friday I will be announcing the winners of our first-ever Women in Manufacturing Apprentice Awards. Nominations were received from all over Queensland for outstanding female manufacturing apprentices who are showing initiative and leadership in the workforce. The winner will receive \$10,000 and the highly commended recipient will receive \$5,000, thanks to the sponsorship of Manufacturing Skills Queensland, which is another initiative of this Labor government. Unlike those opposite, we see women's issues, whether in health or representation in the workplace, as a priority for government and not a distraction.

Women, Innovation and Entrepreneurship



Hon. LM LINARD (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation) (10.07 am): The Miles government is proud to back Queensland's female innovators and entrepreneurs. Our Backing Female Founders Program, which was launched last year, supports the growth of innovation driven enterprises founded and led by Queensland women, no matter where they are in their business development cycle, where they are located or what their business ambitions are. This \$8 million program delivers a range of funding and other support focusing on four key objectives: increasing investment flow to female founders; supporting a pipeline of female founded startups and scale ups; opening doors to corporate, government and business networks; and showcasing female founders to increase visibility and credibility.


The key initiatives being delivered under this program are the Accelerating Female Founders initiative and the Female Founders Co-Investment Fund. The Accelerating Female Founders program funds organisations to deliver business support initiatives aimed at growing female founded, innovation driven enterprises such as startups and scale ups with high growth potential. It helps them to take their businesses to the next level, create new connections and access opportunities for real and lasting impact beyond the duration of the program. Activities under the Accelerating Female Founders program include early-stage incubators and pre-accelerators for startup founders building their product, accelerators for more mature scale ups, and targeted support to provide mentoring and advocacy and to develop business acumen where needed to support growth and commercial success. Round 1 of the program is well underway, with 11 funded organisations delivering a diverse range of services to almost 500 women across Queensland throughout the year.

I can announce that round 2 of Accelerating Female Founders will commence on Friday, most appropriately in this Queensland Women's Week. This round will fund even more early-stage startup and scale-up support, mentoring and advocacy, and customised business acumen development opportunities. Grants of between \$50,000 and \$200,000 will be available to organisations to deliver initiatives for female founders over the next two years.

The second component of Backing Female Founders is our Female Founders Co-Investment Fund. Raising capital is a difficult process for the average startup and, disappointingly, even more so for women-led companies. The Female Founders Co-Investment Fund aims to incentivise new investment that may not otherwise occur, demonstrating our government's commitment and strong support for these innovative women. Grants of between \$50,000 and \$200,000 are available to innovative female founded and led businesses that are approaching new investors as part of their early stage capital raise.

By supporting more women to participate in the Queensland innovation ecosystem through both of these programs, the Miles government's vision for making Queensland a leading and sustainable world-class innovation economy is on track.

Women

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (10.10 am): We know that a stable job and economic security is key for successful, safe and prosperous lives for women. That is why the theme of this year's Queensland Women's Week is so important—we must 'count her in'.

The Miles government recognises that women's economic empowerment is fundamental to realising women's rights and achieving gender equality. We value women and we invest in women. Each and every day, we show a commitment to women's equality. We have valued women by legislating the promotion of gender pay equity in workplace bargaining. We have amended the paid parental leave directive to provide gender equitable access to paid parental leave. We have created laws that allow portable long service leave for workers in the community services industry, the majority of whom are women. We have invested in women—\$16.3 million to remove barriers that stand in the way of equality, inclusion and economic participation of women and girls.


Since 2015 some 28,000 women have had a successful training or employment outcome through Skilling Queenslanders for Work. We have supported more than 1,500 women in business with accelerator programs, mentoring, business coaching and scholarships. Through our Back to Work program, more than 9,900 women have been employed across Queensland.

I am so proud to be part of a government that is closing the economic gaps between men and women. The gender pay, workforce participation and superannuation gaps all getting smaller, and there are many more women in the STEM and construction industries. Despite these gains, women are significantly more likely to be subjected to violence including sexual assault and elder abuse. They still do much more of the unpaid work and they continue to earn less and retire with less. Worryingly, more than 30 per cent of women rely on their partner's income in retirement compared with six per cent of men.

We must continue to make sure that we 'count her in' so that we can create real and meaningful change for women and girls not just in Queensland but across the country. I am honoured to be Queensland's Minister for Women. Our government, the Miles government, will always strive to make sure that women and girls across Queensland receive the help, support, encouragement and, most of all, respect that they absolutely deserve.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Comments by Premier

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.13 am): Yesterday during question time the Premier referenced an RTI decision from 3 June 2014, when I served as attorney-general. It is not the first time this has been referenced in this House for political purposes. What is not known is that former attorney-general Fentiman referred these allegations to the State Archivist for investigation. I now table a copy of a letter from Josephine Marsh, Acting State Archivist, dated 31 May 2022.

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 31 May 2022, from the Acting State Archivist, Queensland State Archives, Ms Josephine Marsh, to the Office of David Crisafulli MP, Leader of the Opposition, regarding an RTI investigation [\[300\]](#).

The letter states—

I wish to advise that the review of these matters has been completed. No evidence has been found of the inappropriate management of public records by the Member for Kawana and former Attorney-General and that of his then office. I therefore consider my Office's enquiries complete and do not intend initiating any further action under the *Public Records Act 2002*.


The comments from the Premier yesterday are untrue. Unlike the Premier I have not misled the parliament, and I now call on the Premier to withdraw his comments and apologise.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! The House will come to order. Today seems to be an opportunity to remind members of things we have all done over many years. Some have been here longer than others. I just highlight that personal explanations should be a personal explanation and not an opportunity to attack other members.

PARLIAMENTARY CRIME AND CORRUPTION COMMITTEE

Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner, Report


 **Mr KRAUSE** (Scenic Rim—LNP) (10.15 am): As chair of the PCCC, in accordance with section 363 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act, I lay upon the table of the House the Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner's report titled *Report on the results of the inspection of the records of the Crime and Corruption Commission pursuant to section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000*, dated 2023.

Tabled paper: Parliamentary Crime and Corruption Commissioner: Report on the results of the inspection of the records of the Crime and Corruption Commission pursuant to section 362 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, December 2023 [301].

The parliamentary commissioner reports that during the period covered by this inspection the Crime and Corruption Commission and law enforcement officers of the CCC complied with the provisions of chapter 13 of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act in all respects.

HOUSING, BIG BUILD AND MANUFACTURING COMMITTEE

Alleged Unauthorised Disclosure of Committee Documents, Referral to Ethics Committee

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (10.16 am): In accordance with standing order 268(1), I rise as chair of the Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee to report that a matter involving the unauthorised disclosure of a private committee proceeding has arisen. The committee has resolved to recommend that the matter be referred to the Ethics Committee. The matter involves publication by a community resident on a Facebook account of a residents action group a page of a private transcript of the former State Development and Regional Industries Committee's private hearing conducted in Bundaberg on 8 March 2022. On behalf of the committee, I advise the House of the referral so that standing order 271 can be invoked.

NOTICES OF MOTION

Cost of Living, Select Committee

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (10.16 am): I give notice that I will move—

That:

1. a select committee, known as the Cost of Living Select Committee, be established to examine:
 - (a) extent of cost-of-living rises, including big supermarket grocery prices, on Queenslanders;
 - (b) the impact of state government policies, taxes and charges on these increases; and
 - (c) strategies to mitigate these impacts.
2. in undertaking the inquiry, the committee consider:
 - (a) all matters impacting on price rises;
 - (b) the impact of cost of living pressures that lie within state jurisdiction including:
 - (i) the impact of rising electricity prices on grocery costs and on Queenslanders, noting that Queensland has experienced the highest electricity price rises in the nation since Callide C went offline;
 - (ii) the impact of skyrocketing insurance prices on small and family business and on Queenslanders, due to the Queensland youth crime crisis;
 - (iii) the impact of rising water costs on grocery costs and on Queenslanders, as well as a lack of water security;
 - (iv) the impact of increased transport costs on grocery costs and on Queenslanders due to the government's failure to invest in our road network;
 - (c) pressures on commodity supply chains leading to increased costs;
 - (d) effective policies to exert downward pressure on costs.
3. the committee:
 - (a) has the power to call for persons, documents and other things;
 - (b) may present reports to the Legislative Assembly as it determines;
 - (c) ceases at the dissolution of this parliament.
4. the committee consists of seven members chaired by a member of the parliamentary crossbench.

Inala Electorate; Ipswich West Electorate



Mr KRAUSE (Scenic Rim—LNP) (10.18 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House notes:

1. the impact on the residents of the electorates of Inala and Ipswich West of:
 - (a) the growing cost of living crisis;
 - (b) the failure of the government to tackle the rate of crime in local communities;
 - (c) the inability of the government to meet the demands on the public health system; and—

Mr SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt, member for Scenic Rim. We have two notices of motion being put forward by the opposition when I believe there can only be one and one must be offered up to the Clerk directly to go on the *Notice Paper* in that fashion. I will ask you to resume your seat. Certainly, more information can be provided to you at that time.

Middle East



Mr BERKMAN (Maiwar—Grn) (10.19 am): I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

1. notes that:
 - (a) more than 30,400 people have been killed, over 72,000 wounded and approximately two million displaced by Israel's bombardment of Palestine since 7 October 2023.
 - (b) most hospitals in Gaza have been forced to close, and the healthcare system does not have capacity to cope with the number of dead and wounded Palestinians, particularly in northern Gaza.
 - (c) Israel has refused to agree to a ceasefire and continues to threaten invasion of the Rafah region, where approximately 1.4 million people are now sheltering.
 - (d) the Labor state government has provided public support and funds for arms manufacturers who supply weapons used in Israel's attacks, many of which amount to war crimes according to Human Rights Watch and the UN.
 - (e) this includes at least \$9 million for manufacturers to supply Boeing with weapons, and a 2023 manufacturing capability grant of an unknown amount to Ferra Engineering to supply Boeing's Ghost Bat program.
 - (f) Ferra Engineering is the sole supplier of F-35 jet fighter components, which the Israeli Defence Force confirmed on 7 November 2023 have been used to drop 900kg JDAM bombs in their invasion of Gaza.
2. calls on the government to:
 - (a) immediately withdraw public support and funding for companies involved in the manufacture and supply of weapons to the State of Israel, including Ferra.
 - (b) actively advocate for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages and political prisoners, reinstatement of aid and an end to the State of Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories.

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mermaid Beach, I have asked that these motions be heard in silence. You are warned under the standing orders.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.21 am.

Infrastructure, Federal Funding



Mr CRISAFULLI (10.21 am): My question is to the Premier. The Premier was the face of a campaign to Canberra claiming he was taking action on Labor's infrastructure cuts. RTI documents reveal the state Labor government had actually negotiated the cuts weeks prior to the trip. Given what RTI documents reveal and what Queenslanders were told, is this another example where Queenslanders need to question everything the Premier says?

Mr MILES: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question. If there is anyone whose every single statement should be questioned by Queenslanders it is the Leader of the Opposition because that right to information says nothing of the sort. That is not what the right-to-information release said at all. He is misleading this House and misleading Queenslanders.

Mr Speaker, I can assure you that the Australian government was under no illusions whatsoever that we would not cooperate with them on that review. We were very clear with them that we did not agree with the review and that we did not agree with changes being made to the funding allocations for Queensland, and I led a delegation of Queensland local government and industry representatives to Canberra to make that very point.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members to my left!

Mr MILES: The result was a better outcome for Queensland. The result was an ongoing commitment to the funding of the Sunshine Coast direct rail, which we on this side of the House will build and we will fund. We will build with a plan, not a fantasy, as the Leader of the Opposition has outlined.

Those opposite come in here and mischaracterise, misquote and verbal. We heard the member for Kawana just verbal the Information Commissioner. She said there was no evidence. There was no evidence because he deleted it all! It was all deleted. That is the kind of statement we get consistently from those opposite. They come in here with evidence of one thing and say it proves another. In this case that RTI does not support the statements made by the Leader of the Opposition.

What we know and what Queenslanders know is that we fought and will continue to fight every single day for more infrastructure funding for Queensland because Queensland is growing rapidly. All levels of government have a responsibility to work together to make sure we are delivering the infrastructure that will unlock housing, that will ease congestion and that will allow freight to get around our great state. That is what we are doing with our Big Build and that is what we are doing with our advocacy for additional federal funding.

Infrastructure, Federal Funding

Mr CRISAFULLI: My question is to the Premier. A right-to-information request to the transport department shows by 15 November Labor infrastructure cuts were already negotiated with state Labor ministers. Given that on the following day the state Labor government told Queenslanders they had nothing to do with the infrastructure cuts, is this a further example where Queenslanders need to question everything this government says?

Mr MILES: Let me again thank the Leader of the Opposition for his question because every time he stands up he proves my point in another small way. Every time the Leader of the Opposition stands up he demonstrates that Queenslanders cannot trust a thing he says. If anyone in this place knows about cuts, it is the Leader of the Opposition. He comes from the party of cuts. 'LNP' equals cuts every single day. We are the party of the Big Build. We are the party of infrastructure. The Leader of the Opposition leads the party of cuts. He comes in here pretending an RTI says one thing when indeed it says another. What is very clear from that RTI is that we never agreed to participate in that process. Now there may have been an email from the minister to—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members to my left!

Mr MILES: The Leader of the Opposition references a message from the federal minister to multiple states where some states did choose to negotiate. New South Wales and Victoria did choose to negotiate. They put forward projects that were no longer priorities for them. We did not. We stood by our Big Build. We stood by the infrastructure that Queensland needs and we will continue to do so. Isn't that in stark contrast—remember the 10 years we had of federal LNP governments?

Mr Janetzki interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Toowoomba South.

Mr MILES: Remember the 10 long years. Who was it? It was the Turnbull-Abbott-Morrison governments. How many times did they speak up for Queenslanders? Not a single time. We are very different because we do not care what colour the government in Canberra is. We are maroon first and foremost. We stand for Queensland first and foremost. Whether it is their mates in the LNP or whether it is the Albanese government, we know the infrastructure Queensland needs. That is what is in our Big Build. Nothing in our infrastructure program isn't a priority. That is why we refused to participate in that process which is very clear from the RTI.

Mr Crisafulli: Can't trust a word they say.

Mr MILES: I do not often take his interjections but on this I will. The one misleading the House about the RTI is the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the next questioner, member for Callide and also member for Toowoomba South, I have heard both of you use unparliamentary language during the last answer. I would ask that both of you withdraw your comments.

Mr JANETZKI: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mr HEAD: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I also remind both members and the House that correct titles will need to be used in this place.

Women, Health and Cost of Living

Ms McMILLAN: My question is of the Premier. Can the Premier outline how the Miles Labor government is delivering better health care and cost-of-living relief for Queensland women including in my community of Mansfield, and is the Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Mansfield for her question. She is a passionate advocate for women and girls in Queensland, including in her electorate of Mansfield, as members can see from the question she asked.

We are a government that listens to Queenslanders and delivers to Queenslanders, including to Queensland women. We listened to more than 12,000 Queensland women and girls who contributed to the public consultation on our Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy. It was the biggest ever consultation program of its kind undertaken by the Queensland government. What many of those women said to us was that health care for them was a cost-of-living issue and that the cost of accessing health care had put them off accessing the care they need. I know that on this side of the House we are very proud of Queensland's universal health system, but in a universal health system our citizens should not have to choose between accessing health care and buying food or paying the rent. They should not have to make that choice. That is why our Women and Girls' Health Strategy is all about delivering quality health care closer to home, ensuring access for more women.

When women said to us that they experienced UTIs at the weekend or could not get an appointment with a GP, we found a way for them to get the treatment they need at the pharmacy. When women told us stories of discovering they had run out of repeats for the contraceptive pill and could not get an appointment with the doctor in time, we found a way for them to get those repeats filled. Our Satellite Hospitals Program is delivering health care in communities, our free nurse-led walk-in clinics will do even more than that and the Australian government has urgent care clinics. Those three things together will deliver a lot more free health care to women close to home. It will deliver better care to them and it will also assist with the cost of living. As I noted, many women said that the reason they did not access health care was those costs. We are very proud of this plan.

Those opposite have derided it as a distraction. It is not a distraction; it is the core business of our government. Those opposite might want to say that our Women and Girls' Health Strategy is a distraction. They might want to say that our plans to deliver more and better health care are a distraction, but they are not. We are very proud of them.

Infrastructure, Federal Funding

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Premier. RTI documents on Labor infrastructure cuts explicitly say—and I quote from the RTI sent directly to the Queensland government—'changes to the project lists as negotiated with your ministers'. Given all of the media releases, media conferences, social media posts and speeches from the Premier, is this a further example of Queenslanders needing to question everything this Premier says?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Kawana for his question—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Mr MILES:—and his misinterpretation of a communication with a series of ministers.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana! Pause the clock. Resume your seat, Premier. Member for Kawana, this is the second time today I have had to remind members who have been here long enough to know better. You are no better. You are warned under the standing orders. You will cease using things as props in the chamber. The level of interjection is too loud. I am having difficulty hearing the response from the Premier.

Mr MILES: In no uncertain terms, the then Queensland premier advised the Australian Prime Minister that we did not agree with the program proposed in the review of the Infrastructure Investment Program. In fact, she wrote to the Prime Minister on 14 November to very clearly put that position. The New South Wales and Victorian governments saw that review as an opportunity to cancel projects and so they did seek to negotiate. We in Queensland did not, and we were very clear that we would not, much to the frustration of the Australian government—

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Leader of the Opposition, I gave you a little extra opportunity because of the office you hold, but this has become badgering. You need to cease your interjections.

Mr MILES: We consistently said to the Albanese government that our Big Build infrastructure program is the infrastructure that Queensland needs and that we would not stand for them removing projects from that pipeline, we would not give them a list of priorities that were not a priority, and that we stood by our Big Build.

Those opposite certainly know something about cutting infrastructure. In their first budget they boasted about cutting the infrastructure program. It was a footnote in their budget that they were proud to be reducing the infrastructure program. They boasted about it. They said, 'The capital program will be smaller than in previous years, reflecting the determination of the LNP to restore the state's financial'—

Mr Powell interjected.

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

Mr MILES: Those opposite never saw an infrastructure project—other than 1 William Street—they did not think they should cut. We, however, are delivering a record infrastructure program. Our massive infrastructure program will deliver the roads, rail, schools, hospitals and everything that Queensland needs.

Women, Health

Ms RICHARDS: My question is of the Minister for Health. Can the minister please outline how the Miles Labor government is investing in the frontline services women need to live longer, healthier lives, including in the community of Redlands, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms FENTIMAN: I thank the member for Redlands for her question and for her tremendous advocacy to improve the health outcomes for women and girls in her beautiful community of the Redlands. As we have talked about this week, we are so proud of our \$1 billion investment over the next five years to strengthen the health of women and girls in Queensland. Almost 12,000 women and girls told us that they want to see better access to mental health supports. They want to see more support for people diagnosed with cancer. They want to see more support and services for women experiencing endo and pelvic pain and they want more access to sexual and reproductive health outcomes. That is exactly what we are delivering, because it is Labor governments that listen and deliver for women.

Sadly, we know that when those opposite were in government they clearly did not listen to the needs of women and girls. Who could forget that the Leader of the Opposition—he likes to tell us that he is a conviction politician—sat around the cabinet table when those opposite made significant cuts to mental health funding in Queensland? They were the first government in Queensland's history to cut funding to mental health services. What women and girls told us when we went out and listened to them is that more support for mental health is one of the top three issues for the majority of women.

The Leader of the Opposition still does not support our mental health levy. We can deliver \$1.6 billion in additional mental health services because we had the courage to put in place a mental health levy, which is now delivering the biggest boost to mental health services that we have seen in this state. Whilst we are busy delivering a 150-bed specialist cancer centre in cooperation with the federal government in Queensland, it was the Leader of the Opposition who sat around the cabinet table and tried to abolish BreastScreen. One in seven women are diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. That was a heartless and cruel decision, and the Leader of the Opposition has still not apologised to the women in this state.

We know that the member for Mudgeeraba aspires to Campbell Newman's record on health funding. If the member for Mudgeeraba and the Leader of the Opposition sat around the cabinet table cutting funding to BreastScreen Queensland and to women's health services, I need them to stand up today and let the women and girls of Queensland know that they apologise for their atrocious cuts.

(Time expired)

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Pine Rivers and member for Nanango, you are both warned under the standing orders for quarrelling across the chamber.

Premier, Integrity

Ms BATES: My question is to the Premier. During the Lady Cilento name change saga, an audio recording revealed the Premier misled Queenslanders about that process. Given the Premier's comments on changing the name of Lady Cilento hospital and the revelation the Premier misled parliament this week, is this a further example where Queenslanders need to question everything that the Premier says?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Mudgeeraba for her question. I do not recall the recording that she is referring to because it was a long time ago. One thing I can tell you—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left! Member for Ninderry!

Mr MILES: The one thing I can tell you, Mr Speaker, is that the Queensland Children's Hospital has gone from strength to strength ever since its name was reinstated to the name that it was always intended to have. I am happy to recap the history of that move.

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bonney!

Mr MILES: We on this side of the House made the right decision to build—

Mr Purdie interjected.

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

Mr MILES:—a new, dedicated tertiary paediatric hospital. That was a Labor government decision, which was controversial at the time, but we were proud to have made it. Those opposite were in government when it opened and Campbell Newman said, 'What are we going to call Queensland's new children's hospital?' They said, 'We were thinking of calling it the Queensland Children's Hospital,' and Campbell Newman said, 'Oh, that's a terrible name. I want to make up some other name,' and that is what he did. He changed the name of the hospital. They had signs made and uniforms made, all with 'Queensland Children's Hospital' on them, but then, because of some Campbell Newman culture war, they changed the name.

When we came to office, the doctors petitioned us and the families petitioned us and they asked us to change the name. Do you know what we do on this side of the House? We listen to Queenslanders and we deliver on what they say, and that is precisely what we did when we reinstated the right name for the Queensland Children's Hospital. The member for Mudgeeraba knows that is the original name because that was the name printed on the logo. They had to put a sticker over the name on the logo. Until that point, the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital never once appeared on the top 100 tertiary paediatric hospitals in the world. It is now in the top 10. The Queensland Children's Hospital is now in the top 10 in the world, the highest rating—

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b) and relevance. Is the Premier genuinely expecting this House to believe that he cannot remember a poll he ran to change the name of a hospital?

Mr SPEAKER: No. Member for Glass House, you are being argumentative in your point of order. The Premier has gone further than he may well have otherwise gone. However, in allowing the question in the first place, it is starting to get difficult to understand where imputations are beginning and ending. I am allowing questions but I will also allow latitude in terms of the way they are responded to. Premier, you have 15 seconds left. Would you like to use those 15 seconds?

Mr MILES: I would, Mr Speaker. I tell you what: on this side of the House, we are very proud to have delivered for Queensland the best tertiary paediatric hospital in the country and one of the best in the world.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the next—

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: It is all about timing, member for Mudgeeraba. You are warned under the standing orders. Before calling the next questioner, I am going to warn the members for Bonney, Toowoomba South and Currumbin. You were interjecting incessantly during the last contribution. I did not want to interrupt the Premier because that is exactly what your interjections were designed to do. You are all warned under the standing orders.

Electricity Prices

Ms LAUGA: My question is of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Miles Labor government is pushing power prices down for Queenslanders, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Keppel for her question. As she knows, all members of the government are absolutely focused on delivering cost-of-living relief for Queensland families because all members of the government, including the member for Keppel, know the pressure that is on Queensland families due to national cost-of-living challenges. It is why our government has worked so hard to deliver the biggest electricity bill rebates in the country.

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am seeking clarification. There is a motion on the *Notice Paper* now regarding electricity prices and cost of living and this may be pre-empting debate.

Mr SPEAKER: I appreciate the point of order. Deputy Premier, in your contribution, if you can take heed of the motion that is before the House and ensure that your comments are not in conflict with that or anticipating debate.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I intend to explain to the House the facts: that our government is delivering the biggest cost-of-living relief package in the country, including the biggest cost-of-living relief when it comes to energy bills.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. With the greatest respect to your previous ruling, the motion that I have just read out in this chamber—and I am happy to give the Deputy Premier a copy of it—

Mr SPEAKER: There is no requirement for that.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: This goes to the heart of that. What the Deputy Premier is talking about is cost of living. The motion before the House—

Mr SPEAKER: I will actually provide some clarification, member for Nanango. Whilst there are specific bills and motions which deal directly with particular issues, it is important to note that certain issues are in the general community interest overall and it is important to not stifle all debate around that. I am listening carefully to the member's contribution. I appreciate your point of order and I will be listening to the contribution to ensure that it is not anticipating debate.

Mr DICK: I will say nothing about any of those matters. The truth of the matter is that yesterday the ABC printed a story online about cost-of-living relief and tips to save money on power bills. That article made it clear that the best tip to anyone to save money on electricity is this: live in Queensland. Queenslanders do not need to listen to the posturing of those opposite; they do not even need to listen to me. They can listen to Canstar Blue and the ABC. Research conducted in December 2023 for households of all sizes demonstrates that Queensland has the cheapest power bills in the National Electricity Market.

I am asked about alternatives. One of the things we hear about is structural cost-of-living relief. The Leader of the Opposition talks a lot about that when he goes around the country with his brochure. The last time they had a go at structural cost-of-living relief, what did they say about free public health care? When we were building a new public hospital in Kingaroy, what did they say? The member for Nanango and the Leader of the Opposition said, 'Sell Tarong Power Station and you'll get a new hospital.' I built a new \$110 million hospital in Kingaroy and I did not have to sell a power station. What happened? The member for Nanango put out a media release—wasn't she so happy! She said, 'Stanwell's decision to reduce its operating maintenance and employee expenses'—that means sack people—'will in turn mitigate the impact of Labor's carbon tax.' It was stated, 'Ms Frecklington said Stanwell employees would be offered generous voluntary redundancy packages.' Abracadabra!

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, I think you are now straying into the motion as we have discussed. The broader concept is to talk about cost of living but there are specific points. Notwithstanding, I would ask you to take notice of that.

Mr DICK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We provided \$8.2 billion in concessions, a 20 per cent increase in one year alone, and not just in electricity but everything across the board—from seniors' spectacles all the way through to free kindy, frozen rego and freezing public transport fares. They are all—

(Time expired)

Premier, Integrity

Ms LEAHY: My question is to the Premier. In July 2017, the Premier told estimates that he did not use private emails for ministerial business. It was later revealed that he had in 2016. Given the Premier's situation on the use of private emails and the revelation the Premier misled parliament this week, is this another example of Queenslanders needing to question everything the Premier says?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Warrego for her question. The answer to her question is no.

Women, Housing and Homelessness

Ms BUSH: My question is of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning. Can the minister update the House on how Homes for Queenslanders and the Miles Labor government are supporting women in my community of Cooper and right across Queensland, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for Cooper for the question. I know that she is a really strong advocate for women and girls who are experiencing domestic and family violence in her community and right across Queensland. Of course, we know that women having a safe place to call home is critical in ensuring women's economic security. Our Homes for Queenslanders plan understands that. That is why our new plan will deliver 10 new and replacement domestic and family violence shelters right across the state. It will deliver dedicated accommodation for families, most often women and children, who are experiencing homelessness. It also boosts funding for our Flexible Assistance Package, which helps women leaving violent relationships with really practical assistance like removalist trucks, furniture and whitegoods. It adds to a whole range of other measures that we have. We have our housing and support hubs for older women in Brisbane and Mackay. We are purchasing hotels in inner-city Brisbane for women and families. We have specifically designed housing for older women on the Gold Coast in Southport, and our chief architect has been doing some fantastic work.

This is the kind of policy that you get when you have women around the table. It is in stark contrast to what we saw under those opposite, who actually took the extraordinary step of cutting funding to domestic and family violence shelters and services. In fact, despite holding every single Gold Coast seat, they even managed to cut funding to the only service on the Gold Coast that provided that critical service to women there—\$152,000 cut by those opposite—and most of the same blokes are still sitting on the benches opposite.

We have heard in recent times the Leader of the Opposition portraying himself as some sort of ally of women, saying he supports more women candidates, despite the fact that the LNP still rejects any quotas, even though we know that that is the best way to get women—

Mr Lister interjected.

Ms SCANLON: Another bloke over there interjecting. I will take advice from the member for Southern Downs when—

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Resume your seat, Minister. Member for Southern Downs, your interjections are not welcome and you are certainly not using members' correct titles. You are warned under the standing orders.

Ms SCANLON: You need only look at our side of the House to see how our policies work compared to those opposite. Literally every single LNP woman is on the opposition's frontbench and there are still only six of them. It is not even a third. That shows why quotas work. Of course, this sudden interest in having more women candidates is no doubt because of the Leader of the Opposition's guilty conscience over rolling the youngest woman in parliament after his very short career as the member for Mundingburra. He was less worried about women when they stood in the way of his political career. You can pretend to care about women, but what actually matters is what you do in this chamber and around the cabinet table. This week is a test for the Leader of the Opposition: will he back women or will they disregard and disrespect women like they do time and time again?

Premier, Right to Information

Ms SIMPSON: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier tabled in the House an RTI decision notice. Can the Premier explain how he obtained private correspondence that has not been publicly disclosed, sent by an independent RTI officer in his former department directly to an opposition staffer?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Maroochydore for her question. Understandably, she has not been a minister, and those over there did not get long as ministers, but what I can advise the House for the benefit of those opposite is that RTI decision-makers are delegated that decision-making power by the minister. Therefore, as they are my delegates in that decision-making, I am a party to the decision and I receive the decision notice.

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Premier, please resume your seat. Member for Currumbin, you are on a warning. You are interjecting. You can leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Currumbin withdrew from the chamber at 10.55 am.

Mr MILES: As I was outlining for those opposite, as is the normal process, as the minister responsible I receive a copy of the decision. I was happy to share it for the benefit of the House because those opposite were mischaracterising it; they were misleading the House about what the decision said. Is the member for Maroochydore seriously saying that I should not have been able to share that with the House? Are those opposite seriously saying that members of this House should not have had access to the wording of the decision that those opposite were using to prosecute an argument? That argument is pretty offensive to this House. The fact that they do not understand RTI is also disappointing for this House. In fact, they keep coming in here and making stuff up, misleading and mischaracterising. They say one thing and do another.

I will always do everything I can to furnish the House with the evidence of what was actually said and what was actually decided, even if those opposite want to hide the full context—even if those opposite want to keep that to themselves so they can keep making things up. In this chamber, if I can, I will table those documents for all to see so that everyone can understand the weak tactics of the Leader of the Opposition—indeed, all of the opposition every time they come in this place.

Social and Affordable Housing

Ms BUSH: My question is of the Minister for State Development and Infrastructure. Can the minister update the House on how Economic Development Queensland is playing its part in providing social and affordable housing in this great state, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms GRACE: I thank the member for Cooper, who is such a strong supporter of social and affordable housing in her constituency—as I am. I know that she was very proud of our Homes for Queenslanders plan, worth \$3.1 billion. I know that she is equally happy and delighted at the 20 per cent increase in homelessness services that she received in her electorate, as many of us did. In terms of alternative approaches, we do not cut funding to services for people in need like those opposite did. We give them the funds that they need to support the services that will deliver homes for vulnerable Queenslanders, unlike those opposite. What did they do in their first budget? Not only did they gag those community service providers from speaking out but also they cut their funding.

Recently we announced a fantastic new home for Brisbane Youth Service, which provides so many fantastic services to young people throughout all of our electorates. They had a home that was nearly purchased before those opposite were elected. What did those opposite do at the time? They stripped the funding and did not provide them with a permanent home. That is what they do—the exact opposite of the approach we take.

I am proud to be part of a government that builds more homes faster and will boost our social housing big build. My department is working hand in hand with the housing department to deliver social and affordable housing—directly delivering social and affordable housing with the EDQ-led projects at Northshore Hamilton, Carseldine and Southport, and encouraging developers to deliver more affordable and social housing in priority development areas like Bowen Hills and Greater Flagstone. We have completed investigations on 27 surplus government sites and we are looking at developing them. The Minister for Housing and I were excited to stand up to speak about the Ivory Street project that we have in mind for Fortitude Valley which will deliver much needed large-scale affordable housing.

I can say a couple of things about my constituency. They love the Queensland Children's Hospital. What they did not love was the previous minister for housing, the member for Everton. When the LNP was in power, they were fearful of taking holidays lest they be made homeless. They were fearful of looking after their loved ones in their loved ones' homes because they were fearful of becoming homeless. They cut the QBuild workers who build those houses. They cut all kinds of programs that were delivering. It was Labor in government that picked up the pieces.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Clayfield, I give a reminder that members' correct titles will be used.

Premier, Right to Information

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question is to the Premier. A right-to-information officer has informed the opposition that the Premier and his office had to sign a search form certificate proving they thoroughly searched for messages on the Premier's phones. Did the Premier sign this certificate?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Nanango for her question. As I have previously advised the House, my office and I complied fully with all of the RTI requirements.

Neighbourhood Centres

Ms McMILLAN: My question is of the Minister for Communities. Can the minister please update the House on the services Neighbourhood Centres Queensland offer to support women in Queensland, and if the minister is aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Mansfield for her question and for her incredible advocacy for community centres in her own electorate. In fact, she has a wonderful centre in Mount Gravatt that does an incredible amount of work, including some trial work on social isolation. We know that neighbourhood centres are critical to our communities. They play a critical role in creating the cohesiveness that we require to be modern, resilient communities going forward. Of course, they are very much the gateways for service provision. There are a lot of referrals that happen there and very key programs that support a lot of people. On top of that, they are a major employer of women. In a survey that was conducted by Neighbourhood Centres Queensland a few years ago, they saw that about 79 per cent of all neighbourhood centre coordinators are women. We know that this makes a big difference to the kinds of services they provide for people in need. The survey also showed that more than half of the committees and boards are made up of women. These are places that absolutely support women in leadership and ensure the programs that are required are provided.

This government has made the biggest uplift in funding for neighbourhood centres in the history of this state. In fact, we almost doubled the amount of base funding to our 128 government funded neighbourhood centres, which is a testament to our absolute commitment to those women who are employed in those centres and the number of programs that are delivered from those centres. There are programs that offer food relief and emergency relief. In Mansfield, we have funded the project I spoke about in terms of social isolation—the Ways to Wellness program. There are counselling services. There is Centrelink on site in some places. There are referrals to housing, health and domestic violence services. We see a lot of playgroups and programs that support young mums and enable them to connect with other mothers. All of this is possible because we have been able to see record funding from our government to support neighbourhood centres. We know that a lot of that is at risk.

Previously we saw major cuts to key bodies of work. The emergency relief funding, for instance, that is for the poorest of the poor—those who need that support to make it through the week—was not just cut; it was taken away altogether. What we saw at the time was that St Vinnies, and others, only heard about the cut to funding via a media release from the then minister for communities. That is how they treat those centres, that is how they treat those programs and that is how they treat women who are employed in those centres.

Police Service, Coronavirus Vaccination Mandate

Mr KNUTH: My question without notice is to the Premier. The Supreme Court ruled that the Police Commissioner's directives to enforce the COVID vaccine mandate were unlawful and that the commissioner be restrained from taking any further disciplinary action. In light of this ruling, will the Premier immediately instruct all government departments to withdraw all current disciplinary action that is directly related to the mandate and to reinstate all affected workers back to their full employment?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Hill for his question. We are carefully considering the implications of that court decision. We have sought Crown Law advice and, of course, all of our agencies will comply with the decisions of the court and the advice we receive from Crown Law and other legal advisers. We took the decisions at the time in good faith in the best interests of Queenslanders and to preserve the lives of Queenslanders. While a couple of years down the track with hindsight it might be easy to pore over that decision-making, I assure the member for Hill and everyone in this House that all of those decisions were made based on the advice that we had available to us that those steps would keep Queenslanders safe. We stand by those decisions.

Far North Queensland, Disaster Recovery

Ms LUI: My question is of the Minister for Fire and Disaster Recovery. Can the minister please update the House on how the Miles Labor government is supporting our communities in Far North Queensland, including in my electorate of Cook, to recover from ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper?

Ms BOYD: I thank the member for her question. She is a champion of Far North Queensland and, in this Queensland Women's Week, I acknowledge the tremendous contribution that she brings to this place from some of the most remote places in our state. It was great to be back in Cairns last week for community cabinet. Many Far North Queensland communities were truly devastated by Tropical Cyclone Jasper and the flooding events this summer. The recovery, of course, will be long and ongoing for many of those communities, particularly communities in the electorate of Cook.

To date, we have seen \$8.8 million in personal hardship grants approved for people who have lived through this event. It is benefiting 48,487 people in the Far North, which is a tremendous amount of support for households in the Far North. On top of this, we have \$11.5 million in extraordinary disaster assistance packages established by the QRA under DRFA packages. It includes \$29.25 million for Far North Queensland tourism recovery and resilience. We have \$25 million in grants for our primary producers, \$25 million to support our local small businesses and \$20 million allocated for the clean-up package as well. I am advised that, as of Friday, last week's grants were approved. They will support 174 small businesses, 208 primary producers and 28 not-for-profit organisations in their recovery from the devastating effects of that flooding event.

It was great during community cabinet to meet with the community of Cape Tribulation that have been particularly isolated. I met with them, along with the member for Cook, the Premier and the transport minister. Once again, we reconnected with them. We were able to update the community on the involvement of TMR in repairing Cape Tribulation Road in cooperation with the Douglas Shire Council. I am advised that TMR will provide an update on the expected timings on Friday this week in a council-led meeting.

In relation to the tourism grants, the application guidelines for the \$10 million in tourism exceptional assistance grants for businesses have just been changed. Previously it mentioned 14 consecutive days. Under the change we have removed the word 'consecutive' which now means that more small businesses like those in the community of Cape Tribulation are able to apply to cover things like wages, salary, fuel, rent and supplies.

(Time expired)

Departmental Office Accommodation

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Premier. Why is the Premier prioritising spending \$1.5 million on empty office space rather than directing those funds to house vulnerable Queenslanders in the middle of a housing crisis?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Everton for his question. I can advise the member and the House that that office space is not vacant. It is currently occupied by people working at their desks. I am advised that there are 45 desks available in that office space.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Everton.

Mr MILES: Currently, 20 of those desks are occupied, and that will increase to 32 by the end of April. Again we see—

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Everton, you asked the question. You continued to interject. You are warned under the standing orders. Premier, you have two minutes remaining.

Mr MILES: Again we see the LNP come in here and mischaracterise truths to suit some bizarre political argument. The fact of the matter is that the offices obviously are not vacant. The member for Everton could swear on a stack of Bibles but it would not make it true. The fact is that those offices are occupied. I will tell members something else. We would not need to lease office space in the city if the LNP had not sold off all of our buildings. If they had not sold all of the buildings that we owned in town, we would not need to lease extra space for our hardworking public servants.

The team at QTC do a very good job on behalf of Queenslanders and I support them. It is clear that those opposite do not even think they should get an office and desks to sit at. If they were going to sack them all anyway, they would not need an office or a desk. We support our public servants. We let them have office space, even though we have to lease it because those opposite sold it all off, and we let them work at a desk.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, it has come to my attention that you may have used some unparliamentary language. I would ask you to withdraw.

Mr DICK: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Early Intervention Programs

Ms LUI: My question is of the Minister for Education and Minister for Youth Justice. Can the minister update the House on early intervention programs, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms FARMER: I thank the member for her question. I know how absolutely dedicated she is to providing early intervention for all of our kids and giving them a good start in life. That early intervention means there is a positive life trajectory for all of our young people across every aspect of their life spectrum, compared with what happens if we are not providing those positive and supportive experiences at the beginning of life.

I know how excited the member was when the Minister for Treaty and I told her about the Stars program when we visited Cairns State High School. I say well done to Chris Zilm for that program and also for hosting community cabinet at his beautiful school. I know that the member for Cairns is terribly proud about that. The Stars program offers young First Nations women the opportunity to really thrive at school and to take part in every hope and opportunity that is available to them.

Of course, investment in education and engaging young people in education are key. That is why last year we announced a nearly \$300 million program engaging students in education. We have started rolling out those initiatives already. Not every young person who is disengaged from education ends up in the youth justice system, but every young person in the youth justice system is disengaged from education, so we are really interested in early intervention programs.

Among the 13 words the Leader of the Opposition uses when talking about how he is going to fix youth crime is 'rolled gold early intervention'. I have said all along that I can never work out whether he cannot give us any details because he does not actually know what he is going to do or he is just not saying. We have seen his candidates, such as the candidate for Cairns. It was embarrassing when the *Cairns Post* asked her about it and she did not know what it was. Then there was the interview on *Stateline* last Friday night. Kate McKenna, who is a great journalist, tried valiantly to get it out of him. In terms of those long-form interviews, he needs to get a few more details up because he really started getting himself a bit mixed up. What we did get out of it is that he is going to turn around youth crime straightaway. If he does—and we do not know how yet—the entire world—

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

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

Ms FARMER: Now he has not only our interest but also the interest of the entire world, because nowhere in the world has anybody turned around crime or youth crime. However, that guy over there is going to turn it around straightaway. It is going to be magic.

(Time expired)

Gabba, Redevelopment

Mr McDONALD: I have a question to the Premier. On 24 November the Premier announced that the Gabba rebuild was firmly underway. By 18 January the Premier significantly changed position on the Gabba knockdown and announced an infrastructure review. Given the drastic change in position on the Gabba, at any point during these weeks did the Premier exchange messages with the director-general about the policy reversal?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Lockyer for his question. I would need to go and check my records to be able to answer the question. However, the member is right—and I have been very clear about this fact: I listened to Queenslanders. They said to me that they did not support the plan we had to redevelop the Gabba and so I changed my position. I listened to Queenslanders and I changed my position. I have been up-front and honest about that, and that is the kind of approach I will always have.

It is nearly 10 years down the track and nobody opposite has admitted the mistakes they made when in government. They resent it still coming up. However, it still comes up because they are all the same people and they have all the same positions. They have never done what I did—not once—and say that that plan was wrong and that they would come up with a new plan. We listen to Queenslanders and we are delivering based on what they tell us. We will not make apologies for that.

What is really stark to me is that the things you decide to speak about in this place go to your priorities. It is the second day of the sitting week. We have seen nearly two full question times and we have had on full display the priorities of those opposite, and they are not the priorities of—

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). The question was about the messages between the Premier and his director-general.

Mr SPEAKER: The messages are one component of the question. It also related to the substantive matter which I believe the Premier is speaking to. Member for Chatsworth, it has come to my attention that you have used some unparliamentary language. I ask that you withdraw.

Mr MINNIKIN: I withdraw.

Mr MILES: I note for the benefit of the member for Glass House that we have been pretty generous in accepting questions that could otherwise have been ruled out of order.

What you say in this place goes to your priorities. Do members know how many questions we have had from those opposite about women in Women's Week? None! How many questions have we had about addressing the cost of living, housing, health care or all of the priorities of Queenslanders? That is what we talk about. Those opposite might think those things are a distraction. The member for Kawana called our Women and Girls' Health Strategy a distraction. For us on this side of the House they are not a distraction; they are the core business of government, delivering for the more than half of the population who are women or girls.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at what the Premier has said. I never said that. He continues to make this stuff up. I ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: No, it is not an opportunity for you to argue the point. If you have taken personal offence, the convention is that I will ask the Premier to withdraw. Will you withdraw, Premier?

Mr MILES: I withdraw. As I say, on this side of the House we will listen to Queenslanders, we will talk about their priorities and we will deliver according to their priorities, but that is very different from what we see from all of those opposite.

Community Safety

Ms PUGH: My question is to the Minister for Police and Community Safety. Will the minister update the House on the investments and measures put in place to support community safety in the western corridor through to Ipswich, and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you have one minute to respond.

Mr RYAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker; you are always so generous with your time. I acknowledge the member for her question. I have known a few members for Mount Ommaney and she is probably the best member for Mount Ommaney that this parliament has ever seen. The member asked a very good question about investment in the western corridor, which includes those western suburbs of Brisbane all the way through to Ipswich and beyond. This government has made a strong commitment to the Queensland Police Service to support its resourcing and we are already ahead of those opposite, because they went to the last election with a plan—the architect sitting over there with his police cuts plan—which would have seen 150 police positions cut from the Southern policing region which includes Ipswich and the Toowoomba area.


Opposition members interjected.

Mr RYAN: This is a government that is committed to the front line. We are already 150 ahead of those opposite because they would have cut those positions if they had had their way at the last election, and the architect of the police cuts is back in the hot seat.

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired. Leader of the Opposition, I was almost going to warn you, but you actually managed to use 'fewer' instead of 'less' and I appreciate you using the appropriate grammar. Well done!

PRIVILEGE

Alleged Deliberate Misleading of the House

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.22 am): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. The Premier said during question time that I mischaracterised the State Archivist's letter that I tabled earlier and said words to the effect, 'The State Archivist said documents could not be located.' Mr Speaker, that is not true and not what the letter says at all. I will be writing to you about this as I believe the Premier has again misled the House.


CRIMINAL LAW (COERCIVE CONTROL AND AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

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

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from 5 March (see p. 417), on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (11.23 am), continuing: Improving this definition also means that our legislation will be more consistent with other Australian jurisdictions. More consistent language surrounding this definition will benefit the smooth implementation of a national respectful relationship towards consent. At this point in time I will share with the House that over many years a number of young people have raised the issue of consent with me. As members can imagine, being the leader of some very big schools in my time as principal there were many student situations where unfortunate events happened. The issue of consent was a concern of both male and female students over many years and they would often say to me, 'Is there some way that we can affirm consent through an app, through our signature, through some way of demonstrating our consent or otherwise to incidences or interactions with each other?' Clearly over many years young people have been asking for this as the issue of consent has been a concern to them, and we know that situations of consent only involve two people generally in a private situation. My message to our young people right across Queensland is that we do now have the answer and the strategy is the law of this state. The law of this state will ensure that affirmative consent is required before any of those interactions take place. There will be many young people—particularly women and women of all ages across Queensland—who require that guidance and require that support who will now have the law and the legal context for that consent.

Our government has listened to stakeholders over many years, we have listened to the experts and we have listened to victim-survivors and we have responded. This bill is changing the way we think about consent and changing how the criminal justice system responds to coercive control. Above all, this bill is about protecting and restoring justice for the women and girls who have been let down by this system time and time again. It is truly an honour to be part of a government that is tackling such an important social issue in our time. To all those affected by sexual or domestic and family violence and to those of you who had the courage to speak out, our government hears you, our government listens to you and our government supports you. I acknowledge the committee which has done so much tireless work to bring this bill to the House, the department and great female leaders like Justice McMurdo and others, Dame Quentin Bryce and the many other women in Queensland who have led this charge. I certainly commend their work, I commend their leadership and I commend this bill to the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Before I call the next member, I will just remind the House of the members who have been warned under the standing orders: Mermaid Beach, Kawana, Glass House, Pine Rivers, Nanango, Ninderry, Mudgeeraba, Currumbin, Bonney, Toowoomba South, Southern Downs, Everton and Buderim.



Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (11.27 am): I rise to speak in the cognate debate for the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill 2023. Firstly turning to the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, this seeks to implement the second tranche of reforms recommended by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce reports addressing issues surrounding coercive control and domestic family violence in Queensland. The opposition, as we have heard from the shadow Attorney, wants all individuals to feel secure in their own homes and communities. However, the unfortunate truth, as we have heard from many members here and from the experiences of our constituents, is that domestic and family violence continues to plague our state. Therefore, it is imperative that decisive action is taken to combat this scourge and protect the victims.

As we have heard from the shadow Attorney, the opposition will not oppose the bill, but we hold reservations about its current wording as it fails to adequately address the concerns raised by various stakeholders and risks introducing uncertainty into Queensland's legal system. The bill seeks to establish a new offence to address the insidious nature of coercive control within domestic relationships. Whilst it is a crucial step forward, the concerns raised by stakeholders relate to the burden of proof and the potential for unsafe convictions.

As shadow minister for multiculturalism, I refer to the submission by Multicultural Australia which raised cultural vulnerabilities faced by migrant and refugee women. I have met with members of these communities and I can understand their concerns about the lack of provision of services for their specific needs. Experiences of war, conflict, rape and sexual violence resulting in physical and mental health conditions can create barriers, including fear and distrust of services, which can deter people from seeking help which consequently impacts the effectiveness of the legal system in gathering adequate and credible evidence to enforce the law.

Some of these organisations have also mentioned to me that, because of the social conditions that some of these community members find themselves in, some of the ways in which victims of domestic and family violence are treated—and that can be by giving them a house or a unit by themselves—do not make them feel comfortable. It is a significant issue that needs to be faced because of the need to get away from the difficult situation, but the situation they are placed in can also be very foreign to them based on their cultural traditions.

Affirmative consent is about ensuring any sexual activity is consensual and based on mutual agreement. The bill aims to redefine consent under the Criminal Code, emphasising that consent must be freely given and voluntary. It acknowledges that consent can be withdrawn at any time and that lack of resistance does not imply consent. Once the bill is passed, it is vital that adequate community education, training and resources are provided before the implementation of this bill.

I note from the explanatory notes that section 348AA(1) provides circumstances where consent has not been given. One of these circumstances is where a person fails to disclose a serious disease and they transmit the disease to the other person. This has been criticised by several stakeholders, with some stating that it should be confined to sexually transmitted diseases and others saying that it should not be criminalised and could lead to prosecutions of those who unknowingly transmit the disease as well as expressing fear that it will be solely used to prosecute those living with HIV. Keeping that in mind, I want to table an article about a relatively well known case from 2016 entitled 'Gold Coast circus acrobat who transmitted HIV to partner has conviction for intentional infection overturned', which would give some context to people who have raised that.

Tabled paper: Article, dated 6 April 2016, titled 'Gold Coast circus acrobat who transmitted HIV to partner has conviction for intentional infection overturned' [\[302\]](#).


The bill introduces a court-based perpetrator diversion scheme aiming to provide early intervention for domestic violence offenders. Whilst this is a positive step, there are concerns about the availability of approved providers in certain regions potentially limiting access to this diversionary program. As shadow minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, it is encouraging to me that changes to recommendation 126, which provides that when sentencing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person the court must have regard to any cultural considerations, aim to address the impact of systematic disadvantage and intergenerational trauma on the offender. Whilst this is a commendable effort to address historical injustices, there are concerns about the differentiation of penalties based on race.

The Criminal Code (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill 2023 holds immense significance as it aims to cover the Miles government's critical failures unearthed within Queensland's DNA lab. We have heard from a number of members—the member for Currumbin, the member for Nanango and, of course, the shadow minister, the member for Clayfield—about some of the specifics and the 37,000 cases that are now going to have to be re-examined. This bill aims to enhance our criminal justice system's responses to potential wrongful convictions and unjust acquittals, with the objectives of this bill being to establish a statutory framework allowing convicted individuals to make subsequent appeals against their convictions with the leave of the Court of Appeal and to expand the double jeopardy exception to include 10 additional prescribed offences beyond murder.

It should be noted, though, the tireless efforts of Peter Dutton, the now federal member for Dickson and Leader of the Opposition, in 2006. He led the campaign on Queensland's double jeopardy legislation, gathering more than 100,000 signatures to present to then Queensland premier Peter Beattie and leading to changes in legislation. I want to table another article, titled 'The heinous crime that defined the policing career of Peter Dutton', by Lucy Cormack and Deborah Snow from 24 August 2018. It is about the case of Deidre Maree Kennedy.

Tabled paper: Article, dated 24 August 2018, titled 'The heinous crime that defined the policing career of Peter Dutton' [303].

The bill expands the double jeopardy exception to encompass offences punishable by life imprisonment. As shadow minister for disability services I want to acknowledge the inclusion of the offence 'abuse of persons with an impairment of the mind' in the 10 new offences. Justice for victims must remain a paramount concern. This bill is a crucial step towards rectifying the injustices caused by the failures of the Miles Labor government and Queensland's DNA lab.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (11.35 am): I am proud to rise in support of the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill debated in cognate with the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill. Our commitment to the people of Queensland in 2020 was that we would make coercive control a standalone offence. Today we are seeking to deliver on that commitment and make changes to introduce affirmative consent, including the specific declaration of stealthing as an act committed without consent. It is significant that in Queensland Women's Week we are introducing these major reforms in support of women's safety and bodily autonomy. Our Miles Labor government is 100 per cent committed to acting to better protect the safety and rights of Queensland women and girls, who, statistics show, are much more likely to experience domestic and family violence, particularly coercive control, and, sadly, also much more likely to experience sexual assault. That said, all Queenslanders will benefit from the protections and reforms in these bills.

Many of the brave women who contributed their stories to our Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce asked for these changes, with the majority of submissions in support of the criminalisation of coercive control as a standalone offence. I pay tribute to all those victim-survivors and their families who have faced the unimaginable but still had the generosity to work towards better outcomes for future victims. I particularly acknowledge the victims and their families whose stories have not generated widespread media attention and public horror. Your pain is no less real for being less known.

Coercive control is at the heart of domestic and family violence, yet even for victim-survivors it can be difficult to recognise and even more difficult to describe. Perpetrators possess almost unlimited avenues they can use to control and coerce their partner, and that coercion may be no less effective for being subtle and covert. As researcher Lundy Bancroft said in his book *Why Does He Do That?: Inside the Minds of Angry and Controlling Men*—

The scars from mental cruelty can be as deep and long-lasting as wounds from punches or slaps but are often not as obvious. In fact, even among women who have experienced violence from a partner, half or more report that the man's emotional abuse is what is causing them the greatest harm.

Even now victim-survivors are asked why they choose to stay with a perpetrator who treats them badly. Those attitudes ignore that coercive control routinely continues and escalates even once the victim is removed from the perpetrator's immediate circle of control after separation. One particularly cruel mode of coercion routinely used by perpetrators who have children with the targeted person is threatening to take away or restrict the target person's access to their children. Speaking as a parent, little could be more painful or frightening. At separation, perpetrators commonly shift into systems abuse, for example via unreasonable family law communications and proceedings inflicted for the

purpose of controlling the targeted person and causing them emotional distress and financial harm. Coercive control is a feature of almost every relationship that ends in a domestic and family violence murder, and for some victims of coercive control the first episode of physical violence that they experience is the episode that steals their life.

Some LNP speakers have expressed their grave concerns about the fairness of these changes to perpetrators. Personally, I am much more concerned about the fairness of the system overall as experienced by victim-survivors, most of whom are, of course, women. I again thank all victim-survivors and their families who have advocated to secure the generational change that these bills encompass. I acknowledge the ministers and attorneys-general who have listened and worked to deliver these important reforms, along with the committees that have examined them. I commend the bills to the House.



Mr O'CONNOR (Bonney—LNP) (11.39 am): Like every member in this House, I represent a community that has been rocked by horrific acts of domestic violence. I have attended many vigils at our domestic violence memorial in Labrador, across the road from my office. The memorial depicts a woman with her head bowed. It is where we hold a red rose rally every time our community loses a woman to this scourge.

I want to make a contribution in this debate as I have long committed to doing all I can to ensure that victim-survivors get the right support and that our legislative framework is fit for purpose. Reforms like this are essential, none more so than creating a criminal offence of coercive control. The offence will apply to those who commit domestic violence more than once against someone with whom they are in a domestic relationship, and that is a past or present intimate partner relationship. The definition of 'relevant relationship' is taken from the Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Act along with the definitions of 'domestic violence', 'economic abuse' and 'emotional or psychological abuse'. Importantly, 'harm' to a person in the relationship is defined as any detrimental effect on the person's physical, emotional, financial, psychological or mental wellbeing, whether temporary or permanent. The offence was meant to be modelled on the offence that was legislated in Scotland but the government chose to take a different path, which the Queensland Law Society highlighted well to the committee.

The bill finalises a model of affirmative consent by amending the meaning of 'consent' in the Criminal Code and expanding the legislated situations where consent is withdrawn or not agreed to. It will enshrine in law that a person may withdraw consent to an act at any time. The bill defines situations where no consent is accepted, including if a person does not say or do anything to communicate that consent or if the person is affected enough by alcohol or drugs to be incapable of giving or withdrawing consent. It is a simple but powerful change that will mean consent must be agreed rather than given freely and voluntarily. This change must be properly monitored. We must make sure that it is working as it is intended to. The bill also makes it clear that stealthing—that is, removing a condom during sex—is rape.


We want these measures to work. These tragedies and horrific violence cannot continue. The intent in the bill is right but we have issues with how the state government has gone about it. Reviewing the outcomes of the changes as they become active will be essential to determining if they are working or if further tweaks are needed. The concerns about the drafting of the coercive control aspects of the bill are genuine. The rush that the government was in to get the bill to this stage is unacceptable. The recommended three-month minimum consultation period was replaced by a completely inadequate 14-day period. A longer time for consultation could have better addressed the issues raised by a number of stakeholders. These changes overhaul long established principles, but we cannot allow those principles to be weakened or abandoned and replaced with a more convoluted process for victims.

The greatest concern I have with these changes relates to police resourcing. The Southport station services most of my community, which is the northern part of Southport and Labrador, Parkwood and Arundel. Our local police have never been under more pressure. They are struggling to keep up with demand. Domestic and family violence cases make up more and more of their workload; in fact, they are clearly the majority. I worry about how the police will cope with implementing these new offences, which are complex and will take up a great deal of police time. The police need to be properly resourced to get this right. Police recruitment is important but clearly there are issues with the culture of the Queensland Police Service and the pressure that the hardworking officers are facing, which are impacting retention. We have also seen a lack of commitment from the state government to implementing the recommendations in the *A call for change* report.

I cannot understate the importance of education, training and resourcing in general. I commend Di Macleod and the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence for their excellent submission to the committee, which highlighted a lot of the resourcing issues that must be addressed before this legislation becomes active.

The shadow Attorney-General has foreshadowed amendments to clauses 83 and 100 of the bill to remove the government's proposed additions to the sentencing principles in the Penalties and Sentences Act and the Youth Justice Act. Those amendments have great merit. We should not be including the effect of systemic disadvantage and intergenerational trauma on the offender and we should absolutely not be seeking to differentiate penalties based on race.

Overall, these changes are another step in the right direction. They are important to women and they are important to young Queenslanders. We need to make sure that they are implemented correctly and will do what they are intended to do.

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (11.44 am): I rise to make my contribution to the cognate debate on the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 and the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill 2023. I am proud to speak on this cognate debate during Queensland Women's Week. While there are so many things to celebrate, it is also a reminder of the gaps that still exist for women and girls. While we recognise and celebrate the incredible achievements of women in our society and the important role that women play in our communities, at work and in our homes, I want us to remember those who are doing it tough dealing with the very serious issue of domestic and family violence.

I acknowledge that today someone somewhere is trying to make the ultimate decision to escape violence. I acknowledge that this would be a very hard decision to make. I acknowledge that the decision to leave would be life-changing and that not many will be willing to take the next step. Where there are children involved, I acknowledge that the decision to leave will rest predominantly on what is best for the children. I acknowledge that the decision to leave is never easy. My experience of supporting women escaping domestic and family violence is that it will usually take several attempts before they are truly ready to escape violence for good.

I want to highlight the issue of escaping domestic and family violence from a regional and remote perspective as I believe locality adds another layer of challenge for those looking to escape violence. When you leave you do not just leave the violence; you leave behind your home, work, family and social network. The options to escape violence from a community setting are very different and, often times, it feels like the only option available is to relocate. Over the years I have heard many stories of women who chose to stay in toxic and violent relationships because the thought of being disconnected from family and social networks overrode the thought of physical assault, psychological abuse, social abuse, financial abuse or sexual assault.

I have engaged many stakeholders in different conversations about ways to approach domestic and family violence from a regional and remote perspective. The issue that keeps coming up is around perpetrator support to make perpetrators more accountable for their actions. Communities such as Cooktown, Hope Vale and Kowanyama recognise that, as a society, the expectation is placed on women and children to physically escape violence and very little expectation is placed on the perpetrators of the violence. The idea is to remove the perpetrator from the family home and provide wraparound support not only to help deter them from violence but also to help them make better decisions for themselves and their families.

I acknowledge and pay tribute to the many organisations in Cook that do incredible work to support women and children escaping violence. However, the responsibility of addressing domestic and family violence does not sit only with lead organisations or agencies funded to deliver a service. It takes you and I, standing up every day to educate and raise awareness of this ugly societal issue that does not belong in community. The frequency of the violence can be on and off. The cases of Hannah Clarke and her three children and the many others who have lost their lives at the hands of a violent partner are absolutely devastating. No-one should ever have to go through that.

I will always speak up against domestic and family violence. I am proud to represent a government that is committed to strengthening laws to enforce stronger measures to protect those experiencing domestic and family violence. This bill is another measure that the Miles government is implementing to ensure the safety of individuals, especially women and children, across Queensland. There is so much more to be done to improve the system that is meant to protect women and girls around issues relating to domestic and family violence that are still left unspoken.


The new laws will introduce a new offence of coercive control that will carry a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment. The bill also amends chapter 3 of the Criminal Code to implement an affirmative model of consent and provides that 'consent' means free and voluntary agreement. The bill will make it explicit that stealthing is a crime.

Amendments have also been made to the Evidence Act to introduce jury directions for sexual offence trials and strengthen provisions pertaining to improper questions. The bill contains other amendments to the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act: to require a court to consider making a temporary protection order on the first mention of an application for a protection order; to allow a court to extend a police protection notice in exceptional circumstances; to require a court making a protection order to consider the appropriate period for which the order will continue in force; and to allow a court to make an order to extend a PPN in exceptional circumstances. Again, coming from a regional and remote perspective, I think these laws will certainly help those women who are struggling to make that very hard decision to escape violence from their partners in community—oftentimes, like I said, with the many factors involved in making the decision around leaving as opposed to staying. This will certainly help those who are still undecided.

I now turn my attention to the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill. The objectives of the bill are to enhance criminal justice system responses to possible wrongful convictions and unjust acquittals by: establishing a statutory framework to allow a person convicted on indictment or of a summary offence under section 651 of the Criminal Code to make, with the leave of the Court of Appeal, a subsequent appeal against the conviction; and expanding the fresh and compelling evidence double jeopardy exception to 10 prescribed offences in addition to murder.

The rule against double jeopardy is central to our justice system and prevents the state from bringing repeated and oppressive prosecutions against individuals who have been acquitted. However, it is acknowledged that on rare occasions fresh and compelling inculpatory evidence will arise that was not put in front of a jury during trial. Currently, an exception to the double jeopardy rule exists only in relation to murder, in recognition of the seriousness of the offence. In such circumstances, the court may order a retrial on application of the DPP. The act will expand the exception to 10 additional serious offences, being: engaging in penile intercourse with a child under 16 in certain aggravated circumstances; abuse of persons with an impairment of the mind in circumstances where the person is not the lineal descendant of the offender but the offender is the guardian or has the person under their care; incest; repeated sexual conduct with a child; manslaughter; attempted murder; killing an unborn child; unlawful striking causing death; rape; and sexual assault in certain aggravated circumstances.

I am fully supportive of the bills before the House. These new laws will certainly provide stronger measures to protect those who are most vulnerable. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (11.53 am): I rise to make a short contribution to this cognate debate to ensure others will have time to speak, and I thank those members who cut down their speech times. First I will comment on the Criminal Law (Coercive and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which will amend multiple pieces of legislation, with the centrepiece to the Criminal Code to insert a new affirmative model of consent. In this, consent must be freely and voluntarily given, as we have heard, with the bill setting out circumstances when consent cannot be freely given such as if the person does not have cognitive capability or if the person is asleep.

Like most laws, the devil is in the detail. The committee's inquiry produced a large report on the myriad issues raised by stakeholders. One of those concerned consent and serious disease. The bill establishes that consent cannot be provided where a person makes a false representation about having a serious disease and then transmits that disease. The Queensland Council of Unions stated that this form of criminalisation shifts the model of public health for sexually transmitted diseases to one of criminalisation, stigmatisation and discrimination. That was also supported by Queensland Positive People, the HIV/AIDS Legal Centre and the National Association of People with HIV Australia, who stated that they do not support applying criminal law to the transmission of STIs. The department responded that, despite the public health issue, the consent issue is also of prime importance.

There are some serious trade-offs here. There are half a dozen equally serious issues in the report. Despite this, the committee made only one recommendation—to amend a very minor administrative provision. The committee made no recommendations regarding what was in the statement of reservation, issues raised in debate of previous coercion bills around community education


to avoid any confusion, or policing and court resourcing. I think these are vital. As I have said before, the committee system needs a full, independent review to effectively fulfil its role in examining legislation as it does not appear to be currently working as it should.

The issues in this bill are complex. The committee inquiry could have provided a review of the issues from a broad range of viewpoints to get to a consensus, yet it appears to have been a rushed process that could have been dominated by our current system of the confidentiality of committee meetings and chairs with a casting vote. We do not know whether that has affected the outcomes, because minutes are not made public.

The Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill establishes a framework to reopen criminal cases when new evidence becomes available. When applied to prosecution, this is referred to as double jeopardy—retrying people for the same crime even when a decision has already been made. This is the principle of finality, that decisions made by the court should not be reopened, and is a fundamental principle of the legal system; however, it has been put aside in exceptional circumstances. Currently, only murder cases be retried when new evidence emerges. This bill will expand that to 10 additional offences—four relate to unlawful killing and six to sex offences. Some stakeholders were against these changes, with the Queensland Law Society supporting the existing balance in the system, which only provides for the exception of murder. On the other hand, the Bar Association of Queensland noted that the bill largely reflects the position taken in other jurisdictions across Australia.

The bill also amends the criminal justice system to provide a right of subsequent appeal. Currently, a person may only appeal their conviction once, and after the appeal is determined the matter is closed. This bill creates a right to make another appeal if evidence later emerges that has the potential to exonerate the convicted person. In its submissions the Queensland Law Society was supportive of allowing subsequent appeals; however, it highlighted the risk that expanded appeal rights may lead to endless attempts by self-represented prisoners claiming new evidence. Legal Aid Queensland thought the bill would likely to lead to increased litigants in the court but thought it would be not too significant, given the experience of other jurisdictions. In response, the department noted that the bill addresses these concerns by only allowing appeals with the prior approval of the Court of Appeal.

We know why this bill has been introduced. The forensic science lab debacle of not testing certain forensic samples, which now need to be tested, will require an ability to reopen the associated criminal cases. Hopefully, the changes in this bill will bring more justice, especially for our victims. I thank the ministers, departmental staff, committees and submitters for their contributions and scrutiny of both bills.

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (11.58 am): The cognate bills before the House are important for community safety. The mechanics of the cognate bills have been spoken about previously, so I will not again go over those. It is quite significant that we are debating these bills during International Women's Week. I would like to thank the strong women in our community for working to bring these bills before the House.

In my community there are two special women I would like to acknowledge: Vicki Blackburn and her daughter Shannah. Since the murder in Mackay of their sister and daughter, Shandee, they have tirelessly campaigned to ensure the full truth of Shandee's brutal murder is known. Their relentless campaign will benefit victims of crime and their families. I thank them for their grace, dignity and compassion in fighting for justice.

I would also like to acknowledge the wonderful workers in the Mackay Women's Centre, the Broken Ballerina team and the teams who are looking after our women in women's crisis accommodation centres. These locals are looking after victims of domestic violence on a daily basis, and I thank them.


We know that there are shameful statistics of sexual assault on women and also of violence against women and men by partners with whom they are cohabitating. The Miles government is committed to stamping out all forms of domestic and family violence in Queensland.

The women who came forward led to the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce and the recommendations in those *Hear her voice* reports. It is important that we follow that advice, and that is what we are doing here today. We want to make sure that coercive control and the pattern of behaviour that is used to isolate, intimidate and humiliate women is stamped out of our community. We know that this type of behaviour wears away women's skills to navigate life.

I have had many exhausted and distraught young women come to my office because their ex-partner who is under a DVO is using their mates to continue that harassment—to do the drive-bys, to toot the horn at all hours of the night, to call out abusive expletives—thinking that they are helping their mate. It is cruel behaviour. I am glad that this bill will address that behaviour.

There is a lot of change in my community. I would like to mention that the police in my community work hard to keep our community safe. Unfortunately, two of our hardworking police officers are retiring. Sergeant Nigel Dalton liaises with schools and community groups to get the message out about changing violent behaviours in our community. In our schools Sergeant Nigel runs Safe Circus for primary aged students and Be safe and watch your mates for high school students as they prepare students for schoolies. With clever messaging through theatre and song they pass on those messages that will help our students to be safe around sex, alcohol and drug behaviours when they are at schoolies and beyond. Sergeant Rowena Wallace supports victims of domestic violence. She rolls out programs to help her colleagues to deliver the support and programs that we need out in the community. I wish Sergeant Nigel and Sergeant Rowena a retirement where they get to do whatever they like because they deserve it.

There are many celebrations happening around Women's Week and International Women's Day. I am looking forward to supporting Zonta on the weekend, because they do a great job to say no to domestic violence. I commend the bills to the House.


 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (12.02 pm): I want to make a short contribution in supporting these bills. This goes to the fundamental core of why we are in government. I want to commend the chair of the committee but also the relevant ministers for bringing these bills to the chamber. I want to reflect briefly on one of the comments in the chair's foreword which states—

It is not enough to call out the behaviour, draw attention to the statistics or have an awareness campaign. It is not enough to have White Ribbon Day or the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Deep, structural reform is necessary.

Back in 2008 when I entered the Australian Senate as a Queensland senator, that was one of the main reasons I decided to become a White Ribbon ambassador. Since then I have been advocating against domestic and family violence on a regular occasion with my department, with my colleagues and within my electorate.

There were two factors that brought me to that decision. Firstly, it was seeing mainly male supervisors in workplaces that I represented commit abhorrent actions against female workers—belittling them and reducing them to tears using fear and intimidation. That behaviour must stop. The second reason was the fact of living under my own roof and seeing my own daughter affected by coercive control. I will not refer to him as a man because a man does not conduct violence against women. A man does not abuse someone's privacy to look at their phones or to tell them what to wear out in public. A man does not do these things. That is why I am so proud to be part of this Miles government to see these changes and actions of introducing enforcement laws to prevent this behaviour. It has to stop.

The conduct you walk past is the conduct you accept and condone. I call on all men in this House, in our state and in our workplaces to stand up and speak out against domestic and family violence and, in particular, coercive control. Only then we will be in a position to stop this conduct right across our communities. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (12.05 pm): It is a privilege for me to be able to rise to speak in this cognate debate to speak on the criminal law and Criminal Code amendment bills. First, I would like to pay respect to some wonderful and beautiful women in my life with International Women's Day being this Friday: my wife, Deb; my mum, Joan; my sisters, Maree and Jennifer; my daughters-in-law, Cassie and Crystal; and, of course, my wonderful daughter, Millie, and my lovely grandchildren as well. I also give a shout-out to the other Murphy girls—Aunty Judy and Aunty Ann—who together with Mum are a very forceful group.

The criminal law amendment bill is a very important bill which goes to the heart of consent and some very serious offences of domestic violence and sexual assault, particularly when most often the victims of those offences are women and children. That is a devastating thing in our society. Many in this House will know that I was a police officer for many years, having to support victims in their most vulnerable state having been victims of terrible and heinous offences. Any laws that come to this House that assist police and victims in navigating the court process I will support every day of the week and likewise these bills today.

In terms of consent, this bill is codifying the practice that occurs in many courts now, but it does make it clear for the courts that affirmative consent is necessary and that of course consent can be withdrawn at any time. That is something I am sure many women and girls will particularly appreciate. All victims of sexual assault will benefit from those laws when it comes to the most heinous offences.


I want to pay tribute to Sue and Lloyd Clarke for their efforts with the Small Steps 4 Hannah Foundation. I pay tribute to their courage in harnessing their energies to be able to develop this foundation and leave a legacy for their daughter, Hannah, in such terrible and tragic circumstances. Congratulations to them. It is a very small victory after such a huge loss.

In terms of the legislation, I think that the government has missed the opportunity to put in place more recommendations from *A call for change*. There are only two recommendations from that report in this bill. Any opportunities for the law to be strengthened, in my view and in that of the opposition, will assist the prosecution process.

I want to move on to the failures in the DNA labs and the necessity for the legislation regarding double jeopardy. Before I move to aspects of this bill, I would also like to place on record my thanks and appreciation to Peter Dutton and the work that he did in regard to double jeopardy surrounding the Deidre Kennedy case. I was on hand in Ipswich last year when a small ceremony was held with the Kennedy family and their supporters. The Kennedy family have become friends of mine as they lived in the old Laidley police division. That was the start of the ball rolling in terms of the double jeopardy change. That was a great legislative change, and again I pay tribute to Peter Dutton for that effort. This legislation is something that I very much welcome. It is certainly great that a broader range of offences will benefit from the opportunity to prosecute once the DNA has been retested. I understand there are about 37,000-odd cases which have been affected and over 100,000 tests that need to happen.

I want to thank the scientists who work in that space. They are some of the champions of our modern world. I have to say that I really feel for many of the experts who have been let down by the administrative processes that have got us into this situation. Others have described the situation as possibly one of the worst public administration failures in the nation, but we are here to see this legislation put in place and make sure we can prosecute where necessary.

I would also like to place on record my thanks to all of the hardworking police out there who spend a lot of time dealing with many serious offences, including domestic violence. I can share with the House—and many others will know—that police do face frustrations in terms of not being able to give assistance immediately to many victims of domestic violence and sexual offences, so they will also welcome these changes to the legislation. With that short contribution, I will allow others to continue. I commend the cognate bills to the House.

 **Mr DAMETTO** (Hinchinbrook—KAP) (12.12 pm): I rise to speak to the cognate bills being debated before the House: the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill and the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill. Firstly, I will address the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill. As stated in the explanatory notes—

The objectives of the Bill are to enhance criminal justice system responses to possible wrongful convictions and unjust acquittals by:

- establishing a statutory framework to allow a person convicted on indictment or of a summary offence under section 651 of the Criminal Code to make, with the leave of the Court of Appeal, a subsequent appeal against the conviction; and
- expanding the fresh and compelling evidence double jeopardy exception to 10 prescribed offences in addition to murder.

Presently, the rule against double jeopardy prohibits successive prosecutions for the same offence in Queensland with the exception of murder and some defective acquittals. There are multiple legal principles and policies that underpin the double jeopardy rule, including: that a person should not be harassed by multiple prosecutions about the same issue; and the need for finality of proceedings. This legislation will ensure we can re prosecute cases when new evidence comes to light. We all know this bill came before the House in response to the forensic DNA commission of inquiry. It was confronting to learn that such a pivotal arm of the state's entire criminal investigation process was under-resourced and under-prioritised by the state government. The difference that accurate DNA testing makes in criminal cases such as murder and sexual offences cannot be overstated.

Since we have a short amount of time I will now go on to the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The objectives of this bill are to implement the government's response to the reforms recommended by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce

in *Hear her voice—report two: Women and girls’ experiences across the criminal justice system*. There are also some things in here that refer back to the Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence.

I just want to make it known from the outset that some of the legislation proposed today will make things better for those in Queensland who have been the victims of coercive control and domestic violence. It is a moving landscape. It is ever changing, and the reality is that the legislation needs to catch up. I want to address two points in particular. The bill amends the definition of consent in section 348 of the Criminal Code, which states ‘consent means free and voluntary agreement’. I think this is a good thing, but at the same time it does open up some questions which I will get to in a second. We do not have any issue with the definitions that have been changed, but I will talk to section 348AA, ‘Circumstances in which there is no consent’. Section 348AA(1)(c) and (d) state—

- (c) the person is so affected by alcohol or another drug as to be incapable of consenting to the act;
- (d) the person is so affected by alcohol or another drug as to be incapable of withdrawing consent to the act;

A lot of people find themselves having sex after meeting in a nightclub, pub or party and those sorts of settings. It is interesting because if you are both on drugs or you are both alcohol affected, who exactly is capable of making a cognitive decision at the time? I think there is a bit of ambiguity there that is very interesting. Even in the last 10 years the reality is that dating has changed. People used to meet people who they knew or grew up around. If they moved to a new town they would take the time to get to know people. We are now living in a hook-up era where people meet online and have sex within hours of meeting for the very first time, so it stands to reason this legislation is moving with the times.

I will now turn to the coercive control section of the bill. There is no doubt that this legislation is well-intended, but we are concerned there is a real gender focus on fixing men in particular across Queensland when it comes to domestic violence. There are some men out there who need to change their behaviours and I hope this legislation is the necessary tool to do that, but this is not just one-sided. There are females out there right now conducting coercive control against their male partners. I do not think we should stand in this House and talk about the loss of lives from domestic violence situations that affect females in this state without acknowledging that men have lost their lives as well. That is an important point to make and I think both sides of the House should acknowledge that.

As I said earlier, times are changing and so is domestic violence, so that is a good reason this legislation is before the House. We never used to have choking as a specific domestic violence offence, but perpetrators used that as a way to attack their victims without leaving marks so it was important to move forward. I now see that with coercive control we are doing a very similar thing. Some concerns were raised at the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee hearing by Dr Terry Goldsworthy and Dr Matthew Raj. Dr Goldsworthy addressed the complexity of understanding and prosecuting coercive control. He said—


The concept of coercive control encompasses a diverse array of controlling and abusive behaviours, hence giving rise to ambiguity in its definitions. The range of abusive behaviours encompasses emotional abuse, social isolation, financial control, and manipulation ...

This is when someone who is being very manipulative, whether a male or a female, can become very good at doing these sorts of things to their partners. It could become quite lengthy to try to prosecute these things and it could become hard to gather enough evidence to ensure a prosecution can take place.

I want to raise the point about police having the right resources. It is great that we bring legislation into this House to move the state forward and make sure we have the right tools there for prosecution, but our Police Service need the right tools for investigating and then becoming involved in these domestic violence situations and in this case coercive control. We need to make sure the police are well resourced. It has even been suggested that more psychologists should be involved in the initial stage of entering a premises to try to break up that domestic violence. People who are quite manipulative can come across as the victim, but if psychologists can pull this apart they may get to understand that they are actually the perpetrator. As we are talking about coercive control, that could very well be the case.

We want to make sure our police are well resourced. Like I said, if you do not have the right evidence to prosecute, you do not have enough evidence to see a conviction. That is what we want here; we are trying to hold people to account. When we talk to QPS now they say, ‘If we don’t have

video evidence of someone breaking into your house, it's very hard for us to prove that was the person in your house.' With that kind of commentary, it is going to be difficult for police to be able to prosecute this well-intended legislation if they are not well resourced and well equipped. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (12.22 pm), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contribution to the cognate debate. I particularly want to acknowledge the members who spoke of their own experiences of domestic and family violence within their families and communities. This bill would not have been possible without the resilience and courage of victim-survivors and their families who have shared their stories with the taskforce—many of whom are in the gallery today. Victim-survivors have been generous, brave, articulate and so powerful in telling their stories to the taskforce and to the committee, and I once again want to thank them.

I would also like to thank the taskforce led by the Hon. Margaret McMurdo AC and acknowledge the taskforce secretariat, its executive director Megan Giles and all of the taskforce members. I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the ongoing work of the Women's Safety and Justice Team in Strategic Policy and Legislation at the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

The Miles government has heard the voices of victim-survivors, and it is a privilege to progress this bill through parliament as the next stage towards criminalising coercive control. Women's voices and their experiences have been heard and are always at the centre of everything we do in this space. I now will address some of the matters raised by honourable members during the course of this debate.

Several members raised issues with the consultation process for the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Prior to the development of this legislation, the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, which was established in March 2021, did its very own extensive and public consultation on the recommendations that are the foundation of this bill. Between the two reports, the taskforce received over 950 submissions, including over 500 people sharing their lived experience with domestic and family violence and 250 submissions from victim-survivors of sexual assault. The taskforce also held over 125 individual meetings with stakeholders including the police, the legal profession, academics and service providers. The government then undertook two rounds of targeted consultation with a broad range of stakeholders on a consultation discussion paper.

Taken together, the departmental consultation process adds up to roughly 12 weeks, or three months. I want to be clear that the taskforce also told us how important it was to take our time to get this right, and that is what we have done. It is disappointing that those opposite do not appear to understand this and continued to criticise the time it has taken us to bring this bill to the parliament. Throughout the debate of these bills, it has been apparent that those opposite cannot make up their minds quite what to complain about, because on the one hand a number of members have said that the government's consultation process had not been adequate and the legislation had been rushed and on the other hand we heard from the members for Mudgeeraba, Whitsunday and Nanango that we have not acted fast enough and that in fact we should have legislated proposals put up by the LNP back in 2020.

The member for Mudgeeraba mentioned in her speech that the government failed to legislate a suite of reforms proposed by her which would have included a standalone summary offence for domestic violence, including coercive control. As all members probably appreciate, a summary offence, also known as a simple offence, has offences which include public nuisance or trespass. The offence that we are creating in this bill today is a serious indictable offence which carries a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment. This is what was recommended by the taskforce—an indictable offence, not a simple offence.

The offence established in this bill acknowledges the severity of coercive control and those behaviours, which may include both physical and non-physical violence, over extended periods of time. As the taskforce recognised, this offence will cover a wide spectrum of serious offending. Some accounts from victim-survivors described behaviour that could amount to a form of torture. Our government understands how serious and harmful the offence of coercive control can be, and this bill is the embodiment of a shift of our understanding of domestic and family violence.

The member for Clayfield has asked the government to identify the investment that the government has made into training and education in order to support this bill. I am proud to stand in this chamber and talk about the government's record in addressing all forms of violence against women and the huge investment we are making towards implementing the taskforce recommendations. This includes: \$9.382 million over four years to develop and release a co-designed whole-of-government community strategy to address over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our justice system; \$1.9 million over four years to raise community awareness and education, including the development of a communication strategy to give trauma and culturally informed communication activities to increase community awareness and understanding of coercive control; \$20.6 million over four years to develop co-designed, tailored and accessible resources about coercive control; \$4 million over four years to establish a domestic and family violence peak body; \$26.8 million over four years to enhance and expand integrated service responses, including through high-risk teams; \$22.8 million over four years to establish a co-response model involving both police and specialist domestic and family violence services; \$16.3 million over four years to enhance funding to men's behavioural change programs to meet increased demand and trialling innovative perpetrator intervention programs; \$2 million over three years to develop and release the domestic, family and sexual violence system monitoring and evaluation framework to facilitate outcomes and impact monitoring and evaluation; \$5 million over four years to ensure the domestic, family and sexual violence system monitoring and evaluation framework is underpinned by quality and consistent data; and \$3.2 million to establish the independent implementation supervisor to independently review progress. We have also committed additional funding of \$18 million to support the establishment of the Victims' Commissioner's office. That is all as well as the government providing considerable funding to the Queensland Police Service to improve its domestic and family violence response.

Following the Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service Responses to Domestic and Family Violence, the government announced \$100 million in funding to implement priority reforms, including for domestic and family violence support workers to be based in police stations across the state. The Police Service will also be rolling out statewide face-to-face domestic and family violence coercive control training from 1 July this year. It will be compulsory for police officers and frontline staff members and will improve police responses to coercive control and domestic and family violence.

The member for Clayfield also raised concerns regarding the amendments relating to affirmative consent and mistake of fact—specifically, that this bill is a departure from the recommendations made by the Queensland Law Reform Commission in their 2020 report on consent. During the debate in 2021 of the Criminal Code (Consent and Mistake of Fact) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, indeed both the member for Clayfield and I acknowledged that so many advocates and victim-survivors were disappointed in those recommendations and amendments and there was strong feedback that those amendments did not go far enough. These sentiments were acknowledged by the taskforce, who heard from so many victim-survivors that further reform was needed.

These new amendments to affirmative consent and mistake of fact demonstrate the Miles government's commitment to recentring women's voices in the criminal justice system. We are listening and we will continue to listen to the feedback of stakeholders, victim-survivors and members of the community.

Once again, I want to thank all honourable members for their contribution during the debate. I said when I introduced this bill that its legacy belongs to the victim-survivors and their families who have used the power of their stories to push for a safer Queensland. As I look up to the gallery, I want to thank each and every one of them for their advocacy. I want to pay my respects to those who are not here today because of domestic and family violence.

For too long, victims have been let down by a system that does not understand or acknowledge the pain inflicted upon them by perpetrators. This bill is about recentring victims' voices, so I want to give the final words to one brave survivor who told the taskforce—

Looking back, I can see the coercive control started the day I met my ex. It is a death by a thousand paper cuts. After a few years, you look around and you realise that you are bleeding to death and there is no way out.

I want to say to this House and to the community that these cuts are now criminal, and we reaffirm our commitment to providing a safe way out. I commend the bill to the House.

Question put—That the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Question put—That the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill be now read a second time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Consideration in Detail

Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Ms FENTIMAN (12.32 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Ms FENTIMAN: I move the following amendment—

1 After clause 10

Page 19, after line 20—

insert—

10A Amendment of s 227A (Observations or recordings in breach of privacy)

Section 227A(3), definition *consent*—

omit, insert—

consent means free and voluntary agreement by a person with the cognitive capacity to make the agreement.

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

Tabled paper: Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, explanatory notes to Hon. Shannon Fentiman's amendments [\[304\]](#).

Tabled paper: Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Shannon Fentiman's amendments [\[305\]](#).

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 21, as read, agreed to.

Clause 22—



Ms FENTIMAN (12.33 pm): I move the following amendments—

2 Clause 22 (Amendment of s 552B (Charges of indictable offences that must be heard and decided summarily unless defendant elects for jury trial))

Page 40, line 20, '(1) Section'—

omit, insert—

Section

3 Clause 22 (Amendment of s 552B (Charges of indictable offences that must be heard and decided summarily unless defendant elects for jury trial))

Page 40, lines 25 to 29—

omit.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 22, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 23 to 56, as read, agreed to.

Clause 57—

Ms FENTIMAN (12.34 pm): I move the following amendment—

4 Clause 57 (Insertion of new pt 9, div 14)

Page 81, line 22 to page 82, line 1—

omit, insert—

57 Insertion of new pt 9, div 14A

Part 9—

insert—

**Division 14A Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation
Amendment Act 2023**

160A Application of s 21 to proceedings

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 57, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 58, as read, agreed to.

Clause 59—

Ms FENTIMAN (12.34 pm): I move the following amendments—

5 Clause 59 (Insertion of new pt 6B)

Page 84, line 20, 'Subsection (1)'—

omit, insert—

Subsection (2)

6 Clause 59 (Insertion of new pt 6B)

Page 84, line 33, 'Subsection (1)'—

omit, insert—

Subsection (2)

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 59, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 60—

Ms FENTIMAN (12.35 pm): I move the following amendment—

7 Clause 60 (Insertion of new s 161)

Page 104, line 30, 'division 14'—

omit, insert—

division 14A

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 60, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 61 to 63, as read, agreed to.

Clause 64—

Ms FENTIMAN (12.35 pm): I move the following amendment—

8 Clause 64 (Insertion of new s 162)

Page 109, line 9, 'division 14'—

omit, insert—

division 14A

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 64, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 65, as read, agreed to.

Clause 66—

Ms FENTIMAN (12.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

9 Clause 66 (Insertion of new s 163)

Page 110, line 28, 'division 14'—

omit, insert—

division 14A

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 66, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 67 and 68, as read, agreed to.

Clause 69—

Ms FENTIMAN (12.36 pm): I move the following amendments—

10 Clause 69 (Insertion of new pt 6C)

Page 129, after line 9—

insert—

(f) may have regard to any cultural considerations relevant to the applicant or complainant;
and

11 Clause 69 (Insertion of new pt 6C)

Page 129, line 10, '(f)'—

omit, insert—

(g)

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 69, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 70—

Ms FENTIMAN (12.37 pm): I move the following amendment—

12 Clause 70 (Insertion of new ss 164—169)

Page 139, line 23, 'division 14'—

omit, insert—

division 14A

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 70, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 71 and 72, as read, agreed to.

Clause 73—

Ms FENTIMAN (12.37 pm): I move the following amendment—

13 Clause 73 (Insertion of new s 170)

Page 144, line 23, 'division 14'—

omit, insert—

division 14A

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 73, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 74 to 82, as read, agreed to.

Clause 83—



Mr NICHOLLS (12.37 pm): I move the following amendment—

1 Clause 83 (Amendment of s 9 (Sentencing guidelines))

Page 148, line 25 to page 149, line 4—

omit.

Before I get onto the substance of my amendment, can I join with the Minister for Health in thanking those in the gallery here today and acknowledging the sacrifice and the loss of life by all too many people as a result of domestic violence and reiterate the LNP's position in full support of the changes that are being brought about by this legislation. We have no hesitation in doing so and personally I have spoken about this on many occasions going back to my time also as opposition leader in 2016 and 2017.

This is a terrible, terrible offence and it must be stamped out and we must do all we can to address it. To those in the gallery, this is our effort, but it is not all that we can do either as parliamentarians or as governments of either description. This is a legacy to those who have lost their lives and we stand by it. I just wanted to make that clear in this early stage.

The amendment I am moving, though, relates to changes that are being made to the Penalties and Sentences Act, and I outlined the rationale for those changes in my contribution to the debate yesterday. These are changes that seek to, in the LNP's view, and in the view of very many others, institute into the Penalties and Sentences Act and the Youth Justice Act a sentencing guideline that presupposes someone's culpability based on race or background.

This is something that we ought to specifically reject. It is something that was specifically rejected by the High Court. I mentioned it yesterday, but I think it does bear repeating. This is the decision of the High Court in relation to this very proposition that was put forward in 1992.

To accept that Aboriginal offenders are in general less responsible for their actions than other persons would be to deny Aboriginal people their full measure of human dignity. It would be quite inconsistent with the statement in *Neal* which is a High Court case from 1982 to act upon a kind of racial stereotyping which diminishes the dignity of individual offenders by consigning them by reason of their race and place of residence to a category of persons who are less capable than others of decent behaviour. I do not believe that, and I do not believe we should be enshrining that in legislation.

Further, it would be wrong to accept that a victim of violence by an Aboriginal offender is somehow less in need of deserving such protection and vindication as the criminal law can provide. That is also a very real proposition. That is a victim of a crime does not deserve to have their feelings taken into account because of someone's background. This was expressly rejected by the High Court on a full appeal from New South Wales. There are already very many adequate provisions that would deal with this in the legislation and in common law.

Ms FENTIMAN: The member for Clayfield has raised concerns that the amendments proposed by the government will offend against the principles of individual justice and is contrary to the High Court's decision in *Bugmy v The Queen*. I do not share the member's concerns. The High Court in the decision of *Bugmy v The Queen* acknowledged the reality that many First Nations peoples are subject to social and economic disadvantage and indicated that if an offender's background of deprivation is to be used in mitigation at sentence, it is necessary to point to material tending to establish that background. The taskforce, in line with this decision, suggested an amendment to allow the consideration of submissions that are relevant to cultural considerations that include the impact of systematic disadvantage and intergenerational trauma on First Nations offenders.

I remind the House that the taskforce was led by the Hon. Margaret McMurdo, a former president of the Court of Appeal. The amendments that are proposed by the government do not displace the principle that an offender should be sentenced according to the severity of their criminal conduct and their individual circumstances. The amendment simply operates to help ensure practitioners and judicial officers turn their mind to whether there are any cultural considerations, including the effect of systematic disadvantage and intergenerational trauma on Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander offenders.

This amendment does not mandate that courts reduce the sentence of Aboriginal offenders or prioritise consideration of the effect of systematic disadvantage, or intergenerational trauma, above other important sentencing considerations. The drafting of the provision is important in this respect and particular regard must be had to the use of the word 'any'. The term 'any' contemplates that such considerations will not be present in the cases of each and every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offender.

Further, the amendment relates to the effect on the offender. This contemplates some requirement to show a link between the systematic disadvantage and the intergenerational trauma and the individual offender. The Penalties and Sentences Act already allows for relevant submissions if an offender is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and there are matters of cultural considerations put forward by a community justice group. It has long been accepted by the judiciary and the legal profession that this consideration can be applied broadly.

The Penalties and Sentences Act also ensures when an offender is being sentenced for serious offences, such as an offence involving violence, the court must have primary regard to a different set of sentencing principles that are victim centred. It is the government's view that an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person who can be shown to have suffered systematic disadvantage or intergenerational trauma in a way that is relevant is entitled to have this taken into account as a mitigating factor.

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

AYES, 31:

LNP, 30—Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lister, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Minnikin, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Watts, Weir.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

NOES, 46:

ALP, 45—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Walker, Whiting.

Grn, 1—Berkman.

Pairs: D'Ath, Robinson; Howard, Millar; Pease, Camm; Tantari, Molhoek.

Resolved in the negative.

Non-government amendment (Mr Nicholls) negatived.

Mr SPEAKER: Under the provisions of the business program agreed to by the House and the time allocated for this stage of the bill having expired, I will now put all remaining questions.

Question put—That clauses 83 to 103 and schedule 1, as read, stand part of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 83 to 103 and schedule 1, as read, agreed to.

Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill

Question put—That clauses 1 to 36 and schedule 1, as read, stand part of the bill.

Motion agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 36 and schedule 1, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading (Cognate Debate)

Question put—That the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Question put—That the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title (Cognate Debate)

Question put—That the long title of the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the Criminal Code and Other Legislation (Double Jeopardy Exception and Subsequent Appeals) Amendment Bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.


An incident having occurred in the public gallery—

Mr SPEAKER: Members in the gallery, there is no applause allowed in the gallery. I appreciate the sentiment.

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Resumed from 30 November 2023 (see p. 3915).

Second Reading

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (12.52 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

On 30 November 2023 I introduced the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023. The bill was referred to the Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee for its consideration. The committee's report was tabled on 4 March 2024. The report makes one recommendation: that the bill be passed. I appreciate the committee's support for the bill. I also want to thank the organisations and individuals who made submissions to the committee and participated in the public hearing.

The Miles government is committed to the ongoing improvement of Queensland's healthcare system to ensure it continues to deliver the best possible health outcomes for the community. Queenslanders are fortunate to have access to world-class health care. However, we cannot stand still and we must continually strive to improve safety, quality, equity and access to our health system. I am proud to be part of a government that is making every effort to ensure our health system embraces opportunities for change, especially for women and girls.

This week we mark Queensland Women's Week and, as the Minister for Women, I am particularly proud to be progressing important health reforms for women in this bill such as paving the way for minimum midwife-to-patient ratios in public postnatal maternity wards and enhancing termination-of-pregnancy care, especially improving access for women in rural and regional communities, because access to sexual, reproductive and maternal health care is a fundamental human right which contributes to positive health, social and economic outcomes across the whole community.

In an Australian first, this bill amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to clarify that for the purpose of midwife-to-patient ratios a newborn baby should be counted as a patient when they are staying in a room on a maternity ward with their birthing parent. Currently there are no laws governing how many patients can be safely allocated to a single midwife, and babies on postnatal wards are often not counted in the allocation of midwives' workloads. We acknowledge that the absence of such laws can result in midwives experiencing high workloads and burnout, and the inclusion of babies in ratios will have a broad impact on workforce clinical outcomes and the provision of quality maternity care.

The Queensland government has listened to the concerns raised by nurses and midwives. That is why we appointed Queensland's first Chief Midwife Officer, Liz Wilkes, and it is why we have established midwifery group practice across the state. It is also why we are now legislating minimum midwife-to-patient ratios. Once again, I want to thank all of the amazing staff who have pushed for these changes to become a reality. More midwives in our maternity wards will mean better care for pregnant women and newborn bubs.

This week I had the pleasure of launching the Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy, which highlights our commitment to improving health outcomes for women and girls. As part of the government's \$250 million in new investment to support the strategy, \$41.8 million will be dedicated to enhancing access to termination-of-pregnancy services and supports in Queensland. Queensland

women and girls told us during consultation that they wanted equitable and consistent access to termination-of-pregnancy care. This was especially important for women and girls living in rural and remote areas of Queensland and women from First Nations communities, and we have listened to them.

The bill amends the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Code to allow additional health practitioners to perform medical terminations of pregnancy. Our government has always recognised that Queenslanders deserve to have access to reproductive services, and the termination of pregnancy ought to be regulated as a health service rather than under the criminal law. However, we acknowledge that access to termination services can be limited and inequitable, with many facing significant and intersecting financial, social, geographic and health provider barriers.

In 2023 the Australian Senate's community affairs references committee published its report into barriers to sexual, maternity and reproductive health care. The report described access to termination-of-pregnancy care as 'a huge lottery' and found that there was inequitable access to reproductive health care, especially in regional, rural and remote Australia. The negative impacts that this lack of access can have on a person's medical and physical wellbeing were highlighted by one Queensland woman, who told the Senate committee—

I was stressed and I hadn't kept food down in about five days. I was really sick with nausea. I was exhausted and completely terrified that I wasn't going to be able to access abortion services.

The amendments in this bill will allow nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives and those registered nurses and midwives who have the necessary qualifications and training to perform medical terminations of pregnancy. These amendments are in line with changes made by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, which in August last year lifted limitations on prescribing early medical abortion medications. This decision was based on independent clinical expertise in the scientific and medical fields which demonstrates that restrictions which create unnecessary obstacles for people seeking access to vital health care are not warranted.

The amendments in this bill are also supported by many doctors, nurses and midwives. During the committee process submissions were made by the Australian College of Nursing, who said that they wholeheartedly support this amendment, and the Australian College of Midwives Queensland and the QNMU commended the amendment. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists also expressed their support for these amendments. I want to thank those organisations for their continued advocacy.

I would also like to foreshadow that I will be moving a minor and technical amendment to the Termination of Pregnancy Act during consideration in detail which will clarify that for the interaction with the Medicines and Poisons Act 2019 a medical termination can be performed by a registered nurse or midwife administering a termination drug if they are working under an extended practice authority where no prescription is issued. Currently the bill only refers to a termination of pregnancy being performed by issuing a prescription or giving a treatment dose of a termination drug. The Medicines and Poisons Act makes a technical distinction between giving a treatment dose, which is taken at home, and administering a drug, which is done immediately during a consultation.

The bill also makes amendments to the Hospital and Health Boards Act to require a quality assurance committee to disclose information about a health professional to the chief executive if the committee believes the health professional poses a serious risk of harm due to the practitioner's health, conduct or performance. This will help to improve patient safety and ensure that issues can be dealt with at a local level more quickly before they escalate.

The bill also ensures that the chief executive of Queensland may, after considering a report of a clinical review or health service investigation, take the action the chief executive considers appropriate, and the appropriate action will depend on the circumstances. The bill also amends the Mental Health Act to clarify how expert reports and Mental Health Court transcripts may be released and used. Stakeholders were generally supportive of these reports being used in a broader range of circumstances with safeguards.

The amendments in the bill will improve health care in our state and also ensure that women and girls across Queensland have access to higher quality maternity, sexual and reproductive health care. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Fentiman, adjourned.


Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm.

ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

Resumed from 14 February (see p. 169), on motion of Mr Power—

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.

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (2.01 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Economics and Governance Committee's report No. 44, *Examination of Auditor-General reports*. As a former member of that committee, I want to take the opportunity to thank the committee: the chair, the member for Logan; the deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach; the member for Macalister; and the member for Hervey Bay, who I understand is on sick leave and I wish him a speedy recovery. I also want to acknowledge the hardworking members of the secretariat. It is a very hardworking committee—

Mr Stevens: Correct.


Mr PURDIE:—as the deputy chair knows. Speaking of hardworking, I want to acknowledge the Auditor-General, Mr Brendan Worrall, who has recently announced his resignation and will be finishing up soon. He has done a very important job and a great job for a long time. It is not an easy task, trying your best to let the sunshine in against a government that does everything it can to keep Queenslanders in the dark. Queensland has been well served by the Auditor-General, who has performed at this challenging role without fear or favour, exposing serious flaws in government processes and helping shine a light on this government's ongoing efforts to control the way things look rather than how they actually are. Queenslanders can be grateful the Auditor-General has done an outstanding job in holding this government to account. Queenslanders rightly deserve and expect a Public Service that acts with integrity and free of political interference. It has been thanks to the unwavering efforts of the Auditor-General and his office that many of this government's bad habits and underhanded tactics have been exposed.

In relation to report No. 44, last year the committee examined seven Auditor-General reports that had been referred to it between May 2022 and March 2023. These include: QAO report Nos 14 and 11 into state entities; report No. 17 into appointing and renewing government bodies; report No. 2 into improving grant management; report No. 3 into managing Queensland's COVID-19 economic response and recovery; report No. 4 into the status of the Auditor-General's recommendations; and report No. 6 into managing workforce agility in the Queensland public sector. I note that my committee colleagues have already commented on a number of these reports and I will not be revisiting the ones they have spoken about, so I will be reflecting on report No. 14, which in part considered machinery-of-government changes.

Machinery-of-government changes, including changes to department names and responsibilities, can be a common occurrence after elections or reshuffles. These changes may seek to align services with government objectives with ministerial appointments. However, as report No. 14 found, these MoG changes are rarely quick, inexpensive or simple. This point is not lost on Queenslanders, who have been subjected to a number of these during the three terms of this chaotic government in crisis and chaos. For example, the QAO report found that the transfer of employees, assets, information systems and records can be lengthy and complicated and can sometimes take years to complete, with associated costs. From a cultural perspective, functions that move frequently between departments are more likely to become insular and resist fully integrating into their new departments, and this can affect the flow of information and how risks are managed and decisions are made.

During implementation, resources and attention are naturally directed to these restructures, and this can distract agencies from their other responsibilities such as the coordination of service delivery and engagement with key stakeholders. These activities can also be affected by disruptions in relationships with suppliers and customers through changes to department names, to people in executive positions and to employee contact details. The changes can make it more difficult to assess the financial and performance information of departments over time because the nature of their operations, and therefore the composition of their financial results, changes with each restructure of government. Each change requires entities to re-establish their culture and develop consistent internal controls, with regular changes potentially reducing the focus a department puts on such controls and reducing the ability for it to develop and mature.

None of this would be new information to Queenslanders. They have had a front row seat as they have seen the ministerial reshuffles play out again and again as this third-term government lurches from crisis to crisis. The names and faces around the table remain the same, the factional allies remain constant and the faceless union powerbrokers continue to pull the strings. It is just a different day with the same issues of cover-ups and cost blowouts, but it is thanks to the role and independence of the Auditor-General that we can shine a light on these issues. I commend the report and the work of the outgoing Auditor-General, Brendan Worrall, to the House and wish him all of the best for the future.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (2.06 pm): I rise to speak on the Economics and Governance Committee's report No. 44, *Examination of Auditor-General reports*. The committee investigated seven AO reports referred to it between May 2022 and March last year. It considered the Auditor's findings and recommendations and responses from government departments and entities. It also investigated whether any, and how comprehensively, recommendations were implemented. The reports were about state entities, appointing and renewing government boards, improving grants management, managing Queensland's COVID-19 economic response and recovery, the status of Auditor-General's recommendations and managing workforce agility in the Queensland public sector.

Report No. 4 of 2022-23, status of Auditor-General's recommendations, checked whether departments and entities had effectively done their homework. It checked the progress of 56 public sector entities in implementing 454 recommendations contained in 34 reports covering a broad range of responsibilities. The AO found some common and recurring issues were systemic across government. Areas for concern were strengthening governance and oversight, better use of information technology and data, managing contracts and projects effectively, and understanding the impact of government restructuring. The Auditor referred to Professor Coaldrake's 2022 review of culture and accountability in the Queensland public sector, which identified that effective leadership is vital to ensuring a culture focused on integrity, accountability and achieving excellent service delivery. Professor Coaldrake found—

... an integrity system under stress trying to keep check on a culture that, from the top down, is not meeting ... expectations.

In a range of issues which hindered meeting expectations Professor Coaldrake included—

... the erosion of functions designed to hold government to account, such as the Auditor-General ...

Good governance can foster improvement, but it requires transparency, accountability and integrity. Unfortunately, the government views integrity, accountability and transparency as a political and media nuisance and an image problem. Transparency requires providing timely information, clarity about what is done and why, learning from mistakes and improving processes. Otherwise, decisions are being made in a vacuum. More concerning is that problems are not being addressed, not found or just covered up. If you really want to fix the problem, you must be open about what it is. Crisis after crisis has been exacerbated because of the government's culture of secrecy and lack of integrity. It is defining it.

The Auditor found that, while 74 per cent of its 229 recommendations were implemented, only some departments detailed comments explaining their actions and their outcomes. The committee noted the Auditor's concerns that other departments lacked sufficient detail and did not explain why a recommendation was not implemented and that few entities clearly explained the outcome of their actions despite being asked to provide such an explanation. The primary goal of departments should be about service to the public. The Auditor warned that improved delivery of public services was to manage risk by providing effective leadership, accepting change and learning from past experiences. The Auditor warned that to meet expectations of accountability, transparency and integrity requires the public sector upholding high standards of governance and that it must not see governance as mere compliance. He said—

... entities are either unwilling to learn from the past or each other, or lack the ... corporate knowledge to understand the reasons for past failings. In some instances, the fear of repeating past failures is resulting in ... missing opportunities to implement new systems and technologies.


He also found that the lack of data sharing prevented learning from the mistakes of others and recurrence. He also found the independence of audit committees was questionable. He said—

Too often, I find audit committees of departments with large numbers of internal members ... This, in effect, renders them merely a management committee, and makes it difficult for them to independently challenge management's actions and hold management to account.

He found timely and accurate reporting was absent and a failure to develop specific performance targets that are relevant, achievable and measurable. The Auditor-General found repeated gaps in how information was monitored and performance recorded with the focus on outputs rather than outcomes. He said—

They do not shine light on the effectiveness of their performance. Too often, entities only report success stories and fail to report areas of underperformance.

Report after report and still nothing has changed. The government still refuses to release data, sits on reports, muddies messages, changes the parameters of the data so there can be no comparison and tweaks definitions. It is done to hide the reality of the crime crisis, a health crisis, a cost-of-living crisis and a housing crisis. This is what Queenslanders get when, from the top down, this government is focused on how things look and not how they are.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.10 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Economics and Governance Committee report No. 44. I thank the members of the committee from both sides of the House and the secretariat for the preparation of the report. I would also like to place on record my thanks to the Auditor-General, Brendan Worrall, and his staff for their constant and rigorous production of Auditors-General reports that shine a light and try to keep this government accountable.

The report deals with several Queensland audit reports: *State entities 2021*; *Appointing and renewing government boards*; *Improving grants management*—which is a significant frustration for many local governments in Queensland—*Managing Queensland's COVID-19 economic response and recovery*; *2022 status of Auditor-General recommendations*; and *Managing workforce agility in the Queensland public sector*. The area that really does concern local governments in Queensland is improving grants management. It is particularly important for local governments. The frustrations that they experience have been raised with me on a number of occasions. I do wish to note that local government elections are on next Saturday and I would like to thank all the mayors and councillors for their service to their communities over the last four years. I look forward to working with the new mayors and councillors.

In relation to improving grants management, the Queensland Audit Office has made a number of recommendations and they are in the committee report for all to read. The committee report states—

The QAO noted that the Department of State Development, Industry, Local Government and Planning (DSDILGP) was commencing a program to improve grant maturity across government, and that other identified collaborative initiatives and options for whole-of-government consistency in grants management are 'an important step towards building greater consistency, economies of scale, and flexibility'.

It might interest the House to know that the local government department has already spent \$1.3 million on their local government grants management system and, although there have been some changes in the local government department, that has not been reflected across other agencies and departments. The reform that was started—and there was quite a lot of discussion about that for local government—they were looking forward to seeing a lot of things being standardised. It only happened in one department. It was not translated across all of the departments of the state government. We have also seen that there has been consultants: KPMG. They have made a very significant report into local government grants. Local governments tell me that some of these grants that are causing them a lot of time to acquit are often the smallest grants. Local governments have actually singled out the library grants. Some of those are quite small grants, they are only a couple of thousand dollars, and they have said they are most time consuming for their staff. Their staff really should be out there delivering services for the community, but unfortunately they are actually wading through a mountain of applications and reporting and paperwork and different time frames.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Logan, cease your interjections, please.

Ms LEAHY: It is ratepayers' money that is going to deal with the frequency and complexity of so many different grants across various different departments. The reporting frequencies and due dates across different government departments are an absolute juggling act for local government. For instance, the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme reports monthly five days prior to the end of the month, including a payment claim on a spreadsheet. The Rail Trail Local Government Grants are reported as requested to the department on email. The under-5's literacy First 5 Forever grants and the State Library allocations are ad hoc reporting and it takes council staff up to three days to complete the reporting. Some of the grants are only worth \$2,000 so there are actually more staff hours and cost involved in reporting that grant than what the grant is actually worth. This Labor government has taken some years and they are only just now starting to look at some grant standardisation.

Labor have been asleep at the wheel when it comes to looking at grants to local government. Queenslanders deserve better, local government deserves better and Labor should be shown the door in '24.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

LEGAL AFFAIRS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note



Mr RUSSO (Toohey—ALP) (2.16 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee report No. 48, 57th Parliament, *Inquiry into support provided to victims of crime*, tabled on 19 May 2023.

This report presents a summary of the inquiry held by the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee. The committee's task was to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on the support provided to victims of crime and to identify if there are areas where improvements could be made. On that point I should note that there have been many improvements that have been made since this report on 19 May 2023.

Stakeholders, victim witnesses and advocates confirmed that we can do better in this space. Some problems could be quite easily fixed, while others require complex solutions that involve multiple agencies. It should not be forgotten that there have been several reports with recommendations that address many of the issues raised in this inquiry. There is the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce *Hear her voice—report 1: Addressing coercive control and domestic and family violence in Queensland*; *Hear her voice—report 2: volume 2: Women and girls' experiences across the criminal justice system*; and the Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence.


The appointment of a Victims' Commissioner will go a long way to addressing many issues raised by our courageous witnesses during the public hearings. The committee spared no effort in raising public awareness of this relevant and important inquiry. The committee had hearings in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Logan, Ipswich and the Gold Coast. These places were chosen based on submissions received as well as people who expressed an interest in giving evidence to the committee. We advised 360 key stakeholders and over 1,000 organisations and members of the public of the inquiry's inception and invited them to make written submissions. The committee also contacted approximately 90 regional not-for-profit organisations inviting them to tell of their experiences as boots-on-the-ground service providers for the victims of crime.

We embraced social media and made a short Facebook video raising awareness of the inquiry and inviting submissions. Through the Parliamentary Service's media team we sent media releases to over 175 members of the press. While media were present at some of our hearings, we cannot control what or when they report. It is unfortunate that there was not more media reporting about the inquiry in the lead-up to our public hearings, especially when we had open forums for members of the public to come forward and have their voices heard regardless of whether they had previously made a written submission.

On behalf of the committee I thank those individuals and organisations who made written submissions, those who made themselves available and appeared at the public hearing and the regional members of parliament who attended and brought witnesses to the hearings. I thank you all for your contribution to our inquiry. I know the concerns that were raised about the time line of this inquiry. The key objective was to conclude the inquiry and make recommendations to government so that changes can be made alongside those made by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce and the independent commission of inquiry. To get an extension on our inquiry would have only prolonged the agony of victims of crime and delayed change.

The adversarial system of justice is not an easy system for victims of crime to navigate. I practised criminal defence law for close to 25 years. It is hard for victims to understand concepts such as the jury process or the fact that the prosecution represents the state and not the victim. It is harder still to understand when you are grieving, suffering or living with trauma as a victim of crime. This inquiry highlighted that every victim is different and every victim deals with catastrophe differently.

On 23 March 1982, the *Herbert River Express* reported on a funeral service for two victims who died in a traffic collision on Abergowrie Road. The victims were Geoffrey Robert Bonning, 23, and Joanne Mary Russo, 21. They were killed when their vehicle collided with a four-wheel drive vehicle. It was a small country town and a small country road. Joanne was my sister and our family dealt with that tragedy on our own. Mum was very religious and relied on faith to deal with her grief. Due to factors that are not relevant to this inquiry, the driver of the other vehicle was never charged. I raise this issue because often we do not know what burdens someone has faced in life, but those burdens can bring us together to help those whose lives have been marred by tragedy. For that reason, this inquiry should be beyond politics. I commend the report to the House.

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (2.21 pm): This inquiry was established to assess the support provided to victims of crime. It was formed because of the crime crisis currently ripping through Queensland, because of the lack of support provided to victims of crime and because of the rising tide of anguish in our communities following multiple deaths allegedly at the hands of young offenders. Statistics provided by the department show that in 2022 the QPS recorded there were 64,000 victims of offences against the person, which is an almost 50 per cent increase on the year before. The committee heard that that represents only part of the issue. When we turn to property crime, the number of victims becomes staggering. In the reported year alone, 200,000 Queenslanders had their cars stolen, had their homes broken into or were robbed, which is a 25 per cent increase on the year before.

The committee report also notes that a number of submitters raised concerns about Victim Assist Queensland being able to manage the increased demand in processing applications. The committee heard that Victim Assist Queensland has seen a 195 per cent increase in applications from victims of crime for financial assistance. There is no denying it: crime has gone up and Queenslanders feel less safe. How we got to this point must be acknowledged. We got to this point because nine years ago the Miles government, under Annastacia Palaszczuk, decided to water down our laws and they created a generation of untouchables. They created a generation of young offenders who believe their rights are above the rights of victims and they are terrorising communities.

Victims demand more than lip-service and platitudes. They need and they deserve their voices to be at the heart of the justice system, but under Labor their rights are put last. The rights of perpetrators are put before victims under this Labor government. One submitter wrote to the committee saying—

Oh! Please excuse my surprise to note that there is a Victims Charter of Rights. And forgive my sarcasm, as it often seems, the only people who have rights, are those committing the crimes.

Russell Field wrote to the committee, stating—

Neither my wife or myself have worked since the deaths of our son, partner and unborn child on Australia Day, 2021. We have had limited counselling, and still struggle everyday, more than 2 years after the event ... It appears more support is available for the perpetrators than what is available for victims. THIS NEEDS TO CHANGE

This is not new information. For years recommendations have been on the table to address this issue. In fact, on 1 July 2022 the Women's Justice and Safety Taskforce recommended that the government develop, fund and implement a statewide model for the delivery of a professional victim advocate service to provide individualised, culturally safe and trauma informed support to victims to help them navigate the services and the criminal justice system. Twenty months on we have the same recommendation in this committee report, yet still no action from the Miles Labor government. Four of the recommendations in this committee report are actually recommendations that have already been made by previous inquiries or reports and a further 10 recommendations in this report are for yet another inquiry or review.

Victims of crime want action now. They are sick of this state Labor government taking no action and giving them platitudes. In the past nine years this government has had every opportunity to act, but time after time it has failed victims of crime. This government consistently puts offenders before victims of crime. It consistently puts the rights of young offenders who are terrorising our communities before victims in this state, and victims' voices are consistently pushed down by this state Labor government.

Nothing is going to change in this state until we change the government. This is a government that says youth crime is just a media beat-up. This is a government that denies the victim access to the Childrens Court when the person who has committed a crime against them is being heard. This is a government that has had the chance to open the Childrens Court to victims and victims' families, but it has failed to do it. It has failed to act at every opportunity. Now we have this committee report that

recommends further inquiries and further reviews and makes recommendations that have been on the table for years. This is a state Labor government in chaos and crisis. Nothing will change until we change the government.

(Time expired)



Mr HUNT (Caloundra—ALP) (2.26 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the committee report on the victims of crime inquiry. I thank my fellow committee members and the secretariat. I note the contribution of the member for Currumbin, who just punctuated one of the points I am about to make. The committee's task was to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on the support provided to victims of crime and to identify if there are areas where improvements could be made. To this end, the committee left no stone unturned in a comprehensive and consultative process.

To get information out to the public about the victims of crime inquiry, 360 stakeholder groups were emailed, inviting them to make submissions. The committee subscriber list, which is over 1,000 strong, was also emailed to advise of the inquiry. Ninety organisations, the names of which were provided to the secretariat by no less an entity than the Queensland Police Service, were emailed or called directly. Those are the organisations to which the QPS send victims of crime referrals in Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Ipswich, Logan and the Gold Coast. More than 175 journalists and media outlets were contacted directly, and the secretariat utilised their own social media platform to promote the inquiry.

As a consequence of this, the committee made no less than 18 recommendations. These crucial recommendations touch on subjects such as expanding the victims' charter of rights and stronger support for victims throughout the committal hearings process. The committee recommended—

That the Queensland Government, in line with recommendation 9 of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce *Hear her voice, Report two: Women and girls' experiences of the criminal justice system* and in consultation with people with lived experience, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and service and legal system stakeholders, develop a pilot victim advocate service to support victims of crime to navigate through the criminal justice system.

The committee also recommended better trauma informed training across all aspects of the public sector that interact with victims and improvements in online material to help victims negotiate their way through the systemic requirements, which can be difficult at the best of times but more trying in the aftermath of a crime. This is crucial because several stakeholders commented on the difficulty for a victim navigating the current system and on the lack of integrated services for victims as they move through the criminal justice system. Submitters were also keen that the financial assistance to victims of crime be urgently reassessed and now, of course, this government has done exactly that.

In one of my earliest contributions for 2024, can I take a moment to reflect on how fortunate our committee is to include in its number the member for Cooper. Her contributions on crime last year and this year have been absolute quality. The 2009 Young Australian of the Year website states—

Queenslander Jonty Bush showed inspirational courage and strength after senseless violence brought tragedy to her family.

Our member for Cooper has pioneered the successful One Punch Can Kill education campaign which was adopted by the Queensland government in 2007. She also lobbied successfully for a review of murder and manslaughter laws in Queensland. Very few people in this House and, indeed, very few people in Queensland have more credibility when it comes to supporting victims of crime than the member for Cooper.

With genuine sadness, I contrast that with the contributions of LNP members on this subject during the inquiry—not a trace of genuine empathy and not one shred of genuine desire about real support for victims of crime. It is my sincerely held belief that far too many members of the LNP in this chamber do not care about victims of crime unless it comes with political leverage. Instead, they seem more intent on exploiting victims of crime as a disposable tool. They consistently approached this inquiry as a cynical exercise in political manipulation. Mercifully, this government is far more interested in the victims than breathless theatrics. The appointment of a Victims' Commissioner will go a long way to addressing the multiple concerns raised by submitters.

To close, I speak briefly of the role of the media. The media plays an important role in society in the distribution of information so that people are aware of what is happening in their community. Witnesses stated that the media publicly reported on a victim before family members were made aware of key information, adding to the trauma and stress experienced by the family. This must be the subject of further discussions. I am proud to be a member of a government that is taking these matters seriously and not being politically expedient.



Mr KRAUSE (Scenic Rim—LNP) (2.31 pm): I am personally offended by the member for Caloundra's comments that members of the LNP do not care about victims of crime and use them only as political tools. I absolutely reject that. I tried to have this victims of crime inquiry extended in this House, because it was too short. We heard the member for Toohey lamenting the fact that the media did not give it enough coverage. The reason they did not give it enough coverage was that it was compressed into six weeks. People did not have time to find out about it, collect their thoughts as a community of victims of crime and make meaningful contributions to it—although there were some very good submissions. That is why the media was not covering it; it was too short.

When we consider that the mental health inquiry went for six months—which is a good length of time—that is exactly the type of time frame this inquiry should have been given, but it was not. I tried to move a motion in this place to extend the time frame, but members of the government voted against it. For some reason, they were determined to squeeze this inquiry into six weeks—which was nowhere near long enough to do a proper job—and it became a total missed opportunity. They wanted to rush this through.

Compare that to how they drag their feet all the time when it comes to reforming youth justice laws. There are a lot of victims of crime when it comes to youth justice. Members of the government were dragged kicking and screaming at the end of 2022 and early 2023 to change the breach of bail laws which we had been calling for for years. We still have closed courts when it comes to youth justice. We have been calling for that to be changed. We also have been calling for the principle of detention as the last resort to be changed. The government drags its feet on that. They act quickly at times when it suits their political agenda but not at other times when victims of crime, especially in the youth justice space, are crying out for change.

There were some good recommendations in this report, but too many were merely recommendations for more reviews and recommendations that had already been made by other inquiries. That is because there was not enough time to put together more recommendations on a more fulsome basis and for the community to really be a part of this inquiry over an extended period of time. I think they know the time was too short because I have now heard, I think, three members of the government talk about the time that was given, the number of submitters—or potential submitters—they emailed and the lengths they went to to try and raise awareness about this. We do not normally hear that from members of the government when it comes to these sorts of things, but they are this time. I think they protest a little bit too much because they know that they squibbed it and that this was a total missed opportunity.

A bill came out of this inquiry to change the monetary limits under the Victims of Crime Assistance Act. That is a good thing because those limits had not been changed for quite some time. It was good to see that happen. It was also good to see an Interim Victims' Commissioner appointed. We support that. I think I have heard there is going to be a permanent Victims' Commissioner put in place in the near future as well. As the member for Currumbin pointed out, there were other ideas that have not been taken up, and we do not know whether or not they will be. They relate especially to the idea of having a permanent victims' advocate service set up so that there is representation at a public level and public funding for victims' representation through the criminal justice system. This is one of those ideas that came up in the inquiry, but, because there was not enough time, there was not the ability to fully consider it either in the public space or in the committee domain and formulate a recommendation.

The inquiry should have been for six months. I tried to change it. Members of the LNP and the crossbench supported me in that, but for whatever reason—probably political reasons because this government is only ever motivated by political reasons and its own political survival—the government allowed only six weeks. It was too short. That is why most of the recommendations are actually recommendations from other reviews or just recommendations for further reviews, which is what this inquiry should have been about in the first place.



Ms BUSH (Cooper—ALP) (2.36 pm): One would think that in an election year those opposite would use every opportunity to speak about their track record and their plans to better support victims of crime. There is a reason they are not speaking about that: their track record demonstrates a complete and utter hollowing out of the victim sector when they were in power. They cut DV shelters, cut funding to Bravehearts, cut funding to the Domestic Violence Advocacy Centre, cut the Special Circumstances Court and cut the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council. I have pages of those in front of me. I do not have enough time to talk about that. Equally, they do not have a plan to support victims of crime. I have looked through their document that outlines their priorities and there is just one sentence that

speaks about victims of crime. What an insult it is to victims that those opposite are happy to politicise and to punctuate the issue of crime but cannot devote more than one sentence to it in a policy document.

It is disappointing to hear the member for Currumbin criticising our recommendation to establish a victim advocacy service. I stand by that recommendation. I think it is a great recommendation. I am proud that it is there. In fact, there is a greater word count in the paragraph on that recommendation than there is in the LNP's entire policy document. I have also heard the criticism that there have been too many reviews into victims' issues. While I do acknowledge that that has an impact on stakeholders, I do not think it is a bad thing to be circling back and to be asking victims about their experiences and what more we can do to better support victims, because those experiences and their needs are dynamic. As we know more, we expect more, and governments can achieve more—and that ought to be embraced fully.

At the time, this committee inquiry was held against a backdrop of reform—most notably the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce which took a deep dive into women's experiences of justice, hearing from hundreds of victims and making over 200 recommendations. It is important to draw out that there have been, even in my time here in parliament, a number of reviews looking into the issues of victims of crime. Over 1,000 submitters have actually collectively contributed to that and formed a total voice of victims in Queensland. Many of the recommendations of that review related solely to victims of domestic and family violence.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition say yesterday that the number of victims in Queensland has increased. What also needs to be clarified is that the most extraordinary increase in reported crime is in fact in terms of survivors of domestic and family violence and sexual violence now actually coming forward to report to police. It is clear that the ongoing commitment to women's safety has resulted in more survivors feeling encouraged to report and that this investment in multiple inquiries such as this parliamentary inquiry or the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce have really been worthwhile.


The report acknowledged that many of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce recommendations such as establishing a Victims' Commissioner will improve victim services generally. That is now underway. We have the Interim Victims' Commissioner in place, and Jon Rouse is doing a fantastic job. We are piloting a victim advocacy service. We are expanding the scope of victims' rights and looking at whether they should be embedded in the Human Rights Act. We are developing a long-term and sustainable plan for adult restorative justice and looking at youth justice conferencing so that it can be more victim-centric. We are improving the way that forensic services are delivered in Queensland.

We also made additional recommendations such as having a serious review into the financial assistance scheme. We did hear that it is not operating in a way that was originally intended and that unfortunately demand has blown that out. That review is underway. We have already seen an increase in financial assistance being made by this government. I do believe that that scheme will continue to improve.

The report also recommended that we have expanded powers and functions in the Charter of Victims' Rights, looking at whether we can include victims of property crime. We have heard from victims of property crime that they need more of a voice. Another recommendation was that a consistent, trauma informed professional development framework is rolled out. It is so important that anybody who is interacting with victims of crime is doing so in a trauma responsive way. The trauma that can be caused to victims through those interactions is very real.

Lastly, the report recommended greater coordination of service delivery between government agencies and between government agencies and non-government agencies to make sure that process for victims is being managed in a way that is reducing the risk of retraumatisation. All of those recommendations mean something. They will absolutely deliver a better victims landscape for victims of crime here in Queensland.

I have been really proud to be part of this inquiry. I thank the secretariat for all of their support. To all of the victims who lent their voices to this and other inquiries, thank you for your contributions and generosity.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (2.40 pm): I rise to speak to the former Legal Affairs and Safety Committee's report into support provided to victims of crime—an issue that I have spoken about on many occasions in this chamber. I gave an undertaking at numerous crime rallies across this state and at numerous meetings with victims of crime in this state that I would be their voice in Queensland

parliament, because for too long now they have felt that their voice has not been heard. It was interesting listening to the previous speaker mention all of those recommendations moving forward. I certainly hope that we are going to see some action regarding those recommendations and not simply rhetoric and false promises. Victims are looking for real change. They are looking for real support. There is no question about that.

It is just under one year since this House agreed to a motion that the committee inquire into support provided to victims of crime. Just 64 days later, the committee's report was tabled. As the Queensland Police Service's annual report 2022-23 clearly states, in that year we saw an almost 19 per cent increase in the rate of offences against the person and a 16 per cent increase in the rate of property offences. Queenslanders expect the government to put victims first and to ensure victims are supported. Despite the lip-service given to victims of crime up until this point, the fact is that this government set a time frame that was astonishingly inadequate and inappropriate for an issue that is so important to Queenslanders.

This government talks a big game when it comes to domestic violence—we have heard that over the last 24 hours—but submissions to this inquiry show yet again the truth of this government's hollow words. DVConnect in their submission said that the 'structure of this inquiry does not facilitate' engagement with victims. The chief executive officer of the Domestic Violence Action Centre in their submission said 'with the notice period it was very difficult for us to mobilise, even as an agency employing staff'. That should be ringing alarm bells.

It is not only the groups representing victims that found fault with the time frame set by this government. Key government departments such as the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and even the Queensland Police Service struggled to provide meaningful responses or address the issues raised by victims. That says it all. If this government's own departments and representative groups struggle to comply with this government's time frames, what chance did victims of crime have to have their say?


It is not surprising, given this government's time frames, that many of the recommendations are based on previous government inquiries. Let me be very clear that this inquiry was an opportunity to make meaningful change for Queenslanders in their time of need. I repeat my earlier statement: I certainly hope that the recommendations contained in this report are acted upon and that we do see meaningful change, because victims of crime in this state have waited too long to be recognised and to be supported.

This inquiry again highlighted the current resourcing of the Queensland Police Service. At the estimates hearing on 14 December 2020 we were told that, as part of this government's election commitment, sworn police officers would increase by 340 during the 2022-23 financial year. Instead, we saw a reduction of over 200 in that year. Since then, we have also seen the failure of the international recruitment drive.

Like several of my colleagues on this side of the House, I have responded to crimes, I have taken statements from victims, I have seen the distress in their eyes, and I continue to be contacted by victims of crime across this state. It has a horrendous impact on some of those people and their families. The violation of privacy when their homes are invaded and the trauma associated with being assaulted—they have to live with that for the rest of their life. We need to be cognisant of that.

Several of the recommendations of this inquiry refer to specific actions to be undertaken by the QPS. I know that the vast majority of police officers want to hold people to account when they commit a crime. I know that the vast majority of police officers want to support victims of crime to the best of their ability.

I want to acknowledge the Queenslanders who gave evidence and made submissions to this inquiry. I also want to acknowledge and thank the groups that support victims of crime.

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (2.45 pm): I rise in support of the report being presented to the House today. This government has a really proud history and record when it comes to supporting victims of crime. I start by associating myself with the contributions of the members for Caloundra and Cooper, as committee members, and I endorse their contributions. I particularly thank the member for Toohey, Peter Russo, for his extraordinary work and commitment and insight into this matter. As he said, he brings considerable experience to that role in what is a very hectic and heavy workload for that committee. I think that needs to be respected. The absolute disdain that those opposite have shown for the genuine work of the committee is really disappointing. As my mum would say, 'I'm not angry; I'm just disappointed.'

The government has appointed the Interim Victims' Commissioner, with a permanent Victims' Commissioner to be appointed by the end of the financial year. Along with the Attorney-General, I met with Jon Rouse and the executive director of the Interim Victims' Commissioner, who is doing an extraordinary job. I want to recognise how dedicated he has been in engaging with the community right across this state. I think he has done eight regional visits, and I think there is another one this week or next week. That is genuine work that he is doing. That is on top of what this government has done.

We passed the Victims of Crime Assistance and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, which significantly increased the support for victims of crime when it came to different categories. We have also extended funeral support for people—at a time when they are at their worst, when they are shell-shocked. We believe that it is at the time when people are at their lowest that they should be provided with support and funding through the government and not used as media tools before they have even had a funeral for their family member.

As we know, just this week we have passed the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. We have passed the Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, including amendments to the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act.

Mrs Frecklington: The Pullen family—we will never forget them.

Mr SULLIVAN: What I will not forget, member for Nanango, through the chair—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Direct your comments through the chair, please, member for Stafford.

Mr SULLIVAN: What I will not forget is the—

An opposition member: The preselection.

Mr SULLIVAN: My preselection is done. Who was that? Was that Ray?

Mr Stevens: No.

Mr SULLIVAN: Thanks, mate—85 per cent. I will take that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for Stafford—

Mr SULLIVAN: Forgive me, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will take that back.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member is not taking interjections, so they should cease.

Mr SULLIVAN: What I will not forget is the \$170 million cut from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General under those opposite—I was there to witness it—and the abolishment of the Drug Court and the Murri Court. The irony of the Leader of the Opposition's big announcement in his budget reply speech was that he was going to appoint one more person to the Queensland Sentencing and Advisory Council, but one little fact he forgot was that when they were in government they cut it. They sacked all of them, including the secretariat. That is their history when it comes to victims' representation.

Mr Purdie: If you cut crime you have fewer victims.


Mr SULLIVAN: Goodness me! There is no self-awareness at all from those opposite about what their record was in government.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Pause the clock—

Mr SULLIVAN: Cutting those people who were tackling crime—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Stafford! Member for Logan and member for Ninderry, you are both warned under the standing orders for arguing across the chamber.

Mr SULLIVAN: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker, I did not mean to speak over you. When you look at the Auditor-General's report into the member for Kawana's failed boot camps, the irony of this debate is that, given the absolute disdain he showed that organisation and their waste of millions of dollars, there are many people opposite today talking about how important the Auditor-General's reports are. Go and read it again. We all remember. That is what those opposite stand for. This government has a proud history of supporting victims, supporting the justice system and standing up for a fair legal profession, a decent judiciary and respect in that space.

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (2.51 pm): I rise to speak on my previous committee's inquiry into this bill, which included hearings across the state. Many recounted in person or via submissions their trauma from experiencing crime and the lack of emotional, financial and physical support provided. As we found, sadly these failings had been known for many years. For example, restorative justice was not

consistently rolled out and is inappropriately applied. When it is, it can be catastrophically delayed. Our current select committee's inquiry into youth justice reform is hearing exactly the same things from submitters and witnesses. In addition, the monetary compensation scheme under the Victims of Crime Act is complex, difficult to navigate and not timely. Requiring victims to prove their victim status is retraumatising. Since the inquiry, the act has been amended to increase the amount of compensation available to victims, but we need to expand the criteria to include car theft, for example.

A system of support that works extremely well is the Victims' Homicide Support Group. We heard constant praise for this organisation and its volunteers. Why this has not been replicated for other victims is a question I have not found an answer to. A similar mystery is the 2017 establishment of the victims of crime One-Stop Shop Strategy and Implementation Office, OSSIO. As we have found, it has delivered nothing. That the Department of Justice and Attorney-General formed this office meant there was a need at that time, so I find it incredible that five years on there has been no progress. This has led to constant submissions from witnesses during the inquiry of the need for a one-stop shop. If the committee had been given the time we could have investigated this failing, determined why it occurred and come up with recommendations to prevent this in the future. As a result of this and many examples found in other departments, I have requested a full, independent review into the capabilities of the Public Service which needs to be undertaken in an effort to diminish these occurrences.

A key message that came through during our inquiry was that the whole justice system is still focused on perpetrators and treats victims as an afterthought. As one witness said, 'When someone seeks a remedy for crime through the justice system, often it is described as having one's day in court. But of course it is never the victim's day: it is the offender's day.' Overall, support systems for victims are disjointed and in need of serious reform. DVConnect stated—

An enduring theme across the life span of the criminal justice journey is the lack of proactive and easily accessible information for victims. There are repeated cases where victims have not been advised of relevant matters or having to engage in protracted follow up to find out information.

That was a familiar theme. As was found some seven years ago, we do need a one-stop shop for victim support and cultural change throughout the system; however, it is a positive that we now have an Interim Victims' Commissioner and we look forward to what emanates from that.

Frustratingly, the nine-week time constraint on the committee's inquiry resulted in no capacity to unpack many aspects. This led to recommendations for others to do what was tasked to our committee. For example, recommendation 2 was—

That the Queensland Government review the Charter of victims' rights ...

This is absurd, as we were asked by the government to review the victims' charter, not for it to be handballed back to the government. What is the point—or was that the point?

As I said in my statement of reservation, this inquiry has been one of 'monumental failings, shortfalls and shortcomings' and it is not acceptable. Regardless of a request to the Committee of the Legislative Assembly, which said it was not their responsibility, and another to the Leader of the House, who did not respond, and a motion without notice to debate, a tabled request for an extension of the time line was not supported by government MPs. All of this was deeply disturbing, especially as no reason was given. Why the rush? Nothing had been done in the previous six years after OSSIO was set up. An extra eight weeks to do the job right is the very least the government could have provided. This was fundamentally disrespectful to the victims and families who participated, as well as any future victims.

For this reason I oppose this report—not because it does not have some good recommendations, but because of everything it failed to do. I want to thank all who contributed to this inquiry. Victims: please be assured you have been heard.



Mrs McMAHON (Macalister—ALP) (2.56 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the committee's report into the inquiry to support provided to victims of crime. I would like to acknowledge the victims and the victims' advocacy groups that contributed to this inquiry, the individual victims who made submissions and presented before the committee, those victims who could contribute and those who could not because the system had failed them.

From the outset I acknowledge that this is a system that I have navigated or attempted to navigate. I have been referred to, and been a client of, the Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence, the Logan Centre Against Sexual Violence and No More. Despite the assistance provided by those three groups, it is still not a system which can be easily navigated. I will admit from the outset that one of the reasons is that no two victims are the same. The support that victims require is not the same. In

any system that attempts to meet the needs of a large number of people who have extremely individual needs and requirements there are always going to be difficulties. The system will always have trouble coping, but that does not stop us in this House from wanting the system to do more and meet the needs of more people, because victims do need assistance.

I acknowledge the recommendations of this inquiry, including the recommendations that have been put into effect, the recommendations that have been subject to legislation in this House to be put into effect, and the work that needs to be done by all of our government agencies, particularly those that deal with victims of crime. There is a need to have trauma informed practices and processes in almost every department, not just the police and Health. A victim needs to navigate a number of different agencies. It could be Housing; it could be Education. We do not expect every single one of our Public Service workers to have undergone trauma informed training. That is somewhat impractical. But to know that in these departments there are properly and thoroughly trained people who know how to best assist a victim of crime and acknowledge the idiosyncrasies that come with being a victim of crime will make that journey so much easier.


In my process, I have not been and will not be afforded justice. I will not be afforded closure, but what I want to know—and what all victims should know—is that we have an opportunity to be heard and an opportunity to receive the support and the ongoing counselling that we need. Certainly, some of the changes that we have made to Victim Assist Queensland will go some way with that. I acknowledge the work that the current inquiry is doing and I thank the chair for welcoming me to participate as a member of that inquiry, even if it was just for a day. I think there are things that many people in this House need to be made more aware of in terms of the impact to individuals, not just as punchlines or slogans. Victims of crime deserve that. They deserve more. As a government, I will continue to fight for more. I commend the report to the House.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Orders

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.00 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—


That standing orders 87 and 150 be suspended to allow the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) and any amendments circulated by the minister to be moved and considered.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

EDUCATION (GENERAL PROVISIONS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Youth Justice) (3.01 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Education and Care Services Act 2013, the Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011, the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, the Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017, the Public Health Act 2005, the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 [\[306\]](#).

Tabled paper: Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, explanatory notes [\[307\]](#).

Tabled paper: Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[308\]](#).

I am pleased to introduce the Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 to amend the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, the Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017, the Public Health Act 2005, the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 and the legislation mentioned in schedule 1 for particular purposes. The Education

(General Provisions) Act 2006—the education act—provides Queensland with a robust framework supporting the delivery of high-quality education for all Queensland children or young people. Schools, as a reflection of our communities, are increasingly complex places and it is important that the frameworks they operate under are fit for purpose and provide the right supports for the challenging roles our staff in schools undertake.

Since the education act commenced in 2006, there have been significant developments at national and state levels impacting the administration of education. These include the Commonwealth Australian Education Act 2013 and National School Reform Agreement, national laws relating to early childhood education and care services, and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Most recently, there has been the 2023 Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. Given these changes and the passage of time, it is important that Queensland has an education act that provides a contemporary, fair and responsive legislative framework for high-quality education in Queensland.

The Department of Education completed a focused review of the education act, considering both the legislation itself and emerging strategic directions for education. The review centred on three key themes: protecting students; providing for the good order and management of schools; and improving and modernising the provision of education services. The department consulted extensively with stakeholders in two major stages during the review. This included establishing a steering committee with senior departmental leaders and representatives of central agencies and unions. Non-state school peak organisations, such as the Queensland Catholic Education Commission and Independent Schools Queensland, participated in discussions about cross-sector matters. The steering committee was informed by significant community consultation, with 11 consultation papers released covering a wide range of matters, and the department providing multiple stakeholder briefings and consultation sessions. Draft policy options were informed by this consultation.

Further consultation was then undertaken on policy options, with targeted stakeholder engagement between September and November 2023. Again, stakeholder consultation was broad and included key education stakeholders across both the state and non-state school sectors such as: the principals' associations; Independent Schools Queensland; disability, privacy and legal advocacy groups; First Nations and human rights representatives; the Queensland Catholic Education Commission; unions; home education representative bodies; and youth advocacy groups. In developing the bill, the government has considered both stakeholder feedback and the importance of a robust legislative framework. This is demonstrated by the comprehensive range of amendments set out in the bill.

The bill provides amendments that respond to stakeholder feedback and align with contemporary practice in education regulation. The bill is also informed by departmental analysis of its operations to ensure alignment with the strategic direction of education in Queensland. The amendments support the overarching purpose of the education act, which is to ensure the regulatory framework for education in Queensland focuses on the best outcomes for children and young people throughout their educational journeys.

Principals are the key decision-makers in schools, and it is important that they have both the tools and the supports they require to ensure the good order and management of their schools. Principals and teachers in our schools provide support every day to students in their care and they play an important role in shaping the young adults they will become. It is one of the most noble of professions, but it also has its challenges, particularly navigating the area of student disciplinary absences. Key amendments in the bill support the school disciplinary absence, SDA, framework and enrolment decisions. Amendments deliver administrative improvements for both—for example, clear time frames for SDA decisions as well as approaches to support principals, schools, students and the community to provide a positive and safe learning experience for everyone.

The bill provides that children or young people must have access to education, even during a time which any enrolment applications are under consideration by the director-general. This is consistent with the existing requirement to provide a student with access to education during suspension from a state school. The bill sets out time frames for decisions about enrolment, suspensions and exclusions to support transparent and accountable decisions and provide clarity for principals as the on-the-ground decision-makers.

The bill provides new appeal rights where a student has accumulated 11 or more school days of short suspensions within a school year. This is a change from current provisions, which limit appeals to long suspensions—those of 11 to 20 school days. Providing an appeal right for accumulated short

suspensions provides greater procedural fairness for students and their parents or carers. The bill also sets out a framework to support principals and the chief executive in their decisions about suspensions or exclusions by making explicit the matters a principal or the chief executive must consider when making such decisions.

Right now, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students—and students with a disability—receiving suspension and exclusion is higher than the rest of the cohort. We need to do something different if we are to provide equal opportunities and address this unacceptable pattern. Further, evidence shows that our prep students who are First Nations or disabled are being left behind. We know that a strong start to schooling sets the foundation for a successful life, so our youngest students in prep also need developmentally appropriate responses to meet their needs and place them on a successful pathway.

The bill introduces a new legislated requirement for a student support plan framework for Aboriginal students, Torres Strait Islander students, students with disability and prep year students who are suspended or excluded. Importantly, support plans for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with disability, as drafted in the bill, are consistent with the obligations of Queensland's Anti-Discrimination Act 1991. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, this is a special measure under the Commonwealth's Racial Discrimination Act 1975, informed by the cultural background of the student. These measures are intended to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and voice within our approach to student support, engagement and learning. We know that connection to culture enriches learning engagement and experiences and strengthens our work.

Student support plans will complement existing plans in state schools to enhance the level of support provided to students to remain engaged with their learning and support schools by providing them with the assistance and resourcing they need. The chief executive will make a policy, setting out the circumstances in which student support plans should be developed and the matters such plans must consider, including the behaviour that led to the suspension or exclusion. This amendment will formalise the requirement and set new, consistent minimum expectations—for example, when the plans are required and what content the plans should include.

The department will update existing policies and procedures to support the SDA, enrolment and student support plan reforms. The design of these policies and procedures will be of utmost importance to ensure implementation of these reforms is effective and achieves positive outcomes. That is why the department will work collaboratively with key stakeholders to make sure we have the right balance of support for individual students, staff and the wider school community. Furthermore, the bill provides for a review of the SDA framework, 18 months after the commencement of the amendments, to ensure the changes are achieving the desired outcomes. I have always said that we will do the things that work and, if they do not, we will find new ways.

These amendments recognise the fundamental role that education can play in shaping a child or young person for a successful future. The SDA and student support plan amendments are designed to improve engagement for children and young people and improve the level of support for school staff and principals as they navigate the increasingly complex nature of their school communities.

The bill also strengthens the home education framework, firstly by establishing a new guiding principle setting out that home education should be in the best interests of the child or young person. This must take into account the child's safety, wellbeing and access to a high-quality education. This amendment was included in the bill after public consultation on home education amendments was completed. Using a guiding principle which makes explicit that a child or young person's best interests must be central to the significant choice of home education is something I am confident Queensland families and home educators will support.

The bill also sets out that home education programs in Queensland must be consistent with the Australian Curriculum or Queensland syllabus for senior subjects, consistent with approaches in other jurisdictions. Since 2019, we have seen a 195 per cent increase in the number of students registering for home education. There are currently just over 10,000 students registered for home education in Queensland. Noting these higher numbers, it is more important than ever that the students are undertaking a high-quality program and that the legislation provides safeguards for student wellbeing. The bill requires a summary of the educational program to be provided at the time of application for home education registration to ensure the child or young person has immediate access to a high-quality program and removes the separate time-limited provisional registration application. This will provide a single and simplified home education registration process with appropriate oversight by the department.

Further, the bill removes the need for a certificate of registration and associated obligations, to reduce an unnecessary regulatory burden for parents. Instead, parents will continue to receive a written notice, as they do now, setting out evidence of registration and any conditions on registration.

The bill clarifies that annual reporting by the parent must include evidence of the educational progress of the registered child and requires that where an application for registration is made within 12 months of the child's previous registration ceasing for any reason, the application must also be accompanied by a written report that evidences the educational progress for the child during the previous registration. The bill extends the age eligibility to enable a child to be registered for home education until 31 December in the year the child turns 18, consistent with the schooling sector. These amendments ensure the best interests of the child or young person are central to the decision-making about their own education, and aligns the educational journey of young people being home schooled with the wider educational framework adopted in all states and territories of Australia.

The bill also protects students and schools by requiring the proportionate sharing of key student information when students transfer between Queensland schools. These amendments speak to a recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse where it was considered that proportionate and proactive information sharing could support student safety and wellbeing and that of staff and others at a student's new school. Currently, this information is shared between schools on an optional basis.

The bill provides that transfer notes will be mandatory, to support an increased focus on child safety and continuity of education. The amendments will be supported by policies and guidelines to ensure that information shared is relevant and proportionate to the needs of children and schools. Importantly, these amendments provide for information sharing across both the state and non-state school sectors ensuring that student and school safety is supported in both sectors. These amendments speak to the important role educational institutions can play in keeping children and young people safe and ensuring consistency across their educational journeys.

There are other administrative reforms contained in this bill which aim to balance the constraints placed on them regarding administrative needs with their other important duties. In this increasingly digital age, Queensland schools may be using hundreds of different online services, from Office 365 applications to curriculum aligned and administrative applications, such as timetabling or library services. Currently, the education act requires state schools to obtain individual consent from students or parents for each individual service. In this digital world, where there is an expectation that a student can access much of their needs online, this individual consent process has become difficult and burdensome for parents, students and schools. The bill provides for this to be transitioned to an approved online service where the service has been assessed against a stringent framework applied by the department. Students and parents will still be able to opt out of providing the information to an approved online service if they wish to do so and therefore opt out of using that particular approved online service.

Disclosure of sensitive information is prevented by the bill. Services that require sensitive information or that are not approved online services will still require individual consent. This important reform recognises the modern digital world our schools operate in and eases the administrative burden on schools who are trying to focus on the core business of teaching and learning while also providing opportunities for students to broaden their knowledge outside the traditional classroom setting.

The bill also provides parents and citizens' committees—P&Cs—with greater flexibility to work across associations to support one another in response to adverse events such as floods or bushfires, to enable P&Cs to have multiple associations where schools have geographically varied campuses, and to protect the integrity of executive committees by setting out that a person convicted of an indictable offence cannot be a member of a P&C executive committee.

Included in amendments to support the operation of state schools is the streamlining of enrolment transfers between state special schools, where a student already enrolled in a state special school will be able to transfer to another state special school without having to undertake an assessment each time.

The bill makes eKindy eligibility easier, supporting access to eKindy for parents and children across Queensland. Making eKindy easier to access is an important step in setting children up for positive lifelong learning. The bill reduces the regulatory burden for state delivered kindergarten programs, SDKs, by streamlining requirements. Currently, schools delivering SDKs are subject to a number of different regulatory frameworks including under the education and care services national law or the Education and Care Services Act 2013, depending on how many children are attending the

service. They are also subject to administrative requirements under the education act. Streamlining regulation of SDKs under the education act in a consistent, school-based system will enable principals and teachers to leverage existing school-based governance, oversight structures and quality assurance processes. The streamlined regulatory framework will ensure robust standards continue to apply and are aligned to the National Quality Standard for early childhood education and care.

The bill provides for the regulation of the safety, health and wellbeing of kindergarten children and the transportation of children attending an SDK and maintains protection of children in SDKs by establishing offences in the education act for harm, hazard and adequate supervision.

The bill modernises the education act by amending the guiding principles to set out that wellbeing and inclusivity are foundational for a positive education. It removes gendered language for contemporary approaches and makes a number of minor and technical amendments to improve the clarity of the legislation.

Finally, the bill supports a high-quality education for all Queensland students by enabling Queensland schools to operate effectively and safely while providing for education to be delivered in differing ways, reflecting varying needs and circumstances. The bill will ensure the education act continues to support a high-quality education system for all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. DE FARMER (Bulimba—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Youth Justice) (3.21 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee

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

VICTIMS' COMMISSIONER AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE REVIEW BOARD BILL

Message from Governor



Hon. LM LINARD (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation) (3.22 pm): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): The message from Her Excellency the Governor recommends the Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

VICTIMS' COMMISSIONER AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE REVIEW BOARD BILL 2024

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

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

A Bill for an Act to establish the Victims' Commissioner and the Sexual Violence Review Board, to declare and implement a charter of rights for affected victims, and to amend this Act, the Evidence Act 1977 the Integrity Act 2009, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the Public Sector Act 2022 and the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 for particular purposes

GOVERNOR

Date: 5 March 2024

Tabled paper: Message, dated 5 March 2024, from Her Excellency the Governor recommending the Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024 [309].

Introduction



Hon. LM LINARD (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation) (3.22 pm): I present a bill for an act to establish the Victims' Commissioner and the Sexual Violence Review Board, to declare and implement a charter of rights for affected victims, and to amend this act, the Evidence Act 1977, the Integrity Act 2009, the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, the Public Sector Act 2022 and the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights on behalf of the Attorney-General. I nominate the Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024 [\[310\]](#).

Tabled paper: Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024, explanatory notes [\[311\]](#).

Tabled paper: Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights [\[312\]](#).

The Queensland government is committed to supporting victims of crime and ensuring their rights are promoted and protected. In August 2023, the Attorney-General announced that the government was working to introduce a bill to establish a Victims' Commissioner in early 2024 and that an Interim Victims' Commissioner would be appointed to engage with and support victims of crime. On 2 September last year, the Queensland government announced the appointment of Mr Jon Rouse APM as the Interim Victims' Commissioner. Since being appointed, the Interim Victims' Commissioner has: facilitated regional listening tours across Queensland including in Townsville, Cairns, Toowoomba, Mount Isa, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Redland Bay and Logan; conducted online surveys with victims of crime and those who support victims of crime; and supported the development of online materials for victims of crime such as easy-read version of the Charter of Victims' Rights to support those victims who may have lower levels of literacy.

To further this work and provide greater support to victims of crime in Queensland, I am pleased to introduce the Victims' Commissioner and Sexual Violence Review Board Bill 2024. The bill will seek to establish a permanent Victims' Commissioner to promote and promote the rights of victims. The bill will establish the Sexual Violence Review Board, which will identify systemic issues in relation to the reporting, investigation and prosecution of sexual offences. These two important initiatives were recommended by the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce in its second report *Hear her voice—report two: Women and girls' experiences across the criminal justice system*. The establishment of a Victims' Commissioner was also supported by the Independent Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service Responses to Domestic and Family Violence and the Legal Affairs and Safety Committee inquiry into the support provided to victims of crime.

The taskforce heard that victim-survivors often felt disempowered in the criminal justice system, sometimes resulting in secondary victimisation, and that this can deter victims from reporting. It noted that there is no single independent body responsible for identifying and monitoring systemic issues or issues of concern and no oversight of complaints made about compliance with the Charter of Victims' Rights. To address these existing shortfalls, the Victims' Commissioner will have key functions: to identify and review systemic issues relating to victims; to conduct research into matters affecting victims; to consult with victims of crime about their experience in the criminal justice system; to publish information in relation to the criminal justice system; to provide advice to the minister on issues affecting victims and the promotion of victims' rights including making recommendations about improvements to government policy, practices, procedures and systems to support the rights of victims; and to monitor the implementation of recommendations made by the Victims' Commissioner.

The Victims' Commissioner will also manage complaints made by an affected victim about alleged contraventions of the Charter of Victims' Rights. The charter, which is currently prescribed in the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009, provides rights to victims in relation to how they should be treated by government and non-government entities throughout the criminal justice process, including the right to be treated with courtesy, compassion, respect and dignity and the right to particular information while a matter progresses.

The taskforce found that the charter currently lacks visibility and consequence. While the rights in the charter are not legally enforceable, the Victims' Commissioner will have a focus on ensuring that complaints are dealt with appropriately and that these rights are upheld—for example, victims are appropriately informed and provided with reasons for key decisions made as part of a criminal proceeding.

The bill will also ensure victims' complaints are managed in a transparent and accountable manner. To support trauma informed, victim-centric and culturally appropriate engagement with victims, the Victims' Commissioner must have specific regard to the vulnerability of particular cohorts of victims of crime including: victims of domestic family or sexual violence; Aboriginal victims and Torres Strait Islander victims; and victims who have characteristics that may make them particularly vulnerable to harm such as women, children, elderly and victims with a disability.

The Victims' Commissioner will be an independent statutory appointment by the Governor in Council for a period of no more than five years. The Victims' Commissioner will be supported to achieve their functions and exercise powers through the establishment of the Office of the Victims' Commissioner. Following a recruitment process, it is proposed to appoint the permanent Victims' Commissioner by the end of June this year. It is intended that, once established, the Victims' Commissioner will work in conjunction and collaboratively with Victim Assist Queensland. Victim Assist Queensland will continue to administer the financial assistance scheme and will help victims of crime to access information about supports available to them. The Victims' Commissioner will be required to provide an annual report to the minister for tabling and may also provide other reports about a matter relevant to the performance of its functions, such as a report about a systemic issue impacting on victims of crime in the criminal justice system.

The Victims' Commissioner will have access to a wide range of information to support its systemic review function. This information will support the Victims' Commissioner to inquire into matters that may be impacting on victims of crime and their experience in the criminal justice system. The bill provides several protections for this information and requires that the Victims' Commissioner not publicly disclose confidential information in its annual report or any other report it may make.

The bill also seeks to establish the Sexual Violence Review Board. The taskforce found that, while the rate of reported sexual assault cases has increased, data on sexual violence cases shows significant attrition during each stage of an investigation and prosecution of a sexual offence. This data shows that the reporting of sexual violence matters by women to police is as low as 13 per cent of all matters. One study found that only 20 per cent of those matters reported to police result in charges and even fewer cases progress to court and result in a conviction.

With a view to increasing the reporting of sexual offences and the number of successful prosecutions of sexual offences in Queensland, the taskforce made several recommendations, including the establishment of a permanent board to identify opportunities for future and ongoing system improvements to address attrition rates for sexual offence reporting and prosecution. The Sexual Violence Review Board's main function will be to identify and review systemic issues in relation to the reporting, investigation and prosecution of sexual offences in Queensland. The board will be chaired by the Victims' Commissioner and comprise eight other members to complement and inform its systemic focus. There will be four government members appointed to the board, being:

- the Police Commissioner or their nominee;
- the Director of Public Prosecutions or their nominee;
- a public sector officer who is appropriately qualified in forensic services or clinical forensic medicine; and
- a public sector officer who is appropriately qualified in the court system.

There will also be four other community members appointed to the board who must have knowledge or experience in at least one of the following areas:

- professional expertise in the field of sexual offence matters;
- providing support services to victims of sexual violence;
- or lived experience as a victim of sexual violence.

In considering the membership of the board, it will be a requirement that at least one member is a person with lived experience as a victim of sexual violence and one member is an Aboriginal person or a Torres Strait Islander person. The minister must also ensure that the board's membership reflects the social, cultural and linguistic diversity of the Queensland community to ensure an appropriate mix of representatives are appointed to the board.

This bill is a testament to the Queensland government's commitment to not only implement the recommendations of the landmark Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce but also build on the extensive work we are already doing to better support victims of crime. This work includes:

- increasing the amount of financial assistance available to victims, particularly victims of domestic and family violence, under the financial assistance scheme;
- the establishment of the Independent Ministerial Advisory Council to ensure victims' perspectives are heard when considering reforms to the criminal justice system; and
- legislative amendments to ensure the appointment of a person with lived experience as a victim of crime on the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council.

This bill provides an enduring opportunity for the voices and experiences of victims to be heard and their rights protected. Accordingly, I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. LM LINARD (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation) (3.32 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee


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

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 466, on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (3.32 pm): I rise to make my contribution to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023. I will start by making the following observation. This bill was referred to the former Health and Environment Committee for consideration when it was introduced to the House on 30 November last year. It was due to report back this Friday, 8 March and yet here we are now debating the bill—a bill that was not even meant to be out of committee until Friday this week. Up until last Friday, the committee's website, the parliament's website, was still saying that the committee report was due three days from now, but we all know what the Miles government thinks of parliamentary convention and parliamentary processes. They treat parliamentary committees like some political plaything and an inconvenience—a nuisance even.

Without a house of review, committees are there to scrutinise and assess, a vehicle to hold the government to account. They are there to listen and consult, but not those opposite. We are just pawns in the big political game they are playing. Those opposite hold parliamentary committees in such high regard that they decided to let the member for Miller chair one now. Good heavens! Actions speak louder than words and putting the member for Miller in that position tells us everything we need to know about the Miles government and how they treat these committees. It says everything about their view of accountability, scrutiny and transparency. With his history of accountability and transparency it makes the member for Thuringowa look like a saint.

Honourable members can imagine the poor old member for Thuringowa getting the call on this bill we are debating today, 'Mate, we need this committee report done early. It could be politically convenient for us. Rush it through. Never mind about the time line that we originally set, just get it done,' and so here we are today, like I said, debating a bill that was not even meant to be out of the committee yet. By rights it should not have been in the House until the end of the month given the original time line the minister gave.

For those opposite it is not about outcomes or results; it is about imagery. It is about how it all looks and it is about the narrative—yes, the narrative. No doubt the timing of this debate, the second reading of this bill, somehow fits in with the health minister's review of the narrative. How is that for wrong priorities, reviewing a narrative before achieving an actual outcome? This is made even more disappointing because of the very serious policy issues which are addressed in this bill.

Those opposite should not be playing games with issues like patient safety or matters of reporting clinician misconduct or the termination of pregnancy. They are serious issues. I think Queenslanders would be upset to learn that issues like these are not being dealt with in a considered way. Instead, with the Miles government they are looked at through the lens of whether or not it suits the narrative and I think that is really disheartening and really disappointing. Noting the government's lack of it, the opposition is going to take a measured and respectful approach to the issues in this bill, and I will deal with each in turn during my contribution today.

To begin, the changes to be made to the Public Health Act 2005 seem to be common sense and uncontroversial. The changes will exempt medical practitioners from duplicate reporting of dust lung diseases to the Queensland notifiable dust lung disease register where there has been a notification already to the national registry. The opposition will not oppose these changes nor will it oppose the changes to the Mental Health Act 2016 which clarify how Mental Health Court expert reports and transcripts may be released and used.

The changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 will also not be opposed by the opposition. I do wonder if it were not for some opposition agitation whether some of these changes would ever have been made, particularly those around patient safety. Part of the changes relate to establishing ratios for nurses and patients, and midwives and patients, including that a newborn baby should be counted as a patient. The opposition does not oppose these changes, though it notes there is considerable work for the government to do before we see where and the finer detail of how these ratios will be applied. We will watch this with interest.

The other changes to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 are centred around patient safety and reporting inappropriate clinical conduct. The opposition see the decision to share appropriate information and learning from root cause analysis reports to facilitate better clinical education and health outcomes as a positive one.

Then there are the changes to the clinical reviews and health service investigations. These are effectively changes without being changes at all. These new provisions allow for the chief executive, after considering a report from a clinical review, a part 6 review, or health service investigation, a part 9 investigation, to take the action the chief executive considers appropriate, whatever that might mean. It is window-dressing, to be blunt. As far as I can tell there is still no requirement for a health service chief executive to actually inform the director-general—or the minister for that matter—that a health service investigation is underway or complete. It is important to remember that the report that uncovered the shocking and tragic state of affairs at the Mackay Hospital obstetrics and gynaecology service was a part 9 investigation. I would ask that the minister today confirm how many of these part 9 investigations have taken place since 2015 and at what hospitals.

While the opposition will not stand in the way of these changes, we believe this does not go far enough in ensuring accountability and transparency across the system and driving better patient safety outcomes. We do acknowledge that there is a balance to strike between ensuring patient safety and not allowing vexatious complaints to burden clinicians. We acknowledge the feedback that has been received by a number of stakeholders on that issue.

I will now turn my attention to the components of the bill that deal with the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Code. As opposition members of the committee rightly pointed out in their statement of reservation, the issue of termination of pregnancy is a highly sensitive one. Having been a healthcare professional my entire adult life, I feel my occupation has shaped my own views about how delicate an issue this is. Queenslanders from all walks of life hold many and varied views about the termination of pregnancy and Queenslanders are entitled to those views. They should be shared in a dignified and respectful way. That is how I intend to conduct myself while talking through the opposition's position on these changes.

The proposed changes to the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and Criminal Code are designed to have three desired effects, according to the government. The first is to allow additional health practitioners to perform an early medical termination of pregnancy through the use of a registered termination drug in response to recent changes in prescribing restrictions made by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, the TGA. At this juncture it is important to note that the changes made to

prescribing restrictions by the TGA were brought about following the Australian Senate's Community Affairs References Committee report titled *Ending the postcode lottery: addressing barriers to sexual, maternity and reproductive healthcare in Australia*. This report was handed down on 25 May 2023. The second effect is to make consequential amendments to the offence provision which is outlined in the Criminal Code to align with the proposed changes in allowing additional practitioners to perform early medical termination. The third is to replace references to 'woman' with 'person' throughout the legislation.

Just like a number of stakeholders who provided feedback to the committee, the LNP has two main concerns with the issues that deal directly with the medical termination of pregnancy outlined in the bill. The first is in relation to which practitioners should be given permission to prescribe, administer or give a treatment dose of the termination-of-pregnancy drug MS-2 Step, and I note the amendments circulated by the minister. The second is the availability, or lack thereof, of health services in regional, rural and remote Queensland to provide the necessary care for women who may suffer complications following their decision to terminate a pregnancy under the changes being proposed. They are both legitimate concerns that were heard throughout the committee's inquiry and as an opposition we, too, share those concerns. I will elaborate on each a little more.

The additional registered health practitioners who will be authorised to prescribe medical termination-of-pregnancy medications under the bill will be nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives. Registered nurses and midwives who work under an extended practice authority, an EPA, will be authorised to administer and/or provide a treatment dose of MS-2 Step without the requirement for a prescription. The authority to give the treatment dose is provided under their EPA. Not all registered nurses or midwives work under an EPA, which would mean a practitioner not working under an EPA would require a prescription from an authorised prescriber such as a doctor or, under these new rules, a nurse practitioner or endorsed midwife. For the benefit of the House, I think it is important to outline that nurse practitioners, registered nurses, endorsed midwives and midwives each operate under a different scope of practice.

Earlier in my contribution I mentioned the Australian Senate's Community Affairs References Committee report titled *Ending the postcode lottery: addressing barriers to sexual, maternity and reproductive healthcare in Australia*. That report was begun at the request of, and reported to, the Albanese Labor government. As I stated earlier, the recommendations of that Senate inquiry brought about prescribing restriction changes by the TGA. Effectively, that report was the catalyst for the legislation that we are debating today. That was an extensive inquiry of nearly eight months, and I think it is significant that that point is made. Recommendation 20 of that report states—

The committee recommends that the Therapeutic Goods Administration and MS Health review barriers and emerging evidence to improve access to MS-2 Step, including by:

- allowing registered midwives, nurse practitioners, and Aboriginal Health Workers to prescribe this medication ...

What members will note in that recommendation is that there is no mention of registered nurses, yet in this legislation we are debating today there is. This same point was identified by the Australian Medical Association Queensland, and I note Dr Yim's contribution to the public hearing held by the committee on 1 February where he made the following observation—

... the Senate committee also recommended extending those practitioners authorised to prescribe MS-2 Step to registered midwives, nurse practitioners and Aboriginal health workers. It did not likewise recommend it extend to registered nurses. That is because the practitioners specified by the Senate committee already have requisite training and experience to safely prescribe these medicines. They also work within suitable settings, including private teams, to ensure safe treatment.

Dr Yim went on to say—

... AMA Queensland urges the current committee to recommend the Queensland government only make those amendments in the bill that would enact the Australian Senate committee's recommendations. Those recommendations were based on broad and comprehensive consultation with a range of independent research bodies and appropriately qualified stakeholders.

I am not going to stand here and pretend to talk for all registered nurses, but, being one, I can say that I personally would not feel comfortable to administer and/or provide a treatment dose of MS-2 Step without the requirement for a prescription, just like I would not be comfortable giving any drug that I am not trained to give and not trained to deal with complications that may arise from the administration of a drug. It is important to note that registered nurses are not midwives and their areas of expertise differ. Whilst there are registered nurses who are also registered midwives, the majority of midwives are midwives and not registered nurses. Like I said, I am not here to talk for all registered nurses; I just know that there will be different views from registered nurses on this. What I will say is that I respect

the process and the work of independent authorities, and what the TGA and other independent experts concluded through the Senate committee's inquiry was that other practitioners are best placed to do this work. I respect that call.

There is a reason that decision has been made, and my honest opinion is that it is not a reflection on the capability of any registered nurse—not by any stretch—but it is a reflection on the capability of the broader health system which surrounds those nurses. That brings me to my second point on why the LNP has reservations with these provisions of the bill. We already know that health services in regional, rural and remote Queensland are stretched extremely thin—so thin, in fact, that many basic services are already absent—basic services like birthing. I am not suggesting that the clinical practice around childbirth is easy, but in a modern society like ours here in Queensland it is rightly an expectation that local hospitals should be able to provide birthing services.

The way I look at it is, when it comes to delivering health services, you have to get the fundamentals right first and you build up from there, so let's be frank about it: for many in our regional and rural towns the fundamentals are not there. For goodness sake, Queensland had a region with 60,000 people who were without a birthing service for a year, and that was when Gladstone Hospital infamously went on maternity bypass. Honestly, that was a travesty and that is not getting the fundamentals right. Our priority is getting the fundamentals right, and I would argue that that should be the priority of the government as well.

I think it is very poignant that there were concerns about women suffering from complications who have opted for a medical termination of pregnancy in a regional, rural or remote area of Queensland. I am not going to get hung up on the numbers of how many women suffer complications after taking MS-2 Step—I know the committee heard some different figures at different times—but with that said, what I think we can all agree on is that complications do happen and they can be potentially dangerous and potentially fatal. I do not think there would be anyone in this chamber willing to argue against that. If that happens to a woman in a community where there are already limited or no supporting services, that could have quite severe consequences. That very point was put to Dr Yim at the hearing by my colleague the member for Glass House. His response was—

We do not want to see women needing to travel four or six hours to get emergency care. That is not acceptable. There needs to be a pathway to ensure they receive emergency care in those small number of cases where things do not go well.

He went on to say—

... we need to ensure the backups are in place before we expand further.

That is a very legitimate and rational position to take.

I note that the QNMU and the organisation Children by Choice also made their position clear: that the proposed legislative reform needs to be supported by appropriate implementation activities such as education, training and safety procedures. My concern with all of this is that the minister is putting the cart before the horse. I think that is evident in the explanatory notes for this bill where on page 16 the following is stated—

... some stakeholders, including some professional medical bodies, provided feedback in relation to the need for appropriate education, support and resources to support successful implementation of the amendments and to ensure patient safety. Queensland Health will undertake a gap analysis to identify elements of the framework that need to be enhanced or strengthened to ensure that additional health practitioners can safely perform early medical terminations of pregnancy. The gap-analysis will consider what support and resources are needed for the workforce delivering termination-of-pregnancy care, as well as information for consumers.

Even when the minister introduced this bill to the House, neither she nor her department were sure about where there were gaps in support and resources across the system. I must say, I find that unsettling. Apparently the gap analysis has been completed, but, even with that, Queensland Health say they are still considering what education and training is needed to support the nursing and midwifery workforce to safely and effectively deliver termination-of-pregnancy care and how best to make this available. I would have thought that before rushing in to making legislative changes the minister and the government might have actually thought to work through these issues in a considered and judicious way. I wonder whether the minister would table the gap analysis that is supposedly finished so that Queenslanders might see what issues exist across the system and can judge the government on whether it has the capacity and capability to fill those gaps. I doubt that the minister will be as transparent as that, but we live in hope. Again I note the clarifying amendments that have been circulated by the minister.

I also want to place on record my disapproval of the decision to replace references to 'woman' with 'person' throughout the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018. I fundamentally disagree with these changes. I acknowledge that there are many in our community who may struggle with gender dysphoria. I certainly do not dispute that this is a challenge that many Queenslanders and their families go through, but there is this point: being a male or being a female is part of the human condition, other than in some exceptionally rare and very difficult circumstances. As human beings, only the female sex is able to carry a child and give birth. Being a mother is a special role. Carrying and birthing a baby is extremely precious and not every woman will choose or be able to give birth, and that is okay, that is also part of the human condition. But being a mother, carrying and birthing a baby, those very things are unique to being a woman and that should be reflected in the way legislation is written, particularly in legislation which deals directly with pregnant women and their babies. To make changes to the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 to replace language like 'pregnant woman' to 'pregnant person' I nor my colleagues are able to support.

I note that we are not the only ones who share this view. It is not an inflammatory view as it crosses political and cultural divides. Stakeholders, including the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union, the Australian College of Midwives Queensland Branch, Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, raised reservations in one form or another with this provision in the bill. The QNMU said in its written submission—

The removal of the term 'woman' in legislation that is targeted at a population level has the potential unintended consequence of making biological sex less visible and more difficult to clearly explain in healthcare education.

The QNMU argues that statutory language needs to be specific to the context and the cohort of people upon which it is focussed. We therefore recommend that term 'woman' is retained in the legislation


The Australian College of Midwives Queensland Branch made the following statement in its written submission—

The language change and impact may hinder the ability to understand and action the unique health care needs and challenges faced by women. Clear, precise, and consistent language ensures that reporting and collection of statistical data remains reflective and consistent.

Decades of statistical data will be lost with the proposed language change, marginalising women in society. The Australian College of Midwives Queensland committee strongly disagrees with the removal of the word 'woman' and replacing this with the term 'person'.

Those views are quite ardent and the LNP share those views. Based on what I have outlined, the opposition will vote against all the provisions of the bill which make amendments to the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and Criminal Code. We cannot support those changes. We have arrived at this position after a careful and considered review of the committee's deliberation on this bill, noting the stakeholder feedback provided through written submissions and appearances before the committee by interested parties across several hearings. I do note that there are no changes to the existing conscientious objection provisions already in the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 in this bill. That means the rights of health practitioners and students to conscientiously object to performing or assisting to perform a termination are maintained in this legislation. That is a good thing because health practitioners are entitled to their own views and beliefs. That right should be upheld and maintained and I appreciate that that is still the case.

I round out my contribution by saying the LNP does not oppose the changes in this bill made to the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011, the Public Health Act 2005 and the Mental Health Act 2016. However, we will be voting against all of the changes to the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and Criminal Code when the bill reaches consideration in detail.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (3.55 pm): I have been called a lot of things in my time, but I am not sure how I am going to take being referred to as a saint by the member for Mudgeeraba. I do not know if it is a compliment. What an interesting observation she has made. I rise to give my contribution to the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023. It does not surprise me that the previous speaker has come out and said that the LNP will oppose anything around termination of pregnancy. We know it was opposed, except by three LNP members, to that in 2018 when that historic change was introduced in a bill and passed.

I want to respond to the member for Mudgeeraba's comments around parliamentary committee procedures. It is at the discretion of the committee to table a report at any point in time. It is the difference between 6 March and 8 March—she is talking about 48 hours. I think it is relevant that we do talk to this this week. I am very proud of our committee. I want to thank all members of the committee,

including past members. There have been some changes. With the indulgence of the chair, I want to give a shout-out to the member for Southport, Rob Molhoek. We wish him well in his recovery. Our best thoughts are with him.

This bill amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to: clarify that, for purposes of nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios, a newborn baby should be counted as a patient when they are staying in a room on a maternity ward with their birthing parent; require a Quality Assurance Committee to disclose information about a health professional to the chief executive where they reasonably believe the health professional's health, conduct or performance poses a serious risk of harm to a person; and clarify that the chief executive of Queensland Health may, after considering a report from a clinical review or health service investigation conducted in a Hospital and Health Service, take the action the chief executive considers appropriate in relation to the matters identified in the report. It also ensures key findings, recommendations and lessons learnt from root cause analysis of serious clinical incidents can be shared with relevant staff across Queensland Health. It amends the Termination of Pregnancy Act, Criminal Code and Powers of Attorney Act 1998 to allow additional health practitioners to perform early medical terminations of pregnancy through the use of termination drugs and provide more inclusive language by replacing references to 'woman' with 'person' in termination-of-pregnancy provisions, one I note other states and jurisdictions have agreed to. It also amends the Mental Health Act to clarify that Mental Health Court expert reports and transcripts may be released and used and, finally, it amends the Public Health Act around duplicate reporting requirements of dust lung diseases in Queensland.

Whilst I have listed all important elements of the bill, I will restrict my remaining comments to two particular elements, the first one regarding nurse-to-patient ratios or, more specifically, midwife-to-patient ratios. In the 55th Parliament, 56th Parliament and now the 57th Parliament as either a member of or chair of former iterations of the health committee, we have undertaken important work resulting in the passing of previous bills in relation to nurse-patient ratios in both acute wards and the state's residential aged-care facilities. This is something our Labor government should be very proud of. We were backing our health workforce and ensuring patient care and safety is paramount. I want to make special mention and commend the QNMU for their strong advocacy in this area. Let us never forget that it was the LNP who opposed those ratios. I will never forget in 2016, sitting in this House at about 1 am, when the gallery was filled with nurses and the LNP opposed the nurse-to-patient ratios.

Of course, that was about the LNP saying how much it would cost. They demonstrated their complete disregard for our hardworking nurses and showed how out of touch they were with nurses in our state's health system. How those nurses applauded when that finally came through to the House! Therefore, I am very pleased to speak to the bill's amendment to the Hospital and Health Boards Act, as recommended in our report, to introduce minimum midwife to patient and baby ratios in maternity wards so that all babies will be counted, including stillborn babies requiring services from a midwife.

On another important aspect of this bill, as a regional member of parliament and having a background of 30 years serving as a paramedic in North Queensland—

Government members interjected.

Mr HARPER: That may come as a surprise to many members—I fully appreciate that anyone living in rural, remote and Indigenous communities should have equality of access to health care. We rightly recognise Women's Week—well, some of us do. I am pleased to see that this bill includes amendments, in line with other state and territory legislation, to address barriers to accessing medical termination of pregnancy, including by allowing registered midwives and nurse practitioners to provide MS-2 Step. I fully appreciate that anyone living in rural and remote communities should have access to health care. I am pleased to see that the bill's amendments will address those barriers.

I listened to the contribution of the member for Mudgeeraba. They can make all the excuses they want, but I know that they will oppose this legislation because they have fundamentally opposed termination of pregnancy in this House. That is something that the Labor government can be incredibly proud of passing, recognising that it is a woman's right to choose.

On behalf the committee, I thank all the submitters who provided contributions to the bill. I thank the minister and our secretariat and every hardworking health professional in Queensland Health. We value what they do every single day.


I turn to the statement of reservation. I note that the statement of reservation talks about women who face challenges in regional and remote communities but then tries to blame the state government for accessing care. Our government has done an incredible job through the work of the health committee, which has recommended changes so that pharmacists can deliver more care to people who

cannot access a GP. It was the health committee's primary care report that recommended that we find alternative models of care for a growing and ageing population where access to GPs is becoming incredibly difficult. In fact, one of the first places we went in Far North Queensland had 97 GP vacancies. How do people in those communities access care? They do it through nurse-led clinics. I applaud the minister for listening and taking note of those recommendations. We also have the urgent care clinics funded by the federal government and a range of other things that take the impact off EDs. Registered nurses told us that through their extended practice authorities they will be able to deliver this safely. That is what the committee heard. We are allowing that to happen because we think it is an important step to provide equality of access to health care for people in the community.

I say to the opposition: when you stand up and oppose this, be real about it. It is because fundamentally you do not believe in termination of pregnancy. But what are their alternatives? What have we heard from the LNP with regard to providing equality of access to quality health care in Queensland?

Ms Richards: Crickets.

Mr HARPER: Absolute crickets; the member for Redlands is correct. The LNP have not introduced into this House one policy that would tell us how they would improve access to care in regional, remote and Indigenous communities. The Labor government is doing that. We have a proud record of doing that. We will continue to listen to our health workforce and Queenslanders to provide the very best care we can for all Queenslanders.

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (4.04 pm): I want to pick up on a very misleading statement made by the previous speaker. The LNP opened birthing services in Queensland, while under Labor we have seen 37 maternity services closed. We saw Gladstone on bypass. That is an absolute disgrace in this day and age when communities throughout Queensland need vital health services. One of the most vital of health services was closed down and babies were born on the side of roads. That is a failure of this government. They do not have the right priorities when they will not address these fundamental areas of service delivery.


This bill is subject to a government gag motion on speaking times so I hope we get to vote on the clauses. It is a wideranging bill, as my colleague the member for Mudgeeraba outlined. She explained very well the complexities in this bill, which covers various serious matters.

In an extraordinary move, the Labor government is using this bill to erase the definition of 'woman' from the statutes and it is doing that in International Women's Week. That is ironic. Labor talks about inclusivity and diversity but then erases women from legislation. Most people can answer the question, 'What is a woman?' but not the health minister, who wants to erase women from the laws. What will be next? Will we have 'International People's Day' instead of International Women's Day? It is getting ludicrous. This should be about clarity in health care and, yes, understanding for people with gender dysphoria. However, that does not mean wiping out the right of women to have clarity not only in health care but also in the law. Stop erasing women.

Let us celebrate our diversity, including our diversity of thought and belief, but that should not be done at the expense of women. It is time to start respecting the fact that not all women think the same or have the same beliefs and that is okay in a pluralistic society. Labor talks about inclusivity and then with dogmatic intolerance attacks women and men who hold different beliefs, particularly those who hold views about the sanctity of life and conscience that are different from their own. That intolerance means that doctors and nurses who may want to exercise their right to conscientious objection by not acting contrary to their genuinely held beliefs about the sanctity of life will be afraid that they will be demonised in the workforce and not protected by the law, as senior Labor government leaders and, as we have heard, Labor backbenchers are setting the tone of abuse and modelling a culture that says that it is okay to abuse those people and discriminate against them. That is not respectful and it is not inclusive.

Unplanned pregnancies are one of the most difficult issues women can face and laws are seldom the complete answer, whatever people think or say. Compassion and support are vital to addressing the challenges women face, particularly at a time when some may feel that cost-of-living pressures, homelessness or coercion by partners leave them with no choice. That is tragic. There needs to be genuine, compassionate, safe and practical support so that no-one feels coerced and unsupported. That is also true for health workers. They matter, too. Leaders should seek to care for women and men in all their diversity. They should treat health workers on the front line with respect and understanding rather than verbally abusing them or trying to abuse them for their beliefs or, even worse, erasing them from law.

I want to again address the issue of the 37 maternity services that have been closed by Labor. It is right that babies are considered patients. They are patients. We support the amendments in the bill with regard to the midwife ratios to support women and babies in maternity services. I issue this challenge to the government: do not use this as an excuse to close down yet more maternity services. It has been an absolute disgrace to see in the past few years a record number of services close down. There has been a lack of will and prioritisation of these services to ensure mums do not have to have their babies by the side of the road or worse still move out of their communities because they do not believe they can safely have their baby in their community. In addition to having legislation around ratios, the government needs to ensure there are actually midwives and birthing services in these communities. To have had 37 of these birthing units close is not good enough. It comes down to this government's priorities. We support ensuring these services in communities so mums can have their babies safely and close to home.

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (4.10 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023. It is Queensland Women's Week and tomorrow is International Women's Day. What better time to present this bill which represents an historic expansion to women's rights and access to health care in Queensland. I am proudly pro choice. Those in the LNP are anti choice. They do not support a woman's right to choose. The Leader of the Opposition has previously said that they do not want debates about issues such as abortion in the lead-up to the next election. We will be having those debates because the women of Queensland are terrified about the prospect of the right to choose being taken away from them.

We have heard what those opposite have said before about access to termination of pregnancy in Queensland. We know what those opposite will do to this kind of legislation if they get into government. We will see the same kinds of changes and the repeal of legislation by stealth that we are seeing in other parts of the world. That is what the women of Queensland are terrified of.

I thank our fantastic Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee and our committee chair, the member for Thuringowa, for their careful consideration of the bill. Most of all, I thank the dedicated stakeholders across Queensland for their incredible advocacy on the important issues covered in this bill and for the submissions they provided in the consultation process. The Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women has already outlined the major amendments in the bill, but I am pleased to take this opportunity to highlight our amendments to the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018—an act of parliament that I proudly stood in this place and voted in support of to give Queensland women the right to choose and the right to have control over their own bodies.

It was our government that removed termination of pregnancy from the Criminal Code—a resounding win that gave Queensland women the right to choose for the first time in our state's history. Since then, I have been labelled a murderer. There have been trucks with my face on them driven around town accusing me of being a murderer. This is all because I voted in support of a bill that gives women the right to have control over their own bodies. We have heard from women in regional and rural communities such as Yeppoon and Rockhampton that there are unacceptable inequities in women's access to crucial reproductive health care.

Mr Head interjected.

Ms LAUGA: I stood up for women in my community. I would actually love to know what the member for Callide thinks with respect to women having control over their own bodies in Central Queensland, because when I stood up against the closure of the Marie Stopes termination of pregnancy clinic in my community, I did not see the member for Callide there. It would have been great for him to stand side-by-side with the women of Central Queensland to say, 'I support you. I back you. I support your ability to have control over your own body.' What on earth does the member for Callide know about having a baby? I would love to know what the member for Callide knows about having a baby.

As the proud representative of a regional community, I will not accept this and our government will not accept it. That is why this bill amends the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and makes consequential changes to the Criminal Code.

Mr Head interjected.

Ms LAUGA: It will be interesting to see how the member for Callide votes. I hope the party does not threaten to disendorse the member for Callide after he votes in support of this bill.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Order, members!

Mr Mander interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Everton!


Ms LAUGA: That is why this bill amends the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and makes consequential changes to the Criminal Code to allow additional health practitioners to perform medical terminations of pregnancy. Nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives and certain registered nurses and midwives with additional qualifications and training will be authorised to perform early medical terminations of pregnancy, giving greater access to care for rural and remote Queenslanders, including the women of the electorates of Keppel and Callide.

Currently in Queensland, medical practitioners—doctors—are the only health practitioners who can perform medical terminations of pregnancy using the TGA approved MS-2 Step. MS-2 Step is approved for use up to nine weeks, which gives women a limited time to decide whether they want a medical termination of pregnancy at home or close to where they live. After nine weeks gestation, they must attend a hospital or a clinic to have a termination of pregnancy. This medication has been a game changer for women in regional and remote parts of Queensland. The reality is that often women in rural, remote and regional areas need to travel long distances to access termination at a hospital or a clinic, which is a major disruption to their lives and employment. It is a financial burden that many women cannot afford. We saw the real impact of that when the Marie Stopes clinic in Rockhampton closed down and women were having to travel long distances in order to access termination of pregnancy.

Many members in this place know that travelling for health care and being admitted to hospital can be a stressful experience. That stress is undoubtedly compounded for someone travelling to seek termination of a pregnancy. I believe it is important to note that some women seeking terminations are also experiencing compounding circumstances such as domestic and family violence, financial hardship or complex health and social needs. That is why these amendments have been proposed so that as many women as possible in Queensland have access to the local, accessible and timely support they need. That is the principle that we apply to our view of health care right across the state—the best quality health care possible as close to home as possible.

This bill will authorise nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe, give a treatment dose or administer MS-2 Step to a person who has an intra-uterine pregnancy up to 63 days gestation. It will also permit registered nurses and midwives who are authorised to work under an extended practice authority to give a treatment dose or to administer MS-2 Step. Other health practitioners including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners as well as students on clinical placements will be authorised to assist nurses and midwives who are performing medical terminations using MS-2 Step. The involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners and students recognises how critical it is to build a workforce that is skilled in providing this important health care now and into the future.

In May 2023 the Senate committee report *Ending the postcode lottery: addressing barriers to sexual, maternity and reproductive healthcare in Australia* was published. If this bill passes, Queensland will be leading the way in responding to the Senate committee's recommendation to relax the restrictive regulations on MS-2 Step by broadening the range of health practitioners qualified to prescribe the medication. This is a landmark moment for Queensland and it is a landmark moment for Queensland women. Thanks to the hard work of the committee and this government, Queensland will be a proud leader in driving reforms that expand and protect a woman's right to choose. Access to safe termination-of-pregnancy care is a human right and essential for reproductive freedom. This bill safeguards that. What is more, by enabling Queensland's wonderful nurses and midwives to deliver safe and contemporary sexual and reproductive health care to Queensland women, this bill will help deliver better health care closer to home no matter where people live. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr ANDREW** (Mirani—PHON) (4.18 pm): I rise to speak on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023. Once enacted, this bill will make Queensland the first jurisdiction in Australia to allow midwives, nurses and other prescribed health practitioners to perform medical terminations using abortion drugs such as MS-2 Step—drugs which are currently only available via a doctor. I have significant concerns over this use of nurse-led medical abortion care and the possible health and safety risks which could be involved for those women living in rural and remote areas of the state.

According to Dr Gino Pecoraro, President of the National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, five per cent of all medical abortions result in complications including uncontrolled bleeding. Not one to beat about the bush, Dr Pecoraro said of the bill's changes, 'Someone could die from this.' Similar concerns were raised by the Australian Medical Association Queensland, the AMAQ,

who told the committee that it is 'not safe for registered nurses to administer these medicines outside of a collaborative setting with appropriate clinical oversight'. According to the AMAQ's submission—

Prescribers must be able to accurately date pregnancies, exclude ectopic pregnancy via a pelvic scan, determine if patients are at risk due to other existing conditions and ensure escalation pathways are available, including access to local emergency health care (usually within 2 hours' drive). Unfortunately, it is often the case in rural and remote areas that patients do not have this access and even medical practitioners cannot safely prescribe MToP medicines. Extending prescribing authority to RNs in this context would not result in increased access and could put patients at risk.

The bill includes a regulation-making power that, according to the health minister's introductory speech, will allow 'additional types of registered health practitioners to administer these termination of pregnancy drugs in the future'. According to the minister—

This will allow flexibility to adjust the legislation over time to extend access to termination of pregnancy services as other cohorts of health practitioners become suitably trained, qualified and experienced to perform medical terminations of pregnancy such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners.

Clearly, the bill's framework has been deliberately crafted for much wider application over time. This is concerning on a number of levels, particularly the suggestion that these practitioners, to be prescribed at a later date by regulation, may ultimately constitute a specifically trained taskforce for the provision of abortion services to vulnerable women throughout Queensland. Even if these concerns are misplaced, I strongly oppose any future expansion of the bill's provisions beyond nurses and midwives, particularly given the life-threatening complications associated with the use of these drugs.

There is also a potential danger that the bill's changes will lead to the creation of a two-tier medical system whereby vulnerable women in rural and remote areas will be at much greater safety risk when undergoing these procedures. Other concerns include the bill's pre-emption of several Commonwealth reviews on the risks involved in non-medical prescribing by health practitioners and that the bill's changes will expose nurses and midwives to professional, legal and insurance risks for which they are not appropriately remunerated.

The bill places a heavy burden of responsibility on Queensland nurses and midwives, most of whom are already struggling under the pressure of an under-resourced, understaffed and underpaid health system. The government claims this bill will address the unmet medical needs within Queensland's rural and remote communities; however, I am yet to see any evidence or data to support the contention that such an unmet need actually exists. Most women I speak to in the regions tell me that the No. 1 unmet need they are concerned about is the chronic lack of adequate and safe maternity services in rural and remote towns and communities, as the member for Callide reminds us so regularly. If Labor are truly genuine about meeting these areas of unmet health needs, they could start by improving the quality of maternal healthcare services in the regions and stop shutting down all our maternity hospitals and childcare centres.

The bill also amends the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 to provide for 'more inclusive language' to be used when referring to abortions. Accordingly, any reference to 'pregnant woman' will now be substituted by the more trans-inclusive 'pregnant person' and 'pregnant people'. Minister Shannon Fentiman said that the bill 'strengthens legal recognition of transgender and gender-diverse Queenslanders' and ensures that 'all pregnant people can access medical terminations—including those who are transgender or gender-diverse'.

Both the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union, the QNMU, and the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council expressed concerns over the bill's changes in this regard, as did a number of other submitters. The QNMU said that retaining the term 'women' in the legislation was an important safeguard for the 'specific rights and experiences of women'. Removing this safeguard would only serve to make 'biological sex less visible'.

According to an international research paper published in 2022 by 10 prominent women's health researchers, they stated that replacing words like 'breastfeeding' with terms such as 'lactating parents' risks 'reducing protection of the mother-child bond' and 'disembodying and undermining breastfeeding'. The authors argued—

Desexing the language of female reproduction has been done with a view to being sensitive to individual needs and as beneficial, kind and inclusive. Yet, this kindness has delivered unintended consequences that have serious implications for women and children.

A co-author of the paper and former president of the Australian College of Midwives, Jenny Gamble, told the *Sydney Morning Herald* that sex-based language 'is important due to sex-based oppression'. Professor Gamble said—

Confusing the idea of gender identity and the reality of sex risks adverse health consequences and deeper and more insidious discrimination against women.

Professor Gamble also said—

Pregnancy, birth and early motherhood are fundamentally sexed issues, not gendered. Pregnant and birthing women and new mothers and their infants have unique vulnerabilities and also require protection.


For decades now, women have campaigned for more biologically targeted studies and research aimed at better understanding women's health and the difference between the sexes. Instead, Labor is putting up bills that will make the study of women's health impossible by erasing biologically accurate terms such as 'women' and 'mother'. Last year the former attorney-general, Shannon Fentiman, went so far as to cite a person being 'misgendered' in a hospital as an example of a possible hate speech crime. I think this is a mad agenda to abolish the word 'mother', which permeates our language and goes back thousands of years. It is absolutely appalling. I love my mother. Labor's agenda to erase women and deny biological reality will get no aid or quarter from me whatsoever.

Finally, with utmost respect to the committee members and the committee chair, I would like to make a few comments on the process and procedure around the introduction of this bill. The committee's report was only released on Monday and here we are voting on a bill just two days later. No time has been allowed for members to read or properly consider the committee's report, let alone conduct any discussion or debate on its contents. This is particularly egregious given the bill's radical changes which drew three statements of reservation from members of the committee, including me.

The whole process around this bill has been rushed and cursory, starting with the 'consultation process'. According to the AMAQ, the government gave 'targeted government stakeholders' just one working week to provide a response on the bill's consultation paper. As the AMAQ said—

It is unacceptable that Queensland Health persists with this targeted and secretive approach to legislative amendments and does not act with transparency and accountability.

Once again, the House is being forced to wave through extremely radical and consequential legislation without even the semblance of parliamentary scrutiny or debate. It just goes to show how the government has utter contempt for the parliament and for the democratic processes built into it. Under Labor, the state's committee system, which is supposed to fill the gap left by having no upper house in Queensland, has degenerated into little more than a 'tick and flick' exercise in futility. This government's undemocratic approach to law-making is a direct consequence of a commanding dominance on the floor of parliament—a dominance no party should be allowed to enjoy in a democracy. Let's hope the people of Queensland take steps to remedy the situation at the next election.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.28 pm): I am so proud to rise in the House and support this bill today, especially the provision about counting babies. I remember speaking to the nurses union about this years ago. I remember thinking as a new parent just how much sense this made to me. We all know that birthing in a hospital has changed a little bit over the years. Back in the 1980s, when I and many of my cohort were born, our parents would stay in hospital for several days, especially if they had had a C-section or an emergency C-section. That was very common for new parents. Now the general procedure is that many new parents return home relatively quickly. They are keen to sleep in their own bed and they want their baby to meet their siblings and family members at home in more comfortable and relaxed surroundings.

That means there are many things that have to occur in the short time that babies and new parents are in hospital. That is why it is so important that both the parent and baby are counted as patients. Nurse-to-patient ratios count babies as patients because they are. This is only right when you consider the many medical procedures that babies experience in their first 24 hours in hospital. They have heel prick tests, they have their wet nappies checked to make sure they are eating enough and they have hearing tests. When you think of the new parents: they often have stitches; they are establishing feeding routines; they are learning how to bathe the baby for the first time; maybe they need help to shower if there has been an epidural and that is still wearing off. Let's not forget about the physio popping by to talk about recovery, and of course there is a chat about pain relief.

This is not an exhaustive list of all of the treatments new parents and babies receive, but it does give a bit of a flavour of just how busy midwives and the nurses who care for babies and parents on the ward are. In relation to home checks that midwives do, it is worth noting that care for both mum and

bub continues. It was a home midwife who detected the jaundice that my little Elyse had after she was born. Patient safety is paramount, and having ratios will only increase safety and care for patients in our hospitals. New parents and their babies, whether the baby is born healthy or born still, deserve the best care we can possibly give.

Debate, on motion of Ms Pugh, adjourned.

MOTION

Middle East



Mr BERKMAN (Maiwar—Grn) (4.31 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. notes that:
 - (a) more than 30,400 people have been killed, over 72,000 wounded and approximately two million displaced by Israel's bombardment of Palestine since 7 October 2023.
 - (b) most hospitals in Gaza have been forced to close, and the healthcare system does not have capacity to cope with the number of dead and wounded Palestinians, particularly in northern Gaza.
 - (c) Israel has refused to agree to a ceasefire and continues to threaten invasion of the Rafah region, where approximately 1.4 million people are now sheltering.
 - (d) the Labor state government has provided public support and funds for arms manufacturers who supply weapons used in Israel's attacks, many of which amount to war crimes according to Human Rights Watch and the UN.
 - (e) this includes at least \$9 million for manufacturers to supply Boeing with weapons, and a 2023 manufacturing capability grant of an unknown amount to Ferra Engineering to supply Boeing's Ghost Bat program.
 - (f) Ferra Engineering is the sole supplier of F-35 jet fighter components, which the Israeli Defence Force confirmed on 7 November 2023 have been used to drop 900kg JDAM bombs in their invasion of Gaza.
2. calls on the government to:
 - (a) immediately withdraw public support and funding for companies involved in the manufacture and supply of weapons to the State of Israel, including Ferra.
 - (b) actively advocate for an immediate ceasefire, the release of all hostages and political prisoners, reinstatement of aid and an end to the State of Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories.

This government can no longer evade responsibility for its part in the unfolding genocide in Palestine. Since the Hamas attacks on 7 October last year—and I want to put on the record again, to avoid any doubt, that the Greens unequivocally condemn those attacks on civilians—Israel has retaliated with such devastating and unbridled force that it is hard to witness and it is impossible to bear. Israel has refused to agree to a ceasefire and continues to threaten the invasion of the Rafah region, where approximately 1.4 million people are now sheltering.

There can be no remaining doubt that Israel is undertaking the collective punishment of Palestinian citizens, which is a war crime under international law. Each day the toll rises, but we know that more than 30,400 people have been killed and that somewhere between 58 and 70 per cent of those people are women and children. Over 72,000 have been wounded and approximately two million displaced since 7 October last year. While the healthcare system in Gaza struggles to cope, Israel continues to justify attacks on key infrastructure including schools, hospitals, and places of worship, by claiming that Hamas leaders are using these places for cover. Implicit in this argument is the assumption that hundreds of civilian Palestinian lives do not matter if one Hamas leader is also killed. We would never endorse the bombing of a Brisbane hospital to target one terrorist hiding inside, so why do political leaders, including the Labor Party, continue to endorse this in Palestine?

The death and destruction in Gaza may seem far away, but it starts right here in Brisbane because, thanks to the Labor state government, Queensland is now a key contributor to those bombs being dropped on civilians in Gaza. In 2018 the government did an \$18 million deal with Boeing, of which \$9 million was allocated to boost the weapons manufacturing capabilities of businesses supplying Boeing with weapons parts. They have also given Ferra Engineering a grant to manufacture parts for Boeing's Ghost Bat program. The Treasurer has regularly boasted of the government's support for Ferra, which builds the AME weapons adaptors that hold and release bombs from Lockheed Martin's F-35 jet fighters. These are the bombers that the Israeli Defence Force confirmed on 7 November last year have been used to drop 900-kilogram JDAM bombs in their invasion of Gaza. This government is loudly and proudly supporting the companies that are enabling war crimes in Gaza. Israel has destroyed hospitals, schools and places of worship. It has directly attacked non-military targets. It has forced population transfers, deliberately starved civilian populations and openly expressed its aim of ethnic cleansing.


These and other violations of international law have been documented and reported by organisations like Human Rights Watch and the UN. Israel has deliberately blocked humanitarian assistance, including the delivery of water, food and fuel, for months. One in four Palestinians are one step away from famine according to the UN's humanitarian office, and 90 per cent of children under the age of two are facing severe food poverty. Thousands of aid trucks are unable to enter the region, and the desperation is so high that more than 100 Palestinians were killed and over 700 injured in a stampede last week just trying to access aid trucks near Gaza while Israeli troops opened fire. Meanwhile, the federal Labor government has withdrawn \$6 million in aid funding.

This motion calls for an end to support for the weapons manufacturers enabling Israel's war crimes and to instead ensure humanitarian aid is reinstated. It calls on this government to break its silence on Palestine and to advocate for an immediate ceasefire and the release of all hostages and political prisoners. It also calls for an end to the state of Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories because we must be clear that this war did not start on 7 October last year. This is a Nakba of inconceivable proportions, but it is not the first Nakba.

In 2022 Amnesty International determined that Israel is practising the crime of apartheid against Palestinians. The UN Special Rapporteur found that Israel had 'prevented realisation of Palestinian people's right to self-determination, violating each component of that right, wilfully pursuing the "de-Palestinianisation" of the occupied territory'. The bombardment and invasions of Gaza since 7 October are a continuation of this project of de-Palestinianisation. The objective is not to destroy Hamas but to destroy Palestine. In order to achieve lasting peace, the occupation must end. Free, free Palestine! This is a call for courage from Labor members here—

(Time expired)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): The member's microphone is off and the member's time has expired. Any continuation will result in you being warned or further action.

 **Hon. C MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

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

1. condemns Hamas for its terror attacks on Israel on 7 October;
2. expresses our profound sorrow for the continued loss of civilian life;
3. joins with the federal government in calling for:
 - (a) an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the release of all hostages;
 - (b) the provision of rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian relief to civilians;
 - (c) Israel to ensure the delivery of basic services and essential humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians;
 - (d) a negotiated political solution to achieve lasting peace and security; and
 - (e) a two-state solution, including the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, where Palestinians and Israelis live side by side in peace, security and dignity within internationally recognised borders.'


We know that Queenslanders feel deeply for those affected by the situation in the Middle East. On becoming the Minister for Multicultural Affairs, I prioritised meetings with senior leaders from both our Queensland Jewish and Muslim communities on behalf of the Queensland government, and I will continue to do so because it is vitally important that we keep the lines of support and dialogue open. Our government joins with the Australian government in condemning Hamas for its terror attacks on Israel on 7 October. We share a profound sorrow for the continued loss of civilian life in the region.

As all members would recognise, foreign affairs matters fall directly within the responsibility of the federal government. Our government expresses our support and thanks for the important work and advocacy of Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. We strongly support the federal government's ongoing calls for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the release of all hostages. We also join calls for the provision of rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian relief—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Jordan, I was just wondering if we can possibly have a copy of the amendment circulated. We have not seen it.

Mrs MULLEN: Yes. We acknowledge the urgent need for a negotiated political solution to achieve peace and security in the region. I want to acknowledge the impact this conflict is having in our community. I know there are Queenslanders from both the Muslim and Jewish communities who are deeply hurting right now. Having met with representatives from both communities, I can assure the House there are no sound bite resolutions or political mileage in this. This is complex. For many of us it is incomprehensible, and we stand with those communities.

Our focus is on acceptance of our diverse views and respectful engagement under the democratic rules of law. We are stronger when we stand together, and we must condemn all forms of hate speech and violent extremist activities. Let us continue to offer assistance and support to each other because that is what Queenslanders do.


 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (4.40 pm): I will be opposing the motion moved by the Greens. I want to put on the record that, the way I have seen it, the Jews are probably the most persecuted race on the face of the earth. If we look back at history, they went into slavery for over 400 years in Egypt, they were in captivity in Babylon for over 70 years and they were trampled by the Romans for over 400 years. In 70 AD the Romans destroyed the temple and Israel was scattered across the four corners of the globe. Over six million Jews were slaughtered during World War II. It is a tragedy that we see innocent people killed during war. All war is a tragedy; there is no doubt about it.

The Jews were scattered for 2,000 years and the Holy Land was in the hands of the Roman Empire which occupied it, and the Byzantine Empire and the powerful Ottoman Empire. I believe Napoleon tried to conquer the Holy Land but he failed. It was 800 horsemen who charged and took the Holy Land in the Battle of Beersheba, and then the Holy Land was back at the hands of the British. The League of Nations agreed to give the Holy Land back to the Jews after they were scattered for almost 2,000 years.

The nation of Israel was formed again in 1948. There was a league of Arab nations that declared war against them, but they ended up defeating them. In 1967 another league of nations rose up against Israel and Israel defeated them in six days. In 1973 a league of Middle East nations rose up against Israel as well and Israel also defeated them within a month. Israel is probably one of the most democratic countries in the Middle East. The women have rights, and tourists go there every year to visit the Sea of Galilee and all of those precious sites where Jesus, Abraham and Isaac had walked. Twenty per cent of the parliament in Israel, the Knesset, is made up of Arabs so they give them the opportunity to participate over there in Israel.

There is one particular moment I can recall about three years ago when the LGBTQ+ were protesting about the right-wing government in Israel and there was condemnation about that right-wing government. At the same time, over in Iran they were hanging two homosexuals upside down on a crane. No-one was condemning Iran at that time—nobody—but they were condemning Israel about their right-wing government.

It was an atrocity when we saw Hamas invade Israel in October last year and 1,500 innocent civilians were mutilated and slaughtered in the most barbaric atrocity in history known to man. They did not even do that in the barbaric days thousands of years ago. War is an atrocity and everyone wants to see peace, but when it comes to peace there are still more than 100 hostages who are trapped in the terror tunnels in the Gaza Strip. We call on Hamas to surrender and release all the hostages.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (4.44 pm): I will make a very brief contribution. We have heard a lot about how bad Israel were and how intolerant they are of Palestinian people. Perhaps a lesser known fact is that there are 1.9 million Palestinian citizens in Israel at the moment, which is about 21 per cent of their population, and there are zero Israelis registered in Palestine. On further reflection, this aggressive war machine that invests all of their money has as the centrepiece of their defence a thing that blocks missiles. They did not set something up that goes and attacks people. The whole architecture of their defence is that it defends. If we are going to have a motion that is going to victimise every arms dealer or whatever for Israel, then why aren't we talking about it for Hamas as well? No-one remains void of any guilt in this process.

Mr Berkman interjected.

Mr KATTER: Well, any supplier. I am not going to take interjections from over there. This is a one-sided, biased view that is very narrow-minded and has not taken into consideration the fullness of what is a complex international situation that was very well summarised by my colleague the member for Hill. We will certainly not be supporting the motion and I am surprised it is even in the House.

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

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

Amendment agreed to.

Question put—That the motion, as amended, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House:


1. condemns Hamas for its terror attacks on Israel on 7 October;
2. expresses our profound sorrow for the continued loss of civilian life;
3. joins with the federal government in calling for:
 - (a) an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and the release of all hostages;
 - (b) the provision of rapid, safe and unimpeded humanitarian relief to civilians;
 - (c) Israel to ensure the delivery of basic services and essential humanitarian assistance and protection of civilians;
 - (d) a negotiated political solution to achieve lasting peace and security; and
 - (e) a two-state solution, including the creation of a Palestinian state alongside Israel, where Palestinians and Israelis live side by side in peace, security and dignity within internationally recognised borders.

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 496, on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.


 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.51 pm), continuing: Just before the break, I was speaking about the very important ‘counting the babies’ nurse-to-patient ratios and reflecting on the changing experience that parents are having in the hospital around the increased workload that midwives and nurses have been experiencing because of some of the fantastic new healthcare checks that have come in since members of this House were babies, and now as we experience our own maternity care, the fantastic work that they do. As I said, patient safety is absolutely paramount for our littlest humans and our parents as well—all parents and their babies, whether they are born healthy or still; they deserve the best care that we can possibly give.

I will turn briefly now to the amendments to the Termination of Pregnancy Act. This is a very important part of the act and, certainly in the years since termination of pregnancy in Queensland was taken out of the Criminal Code, we have had a number of years to observe how this change in legislation has, in real terms, impacted on the health choices of women. We on this side of the House, and certainly myself, have all supported this part of this particular change in the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. To me, it is very important to recognise that although we have legalised termination of pregnancy, it has not necessarily translated to easy access for every Queensland woman. Indeed, in rural and regional Queensland, it has not been as easy to access that medication sometimes. I have noted the contributions of some other speakers. I do want to note that this medication, like all medications, of course carries risks, but it is a generally safe medication, and that is why it is able to be prescribed in Australia and in Queensland. MS-2 Step is routinely prescribed to end a pregnancy early on, and these provisions in the legislation will improve access to safe termination-of-pregnancy care in Queensland. All women across Queensland deserve access to the same health care, to equitable health care, and that is why I support these provisions. I think they are incredibly important.

As I said earlier, I am also very proud to support the ‘counting the babies’ changes as well because I think that is just so important. It is also important, as I said earlier, to recognise the parents of babies who are born sleeping, and the fact that just because they do not get to take a baby home from the hospital with them, it does not mean that they do not still have needs. Those needs can be medical, they can be mental health support needs and they can be emotional, and they can go on for quite some time. I acknowledge the members of the House who have spoken about their journey, including yourself, Speaker, with pregnancy loss. I commend them for their courage.

With the indulgence of the House, I want to very quickly wish my grandparents, Murray and Margaret Pugh, in New Zealand a very happy 70th wedding anniversary today. I am absolutely in awe of their union. Happy 70th wedding anniversary. I am so sorry I cannot be there with you, but I love you both very much.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Mount Ommaney, so indulged.

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (4.55 pm): I rise to give my contribution on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The last time I spoke about nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios was back in 2016 when the Hospital and Health Boards (Safe Nurse-to-Patient and Midwife-to-Patient Ratios) Amendment Bill was being debated. This bill amended the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to enable the government to legislate a nurse-to-patient ratio which is the minimum number of nurses


and midwives working on a particular ward, unit or department in relation to the number of patients they care for. However, according to the explanatory notes of the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, it clearly states—

Minimum midwife-to-patient ratios have not yet been implemented in Queensland as the wards that midwives work on are not prescribed under the Hospital and Health Boards Regulation.

This means that it has taken seven years for the government to action this. I was excited about this back in 2016 as my mother was a midwife and two of my daughters are nurses. However, I and my fellow KAP members are extremely disappointed that something that is very crucial—to get nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios right—has been bundled together with the changes to the Termination of Pregnancy Act.

As everyone knows, the KAP were strongly against the introduction of the abortion bill in 2018 because all life is sacred and the bill devalued life. We supported—and still support—the sanctity of life by speaking against and strongly objecting to the termination of pregnancy bill. That view has not changed. Now we find the government is introducing legislation that will allow qualified nurse practitioners and midwives to perform medical terminations. In other words, they are making it even easier to terminate life.

To make matters worse, the government has announced \$40 million towards making it easier to terminate life. It is amazing that we can find—we know this in rural and regional Queensland—\$40 million to terminate a life, but the government cannot find \$40 million to save lives by putting dialysis units in remote regional centres across our state. I cannot support this bill.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (4.58 pm): With this bill, we see another landmark piece of legislation in support of women introduced by our Miles Labor government during Queensland Women's Week. The reforms in this bill, if passed, will significantly expand access to medical terminations for women living in regional, rural and remote Queensland. On this side of the House, we believe that abortion is essential health care and that women and girls should have access to that essential health care, no matter where in Queensland they live. Whatever the member for Kawana and the LNP may say, these are key healthcare issues for Queensland women. They are not a distraction.

One of my proudest moments was seeing this government pass the Termination of Pregnancy Act in 2018. Removing abortion from the Queensland Criminal Code was the culmination of decades of advocacy, lifting the curtain at last on a dark era of stigma, shame and oppression for women. We have all heard about the raids on clinics, the prosecution of doctors, and the intimidation and surveillance women experienced from police, at a time when they also did not have access to reliable contraception.

Less commonly heard are the stories of the women and girls harmed and killed by unsafe and illegal backyard abortions. Jo Wainer, the editor of *Lost: Illegal Abortion Stories*, estimates that prior to the 1970s around 90,000 Australian women each year had secret abortions and many of them died or were permanently injured. I remember hearing members in this House during the debate on that bill give examples of that happening to their family members.

We know that as recently as 2009 a couple in Cairns were prosecuted for illegally obtaining a medication abortion. While they were acquitted, the risk of prosecution resulted in fewer doctors providing services. That is where the reforms we introduce today will make the greatest difference. Rural, regional and remote Queenslanders are facing a serious primary care shortage, with communities struggling to train, retain and recruit doctors.

Debate, on motion of Ms King, adjourned.

MOTION

Cost of Living, Select Committee



Mrs FRECKLINGTON (Nanango—LNP) (5.01 pm): I move—

That:

1. a select committee, known as the Cost of Living Select Committee, be established to examine:
 - (a) extent of cost-of-living rises, including big supermarket grocery prices, on Queenslanders;
 - (b) the impact of state government policies, taxes and charges on these increases; and
 - (c) strategies to mitigate these impacts.
2. in undertaking the inquiry, the committee consider:
 - (a) all matters impacting on price rises;

- (b) the impact of cost of living pressures that lie within state jurisdiction including:
 - (i) the impact of rising electricity prices on grocery costs and on Queenslanders, noting that Queensland has experienced the highest electricity price rises in the nation since Callide C went offline;
 - (ii) the impact of skyrocketing insurance prices on small and family business and on Queenslanders, due to the Queensland youth crime crisis;
 - (iii) the impact of rising water costs on grocery costs and on Queenslanders, as well as a lack of water security;
 - (iv) the impact of increased transport costs on grocery costs and on Queenslanders due to the government's failure to invest in our road network;
- (c) pressures on commodity supply chains leading to increased costs;
- (d) effective policies to exert downward pressure on costs;
- 3. the committee:
 - (a) has the power to call for persons, documents and other things;
 - (b) may present reports to the Legislative Assembly as it determines;
 - (c) ceases at the dissolution of this parliament.
- 4. the committee consists of seven members chaired by a member of the parliamentary crossbench.

This morning I gave notice of this motion to establish a select committee known as the Cost of Living Select Committee. Let's have a history lesson on why we need to move this motion today. On roughly 19 January this year, Premier Steven Miles—not the last premier but this one—announced that he was going to have a select committee on the cost of living.

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection; it was going to be his No. 1 priority. He was going to come into this House and demand that we look into the big supermarkets. Great. I sat here every day of the last sitting week—the Premier's first week—waiting for his No. 1, top priority, and what did we hear? On Tuesday, what did we hear? Crickets. On Wednesday, what did we hear? Nothing. Then on Thursday—I had my notes printed out—I thought, 'Right, I will move an amendment because, yes, we need to hold the big supermarkets to account—you betcha we do—but we need to expand that inquiry.' On the Thursday I sat here in anticipation, because a select committee on the cost of living was the Premier's No. 1 priority.

An opposition member: It was urgent.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It was urgent; I take that interjection. What happened? Nothing—absolutely nothing. What did I do? I hit the road. I went up to Cairns, where it was great to see Yolonde Entsch and Bree James. I spoke to small business owners with the Leader of the Opposition. We went to Chambers in Cairns and met Leith, an amazing small business owner who has been broken into many times. Her insurance has gone up. Her electricity has gone up. She does not want to have to rip off her customers. It is a beautiful coffee shop. Then I was in Townsville with Cheryl, the owner of Fulham Road Fish Bar—there is no greater Queenslander than Cheryl. She spoke about how her electricity prices have gone through the roof. I also went to Toowoomba and many other places.

We need to expand this inquiry. Yes, we need to hold the big supermarkets to account, but we need to investigate the factors that are holding this state back—electricity, insurance. We have to tackle these issues as well as transport and rents. These are the issues that are affecting Queenslanders' everyday bills. They are state government controlled issues.

After that sitting week, I wrote to the Premier to say, 'I suggest that we expand your supermarket inquiry to include very important issues such as electricity costs, health costs, transport costs, rent costs and insurance costs and sports participation costs.' By the way, I wrote to the crossbench as well, inviting them to examine the cost of living in this inquiry. What did I get back from the Premier? I got nothing back from the Premier by way of correspondence. I did get a juvenile response from this Premier, calling Queenslanders 'dumb' for calling out the issues. The Minister for Education looks confused. It might help if she read the headline in the *Courier-Mail*. The cost of living is an issue for Queenslanders. That is why I plead with this House to expand the inquiry. Let's get around the state and find out what we can do to ease the cost of living.

This week I received an email from a distraught couple in Bundaberg. They compared electricity bills a year apart: January 2023, \$314; January 2024, \$643. I give a big shout-out to Bundaberg's Bree James, who will be a member of this House. This constituent put a post on the member for Bundaberg's page and only got in response a spruiked government line about the cost-of-living rebate. We need change and we need this inquiry.

(Time expired)



Hon. GJ BUTCHER (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (5.06 pm): I move the following amendment—

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

'the House:

- (a) notes that the government has established a Cost of Living and Economics Committee;
- (b) notes that the government will move a motion in the House to establish a Supermarket Pricing Select Committee to examine the cost of groceries in Queensland and the associated cost-of-living pressures;—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. I am sorry to interrupt, Minister. I will hear the amendment in silence. I assume that if members want to debate it they will need to hear it as well. If there are any further interjections, members will be warned.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Leader of the Opposition, I could not have been clearer. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr BUTCHER: I continue—

- (c) notes that Queenslanders are paying more for their groceries, while farmers are being paid less for their produce;
- (d) notes that the Miles Labor government has provided \$8.224 billion in concessions in the 2023-24 budget to assist Queensland families and businesses with cost of living; and
- (e) condemns the LNP for not properly standing up to the big supermarkets.'

We know that cost of living is front of mind for all Queenslanders. That is why we are delivering on the \$8.2 billion in cost-of-living relief that has been announced in the state budget. It is the biggest cost-of-living package ever delivered by a government in Queensland. We are freezing car registration and public transport fares, making kindy and TAFE free for families, outlawing rent bidding and making bonds portable.

The motion moved by the member for Nanango is typical of the LNP—huffing and puffing and delivering nothing. Who can forget the member standing up with her Bradfield plans out in the paddock marked 'not for construction'. Those opposite have no idea. The LNP cannot deliver a policy on anything, let alone a real plan to help Queenslanders with the cost of living. The motion's attempt to shift the focus away from the big grocery chains is typical of the LNP here in Queensland—in the pocket of big business once again.

Instead of backing our farmers and our consumers by helping to drive a hard bargain with these supermarket giants, like the Premier has done, the LNP are failing Queenslanders doing it tough. If the member had paid attention she would know that this side of the House is delivering cost-of-living relief right now. We are absorbing dam safety costs; offering irrigation price discounts of at least 15 per cent for irrigators—

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Buderim and member for Nanango, your interjections have been ongoing and are designed to interrupt. You are both warned under the standing orders.

Mr BUTCHER: In terms of irrigation pricing discounts, there has been 15 per cent off water bills for irrigators in the last three years. For our horticultural growers it is 50 per cent off.

Mr Lister interjected.

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

Mr BUTCHER: That represents millions of dollars of discounts so far. For residents, our concealed leaks policy is giving relief. South-East Queenslanders received a \$55 water discount. There has been funding to councils right across the state—particularly in regional Queensland—to support our councils to help keep downward pressure on rates. There is also a \$120 water subsidy for pensioners in South-East Queensland. Do honourable members know the most interesting thing about discounts for the elderly here in Queensland? The LNP wanted to cut them, and the member opposite was part of that. Let that sink in for a little bit. Those opposite had the gall to rip money from our seniors—our grandmas and grandpas—here in Queensland. They wanted to take that money off them. When it comes to water projects—

Dr Rowan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Moggill, you seem to be picking up bad habits from the member for Buderim or he is channelling his ventriloquism to you. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr BUTCHER: When it comes to water projects for regional councils, the LNP said when they were last in government that councils were sitting on a goldmine, including the Banana Shire Council. They used that as an excuse to cut the funding to councils for water projects. Under the LNP there would be no Building Our Regions in Queensland, no Mount Morgan pipeline, no Toowoomba-to-Warwick pipeline and certainly no Haughton pipeline in Townsville. The LNP's claims about water prices going up is a lie. They should check their figures. I say to the member for Nanango that they are wrong. Let's put the facts out there. Bulk water prices—

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Deputy Speaker—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Resume your seat please, member for Gladstone. I will take some advice in relation to that. I was seeking to get the attention of the Clerk. Member for Gladstone, you have used unparliamentary language. I would ask that you withdraw.

Mr BUTCHER: I withdraw.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I believe that has satisfied the point of order.

Mr BUTCHER: Let's put the facts out there. Bulk water prices under Labor have stayed down well below inflation. Prices between 2012 and 2015 under the LNP government went up at least 12 per cent every year. That was under those guys opposite when they were in government. There was a secret tax just to turn the tap on. The LNP in Queensland are a party of pretenders. We know that. They pretend to care about the cost of living, pretend to support our farmers in Queensland and pretend to care about Queensland.

Labor listens and we deliver. We will always support Queenslanders with cost-of-living measures here in this state without being told by the LNP, who managed to sack 14,000 people in Queensland. If we are talking about the cost of living, not having a job in Queensland under the LNP speaks volumes.

(Time expired)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Before I call the next speaker, I would like to remind the members for Logan and Ninderry that they are both on a warning from earlier in the session. I am sure you will both maintain good behaviour, but I just wanted to remind you.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (5.12 pm): I rise to support the LNP motion to establish a cost-of-living select committee. The government has paid lip-service to dealing with the cost-of-living pressures. The government promised a committee but has done nothing. It wanted to narrowly focus only on supermarket pricing, an issue which the Premier knows he has little ability to impact. The Premier's promises were nothing more than a grandstanding exercise to deflect the government's complicity in the cost-of-living crisis.

Supermarkets have taken farmers for a ride; they must be held to account. A genuine inquiry must look at how state government policies, taxes, charges, levies, actions and failures are dramatically impacting the cost of living for every Queenslander. Pressures on commodity supply chains are pushing up costs. The government is responsible for rising electricity costs which are crippling families, businesses and primary producers.

This government failed to fix our major power plant at Callide, which has been offline for nearly three years. Power bills have risen 20 per cent, triple the national average. Some businesses are paying 40 per cent more. They either absorb it or pass on the cost. We have Australia's highest increase in insurance—18 per cent. It is been caused by out-of-control crime rates and a lack of flood resilience. Transport costs are up 4.2 per cent—the highest in the nation. They have been caused directly by the government's failure to maintain roads. We have the highest increase in water costs—16 per cent. Increased irrigation costs directly impact our grocery prices.

Newfound concerns about fruit and vegetables prices are welcome. The government has contributed to those prices. Pressures on commodity supply chains are pushing up costs. Farmers are price takers; they are not the price setters. They have been doing it tough for some time. The government has refused to deal with the issues where it has been responsible. The agriculture minister has been warned about this again and again and there have been pleas to do something because

government policies are squeezing farmers. The minister has ignored warnings that government policies would push up the price of fresh seafood, meat, timber for renovation and building costs. Four and half years on it still has not delivered its promised timber action plan. The chronic timber shortage is fanned by the government's policies underpinned by two decades of systemic policy failures.


Since 2019 the government has been warned that fruit and vegetables growers were doing it tough, that farmers were making conscious decisions to not plant crops. Since then, debt levels have risen and are now at critical levels. Wherever I go across the state the message is the same: they have nowhere to go. They are being squeezed. The Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers cautioned against being 'sucked into' the 'easy narrative of farmer versus the supermarket, the underdog versus the duopoly'. It said '... let's not forget the government ... are responsible for increasing the cost to the grower. The policy pile-on during the last 18 months has dramatically changed the way growers operate.'

For 10 years as a senior minister or deputy premier, the now Premier has been present when all the decisions were made. Electricity, water, fuel, transport, registration, labour shortages and fertiliser costs have massively increased under this government and Queenslanders are paying the price. In October 2022 I warned about labour shortages pushing up fruit and vegetable prices. The *Queensland Country Life* warned about this with its heading 'Lack of workforce holds agriculture to ransom'. This government supported federal Labor's broken promise on the agriculture visa scheme. Growcom called the changes a 'poor consolation prize' and AgForce said it was 'rubbing salt into the wounds'. This government piles on the workload for growers. The Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers said—

It's relatively easy to make a new rule, however ... every change causes a chain reaction.

Farmers face rising costs from underfunding and mismanagement of biosecurity threats, the anti-dam agenda and the state of rural roads. Farmers face escalating costs from increased regulation, native title claims, vegetation laws and being sacrificed to reach environmental targets.

Last October the Queensland Fruit & Vegetable Growers cancelled its 100-year celebration saying it was inappropriate when the industry is currently enduring one of the most trying periods in recent history. If the Premier is genuine about the cost-of-living crisis, he would support this motion. Anything else is hypocritical.

 **Mr KING** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (5.16 pm): I rise to speak to the amended motion. As a qualified electrician who has come up through the ranks of Queensland's government owned energy corporations, I have witnessed how appallingly those opposite have dealt with energy workers and electricity prices. The member for Kawana got me right in the feelings.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr KING: No. I understand how energy prices work. The energy price rise that those opposite mistakenly attribute solely to Callide C occurred in 2021. To jog their memories, this was the same time that a worldwide sharp increase in energy prices occurred. For the last 18 months, global price rises have been identified by independent regulators and analysts and have been attributed in the main to the invasion of Ukraine. This is not a party line; it is fact.

As part of last year's pricing process, the Australian Energy Market Operator and the Australian Energy Regulator both stated that it was global demand for energy as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine that shaped costs. As those opposite seem to have forgotten, the Russian government took out the Nord Stream gas pipeline. There was an import ban on Russian gas to the EU and Russia responded by refusing to sell gas to other countries. That is what lifted gas prices around the world. Gas is a key price setter in the market.

The Callide C incident also coincided with a severe weather event that impacted the ability to extract coal and get coal to power stations across the east coast. The global price of coal went from US\$50 per tonne in June 2020 to US\$298 per tonne in October 2021. Across the nation, and the globe, prices spiked.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr KING: They do not like facts. The International Energy Agency's World Energy Outlook stated—

Spot natural gas prices ... reached their highest ever levels in Europe during the second-half of 2021 (more than ten-times the—
prices in June 2020. The report also noted—

High natural gas and coal prices have fed through to higher power prices in many markets...

If those opposite want to say that Callide C was responsible for power prices in New South Wales, Victoria, New Zealand, London or Japan, that is a very long bow to draw. It is just not true, but facts do not matter to the LNP. It is another case of those opposite linking things that have no basis, just like their climate-denying, cooker pals have a habit of doing.

Energy prices are impacted by a range of circumstances, predominantly global, but power bills will always be lower under Labor, thanks to public ownership and our cost-of-living rebates made possible because of progressive coal royalties—and who does not love progressive coal royalties? If those opposite want to talk about responsibility for the incident at Callide C, I remind them that it was the Borbidge government that placed the design of Callide C into private partnership.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, members!

Mr KING: The lesson we can learn from Callide is that public ownership of energy assets—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Members, I am listening carefully to the member's contribution and he is providing what I would consider to be a fairly factual and non-provocative contribution to this type of debate. I would appreciate the opportunity to continue to hear that. I will start to warn people for continued interjections.

Mr KING: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker; they had forgotten that I have feelings. This has been the consistent policy of successive Labor governments, including the Miles government. The Miles government will never sell off Queensland's publicly owned assets like that mob want to do. We believe in investment in public infrastructure, and, Mr Deputy Speaker, you know that. The public built and owned Callide B turbines were built to last. Despite being older, they consistently outperform Callide C on reliability. The LNP's negligence has not stopped at turbines. It slashed maintenance costs by \$74 million. I can borrow some of the member for Callide's crayons and draw a picture for the member in front of me if he wants. The LNP is the only party that cuts maintenance.

Mr HEAD: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at those comments and ask the member to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr KING: I withdraw. Someone else has feelings, and I respect that. Electricity prices, if I remember correctly, rose 43 per cent under the Newman regime. They also succeeded at driving up the average household bill by \$440.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba North and member for Scenic Rim, you are both warned under the standing orders.

Mr KING: The LNP did not offer Queenslanders a single cent in rebates or relief, from memory. That is in stark contrast to our Miles Labor government's nation-leading cost-of-living rebates. Regional Queensland benefits from this government's community service obligation, which reduces bills on average by about \$707 a consumer. This is amazing.

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr KING: Thanks to the Miles government's rebates, Queensland has the lowest energy bills in the nation while the LNP does not have much grasp on facts and truth, and that is well known.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for Scenic Rim, you are under a warning. You can leave the chamber for one hour. You have continued to interject.

Whereupon the honourable member for Scenic Rim withdrew from the chamber at 5.22 pm.



Mrs GERBER (Currumbin—LNP) (5.23 pm): Let's talk about an aspect of this cost-of-living crisis that this state Labor government is refusing to acknowledge—that is, the youth crime crisis that is ripping through our state right now. It is contributing to the cost-of-living crisis right across Queensland in an extreme way: it is contributing thousands of dollars in increased insurance premiums for Queenslanders; thousands of dollars in increased insurance excess when making claims; thousands of dollars of uninsured damage to property that Queenslanders are having to pay; and thousands of dollars in time off work, having to arrange for repairs or recovering from injuries due to violent crimes because of the youth crime crisis ripping through this state under this state Labor government.


Queensland is facing this crisis in a profound way because of the neglect of this government. That is why we need to see the select committee established in the way moved by the shadow minister, and that is why we need to see it established now, not some time in the future. Our community members do not need talk. They do not need a Premier pretending to take action yet neglecting to take responsibility for what is in fact all of his responsibility. Youth crime is all him. He voted to water down the laws, and if he cannot recall what that should look like he should look at *Hansard*.

Every day we speak to victims who are struggling to not only emotionally recover from the crime committed against them but also financially recover. It is the cost of replacing what was lost, the cost of installing cameras and screens and taking measures to protect their property—and then the insurance bill comes. It is costing Queenslanders thousands and thousands of dollars and it is increasing insurance premiums for whole postcodes because of the youth crime that is ripping through that postcode. We have spoken to small and family businesses and individuals who are feeling this. It is great to see Yolonde Entsch for Cairns and Bree James for Barron River sitting in the gallery. I know that they are advocating fiercely for their communities. I know that they are talking to their communities every single day about the cost of living, about youth crime and about the cost of that youth crime to not just people and their families but also small and family businesses.

At every moment this state government tries to deny the fact that the youth crime crisis is contributing to the cost-of-living crisis. It tries to rewrite history. More recently the Premier has claimed that he just cannot recall events, so here is a recap for the Premier. In 2015 the Premier's government proudly started the process of watering down the Youth Justice Act. It put detention as a last resort in the Youth Justice Act and closed our Childrens Courts to victims and their families. In 2019 the Premier started the youth crime watch house scandal. Then in 2021 the Premier had to try to unwind the damage that caused with the watch house scandal by rewriting and overriding the Human Rights Act. In 2021 the Premier voted against our breach-of-bail amendment. Then in 2023 the Premier brought in our breach-of-bail amendment—word for word the LNP's amendment—as an offence.

The youth crime crisis is not a beat-up. The youth crime crisis is real to every single Queenslanders. They are feeling it. They are feeling not just the emotional toll of youth crime and having to protect their homes and provide for their own safety and security—a job that this state government should be doing—but also the financial toll. Their insurance premiums are going up. I will table a news article from the ABC titled 'Insurance costs rise, regional Queenslanders say they're paying the price for youth crime'.

Hamish Burge's Toyota Hilux was stolen by a gang of youths—Mr Deputy Speaker, I assure the House that none of these matters are before the court—and his insurance has gone up \$1,000 a year, just because of moving to the postcode of Goondiwindi on the border. The car of another regional Queenslanders—a Toowoomba resident—was stolen by a 12-year-old. She said that she was able to get her car back, but her insurance premium has gone up by \$800. Labor members may not think that is significant, but in a cost-of-living crisis that is huge and Queenslanders are suffering under it. This state Labor government needs to start acknowledging that the youth crime crisis is contributing to the cost-of-living crisis.

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (5.28 pm): I rise to support the amendment. I am really proud of the work that our government has been doing in providing genuine cost-of-living relief. I just listened to the member for Currumbin's contribution. If you want to talk about cherrypicking—because if you were not here for December and you were not here in January and you missed Tropical Cyclone Jasper and you missed Tropical Cyclone Kirrily, you missed the floods—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Direct your comments through the chair.

Ms RICHARDS: The member missed all of the natural disasters that have occurred in Queensland and the impact that is having on insurance. Seriously, you cannot take Queenslanders for fools on all of the different things that impact insurance. Be genuine. The member for Currumbin just spent five minutes contributing to a debate saying that insurance premiums have only gone up because of youth crime. Everybody in this chamber knows that that is simply not true. It is not true. An inquiry is going to be held into supermarket pricing. I genuinely hope that whoever from the opposition is nominated to sit on that committee contributes in a meaningful way for all Queenslanders. Queenslanders deserve to have all of us on the same page, fighting for better outcomes when it comes to what is a duopoly between Coles and Woolworths. We all need to be on the same page.

Let's face it: this is a national issue. The ACCC is looking at it at the moment and there is a Senate inquiry. We all need to play our part in making sure that we hold those big retailers to account and that we hold the big banks to account as well. Skippy's Fresh Frootz, a great local small business


in my area, sells fresh fruit and produce. Today they have avocados for 49 cents. I concur with the member for Gympie. That small business can sell them at 49 cents. Today Woolies have them for \$1.70. That is the price difference. Strawberries are \$3.99 a kilogram from the local small produce guy and \$6 from Woolies. I genuinely hope that the LNP will participate meaningfully in the inquiry to make sure that we can do everything that we can to continue to provide cost-of-living relief and support for all Queenslanders.

We have just heard the contribution from the member for Kurwongbah around electricity. Those opposite cherry-pick when it comes to prices. When we talk about electricity and water prices those opposite obviously have a very short memory as to what happened when they were last in government. In less than three years, while the LNP were in government, water in the Redland City Council area went up 53 per cent. They have very short-term memories about what their track record is. They come into this place and literally cherry-pick prices and do not think about what they did when they were in government.

I am proud to be part of a government that is delivering free kindy for families. That is nearly \$4,000 worth of savings for families. We are delivering free TAFE to make sure that we can get the right skills and training for young people here in Queensland. We are delivering concession rebates for our seniors and a free pair of glasses for pensioners. We are delivering so much in that space. Our electricity rebates here in Queensland have been nation leading. That is because we own our public assets. We have not tried to sell them off. That is the LNP's track record in that space.

When we talk about being genuine and delivering for Queenslanders, the track record of those opposite says it all. The LNP's track record is on the public record, whether it is in the water space, whether it is in the electricity space or whether it is sacking people. There is dignity in having a job to be able to put food on the table. We have done work in the rental space. The members opposite have their heads down. They know what their track record looks like.

Our Miles government will continue to deliver for people like Alan in the Redlands who was able to get, under our energy rebates, the energy efficient appliance rebate to get a new washing machine for his home. That is what we are doing to help everyday Queenslanders. The LNP will continue in their normal tradition of cutting, sacking, selling and absolutely standing up for their big mates in the corporate world. I proudly support all of the work that our Miles government is doing to make life better for Queenslanders.

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.33 pm): I rise to speak in support of the member for Nanango's motion and to speak on behalf of Queenslanders who live in rural and regional Queensland. I certainly lend my support to this cost-of-living select committee that we are calling for here tonight. The arrogance of those opposite is on full display here tonight. If one listens to their contributions they are digging a hole for themselves and they would somehow have us believe that this cost-of-living crisis is not as bad as it is being made out. I can assure members that those on this side of the House are talking to Queenslanders the length and breadth of this state and it is real. This is driving this state into the ground at the moment. I see evidence of that every single day: skyrocketing prices, the rent increases, the fuel increases, the insurance increases, groceries, power prices, water—it is across the board in this state. The further one travels from Brisbane the worse it gets.

Two weeks ago the member for Nanango and I met with some canefarmers in the Burdekin to discuss power and water prices. We got a shock to find out what is happening in that space. Can members believe that in 18 months power prices have gone up 52 per cent for those farmers? It has become so bad in the Burdekin that they are going out and buying diesel pumps. They have given up on electric pumps because they can no longer afford to run them to pump their irrigation water. That is on top of fuel cost increases, fertiliser cost increases and all those other costs. The farmers who feed this state are struggling to keep their head above water.


Do members know how galling it is for my constituents, my farmers, the business owners who are out there trying to make ends meet, to hear about these multibillion dollar profits that these grocery chains are making? It is price gouging at its worst. Let me give an example: rockmelons that farmers in my area are receiving \$2 for are being sold for \$7; and tomatoes that they are receiving \$1.50 for are appearing on the shelves for \$6 to \$12. This year we have farmers who are ploughing their crops back into the ground. They are running at a loss to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars. That is the reality of what is going on in the agriculture sector and how that is biting. Those primary producers are facing red and green tape, increased labour costs, power price increases and it is 10 years since they have received an increase for their produce.

Let me turn to insurance costs. The member for Currumbin talked about this. I can guarantee, member for Redlands—it is a shame she is not here—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member, there is a convention that we do not comment on the presence or absence of another member.

Mr LAST: I can assure this House that youth crime is having a massive impact on insurance premiums in the north. If members do not believe me, they should go upstairs and talk to Bree James and Yolonde Entsch. They will tell them. My insurance premiums have gone up 30 to 40 per cent—house insurance, car insurance. Insurance companies are bailing out of the north because it is ground zero, crime is so out of control up there, and the flow-on effects with insurance premiums are having such an impact that people now are making a conscious decision not to insure their homes or vehicles because they cannot afford it. This is the reality of what is going on in the north of the state. As I said before, it is real and it is magnified when you live in rural and regional Queensland.

There have been double-digit increases in the cost of fuel. Think about the impact of that when those truckies have to put 1,000 litres of diesel into their truck. Someone has to pay for that. It is Queenslanders who are paying for that as added costs. Energy Queensland's 2022-23 annual report showed more than 50 per cent of customers were concerned they would not be able to pay their power bill. Is it any wonder when we are looking at 28 per cent increases in the cost of power! The bottom line here is that Queensland families need help and they are demanding answers, whether they live in the south-east, rural or regional Queensland. The member for Nanango's motion will help provide those answers. I want to assure everybody in this place that those on this side of the House will continue to stand up for rural and regional Queensland when it comes to the cost-of-living crisis.

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (5.38 pm): After listening to this debate carefully I have decided that I am going to support the amended motion put forward by the member for Gladstone. I will highlight for the House the reasoning behind my decision. I am the member for Logan. I represent some of the hardest working Queenslanders who often do not get the financial reward they deserve. I speak to people at the Park Ridge shops or at Jimboomba and recently I spoke to people who were struggling to put food on the table because of the fact they had lost work and had so many bills pile up because of the big storms that came through Jimboomba and the Scenic Rim. I know that they are doing it tough. We hear it. We are in touch with it. It matters. I am supporting the amended motion because I am disappointed that on the other side we hear more slogans than solutions. There is much more about politics rather than power prices. This is all about elections rather than electricity. Honestly, they spoke more about LNP candidates than they spoke about the cost of living or shopping carts.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr POWER: I can see that they continue to want to speak about politics. We want to speak about solutions for hardworking Queenslanders such as those in Logan. I know how tough Queenslanders are doing it. We know that family budgets are under pressure. That is why I am proud to be the chair of the Cost of Living and Economics Committee, as mentioned in paragraph (a) of the amendment. The cost of living was an important part of the report that we did about the concentration of ownership in the pharmacy sector. We are also taking action right now so that we can lower household bills for Queenslanders. In total, we have provided more than \$8 billion worth of cost-of-living relief in this financial year alone.

Mr Head interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Please resume your seat, member for Logan, primarily so that I can see the member for Callide. I can hear you, member for Callide, and you are warned under the standing orders.


Mr POWER: I can certainly hear the member for Callide as well, although he was not talking about the \$8 billion worth of cost-of-living relief that we have provided this financial year because he will not. He wants to talk politics; he does not want to talk solutions. We are delivering free kindy and free TAFE and the biggest electricity rebates in this country, but no-one on the other side wants to talk about that. Why won't they talk about that? It is because they want to cut it. We are expanding access to free health care through our satellites hospitals, and something I am really proud of is the recently announced free walk-in nurse-led clinics.

We can deliver this universal cost-of-living relief because our government has made some really tough and strong decisions. Firstly—and I know that my mate here believes in this very strongly—we have kept our assets in public hands when they were going to sell them. That was a tough decision.

We took on the multinational mining companies that this group kowtow to. We ensure they pay Queenslanders a fair share of royalties when they make record profits—record profits that they want to hand back to overseas companies. I stand for Queenslanders, not foreign shareholders.

We know that there is a lot more to be done. We know that every time Queenslanders go to the supermarket they are being hit by ever-increasing costs. Queensland parents should be able to give their kids a healthy meal without breaking the bank. Like the member for Redlands, I notice the difference in prices between an independent shopping centre that goes direct to market, like Olley's Orange, and the big supermarkets with their concentration of power. That is why prices continue to rise for Queensland consumers. Farmers are being paid less and less for their products so there is a gap between the farm-gate price and the high prices that result from the supermarkets' concentration of power. That is not good enough and it is something that we need to focus on directly, which is why Premier Miles made it a priority.

Having a premier who is standing up on this basic issue has meant a change to the conversation nationally. He has brought the issue to the fore. He raised this issue on his first day in office and he has led. He has driven the national conversation ever since. That kind of strong leadership is back to basics and focused on the hip pocket. That is the kind of leadership that Queenslanders need in order to get a fair deal. I support the amendment that is before us because it is about solutions, not slogans. Their motion is about politics, not power prices.

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (5.43 pm): I stand to support the motion moved by the member for Nanango. When it comes to the cost of living, at the moment one of the greatest pressures on Queenslanders is the cost of housing, particularly for renters. Over 30 per cent of Queenslanders are renters. A couple of months ago, figures were released that looked at the rental increases over the past year as well as the past nine years of the Labor government. Those figures are quite frightening. Statewide, in one year, on average, rents increased by 13 per cent but over the past nine years they have increased by 53 per cent. Under this government, rent has increased by 53 per cent, on average, across the state. When you look at some of the local government areas, it is even more frightening.

I recognise Bree James and Yolonde Entsch, who are in the gallery. They are the LNP candidates for Barron River and Cairns. One of the reasons they are fighting for their region is that in Cairns over the past nine years rents have increased by 48 per cent. Some of the other local government areas include: Livingstone in Central Queensland, 77 per cent; Whitsunday, 86 per cent; and Mackay, 79 per cent. Is it any wonder that Queenslanders are struggling to pay their rent from week to week? However, they need not fear because they have a minister who is a renter and can relate to them! The fact that she is on 370 grand a year and has a driver has nothing to do with it. She understands the challenges that renters have! The greatest challenge the minister has is whether she is going to have lobster or Wagyu steak for dinner. That is the greatest challenge she has. It is insulting to say that she understands what they are going through.

What is the result of these increases in rents? The result is now being seen in our parks. The other day I went past Musgrave Park and I could have sworn I passed the Cotton Tree caravan park. What look like brand new tents are all set up, in order. I would say that the government has installed those tents. Of course, in recent days we have heard that the Premier's own electorate of Murrumba has a tent city, located opposite the office of the member for Bancroft. Miraculously, people from the housing department visited that day. They visited because of the publicity in the paper. The only time this government acts is when the media or the LNP embarrasses them, which is happening on a daily basis.

Why do we have a problem? We have a problem because there are not enough houses. There is no supply because this government have not planned. They have been in government for 30 of the past 35 years and for the past nine years straight, but they have not planned and there have not been enough land releases to improve supply.

I can tell members what the government is good at. This government is good at making announcements. There was a classic example of that last week when they made an 'announcement' in a press release titled 'Homes for Queenslanders: Ivory Street redevelopment on cards to bolster inner-city housing'. Those of my vintage would understand this term: it is a Clayton's announcement—that is, an announcement you have when you do not have an announcement. It states—


Site at Ivory Street, Fortitude Valley could deliver housing solutions ...

Miles Government will now progress a detailed evaluation of housing options which could be delivered ...

The ever-changing face of Brisbane's Fortitude Valley could usher in a large-scale housing solution ...

This project could potentially ...

That one is a double whammy. The release says the site 'may be suitable'. It quotes Minister Grace Grace as saying that this site has the 'potential' to provide safe housing. Another minister is quoted as saying, 'There's a huge amount of potential on this site.' This announcement is not worth the paper it is written on. They continue to make false announcements, giving false hope to our most vulnerable in the state. In the meantime, Queenslanders suffer. Show Labor the door in '24.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (5.48 pm): What a privilege it is to follow the member for Everton. In that solid five minutes of bellowing, not once did the member for Everton acknowledge his role in attacking Queenslanders' cost of living when he cut—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member for Mermaid Beach, you are warned.

Ms KING:—our public housing builds by 90 per cent, forced elderly people out of their homes if they dared to take a holiday and sold off our public housing stocks. Shame on the member for Everton!

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member has made a misleading comment. I will be writing to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, to highlight that matter.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. There is a process to follow if you believe someone has misled the House. I ask members not to use points of order to attempt to make speeches in relation to that. There is a process to follow and it is clearly outlined.

Ms KING: Along with the rest of the LNP, of course the member for Everton does not like to be confronted by his own record while in government.

Mr MANDER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at that and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence. I ask the member to withdraw.

Ms KING: I certainly withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I just asked you to withdraw.

Ms KING: I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker. Locals in my community tell me that their No. 1 issues are cost of living and how they are going to pay their bills. That is why our government is listening and acting. We have frozen public transport fares and rego. We have delivered free kindy and free TAFE—not selling off TAFEs—saving lots of families I represent thousands upon thousands of dollars a year. We are building our awesome satellite hospitals that will support Queenslanders with their cost of living by delivering free community health care closer to home.

We are delivering record cost-of-living relief to lower every household's bills and put more money back in their pockets. We are able to do this because we made good choices—not Strong Choices—and we have stood up for Queenslanders. We kept Queensland's energy assets in public hands even when the weak LNP tried to sell them off to make a quick buck. We stood up to the big supermarkets, and we are holding them to account with a real inquiry—not like weak opposition leader David Crisafulli and the LNP who are doing a favour to their big business mates by actively trying to water down our inquiry.

Our progressive coal royalties are funding our massive infrastructure pipeline that will lower household bills while the spineless LNP leader will not come out and admit his plan to cut our royalties. Our nation-leading electricity rebates mean Queenslanders have the lowest electricity bills—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member, you have used unparliamentary language. I ask you to withdraw.

Ms KING: I withdraw. Because we kept our energy assets in public hands, we have been able to deliver those huge rebates on people's energy bills—\$550 for every single household; \$1,072 off for our seniors, Health Care Card holders, veterans and people with a disability. That is 600,000 Queenslanders who will receive \$1,072 off their energy bills this year, including so many—even the majority—of people in my communities in Pumicestone. Seniors in my communities notice that rebate on their power bills. They notice that our Miles government has reduced those bills thanks to our strong leadership. Our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan will transform our energy market and provide cheaper, cleaner energy for every Queenslanders into the future—all made possible by the strong leadership on this side of the House.

We do not need an LNP premier who will take sides with the big supermarkets and big banks against Queenslanders. Pumicestone locals are paying more and more at the check-out every single week. When they hear that those same supermarkets are paying less to farmers, they are outraged. It is not fair. If the Leader of the Opposition will not stand up to the big supermarkets as our Premier is, he should not pretend to be on side of Queenslanders.

Pumicestone locals are also telling me that they are noticing the banks are refusing to drop interest rates as quickly as they hike them up, leaving them with less money to spend on essentials. Families are hurting because of that decision and because the big banks pumped up those interest rates and are keeping them high, all while the spineless LNP is caving in and doing whatever—


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock.

Ms KING: I withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

Ms KING: This is all while the weak LNP are caving in and doing whatever the big banks, the big supermarkets and Peter Dutton demand of them. We do not need more weak posturing from the LNP; we need strong leadership. Members of the LNP love to talk about power prices but never acknowledge that under their government they saw the biggest increase in power prices in the history of Queensland—a massive 39.4 per cent—putting massive pressure on Queenslanders right across our state, whereas under our Miles Labor government Queenslanders have the lowest household energy bills in the national electricity market. The LNP cannot keep blaming electricity prices or water prices to provide a smokescreen for the big supermarkets.

Who can forget the LNP's ultimate attack on cost of living when they sacked 14,000 workers across Queensland? First, they cut the services they relied on and then they sacked them. Members opposite cannot talk about cost of living when their record is sacking 14,000 workers.

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.54 pm): The member for Pumicestone may think it is a privilege to follow the member for Everton, but I have no pleasure in following the member for Pumicestone—a member who sat in this House for three months knowing that the Premier misled this House by sending her a text message and did not correct the record or say that the Premier misled the House—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Resume your seat. I am taking some advice.

Ms RICHARDS: I rise on a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, on relevance to the motion before the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Redlands. I was just taking advice on that very point. I bring you back to the substance of the motion, member for Kawana.

Mr BLEIJIE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. Of course, this motion is calling for the Miles government—which is no different to the Palaszczuk government—to expand the grocery inquiry to look at what the Queensland government can control such as electricity prices. I heard the member for Gladstone say, 'We will do a motion.' When? Because the Premier promised this motion would be moved last sitting.

Mr Watts: No. 1 priority.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. No. 1 priority—he was going to go in, stare down the grocery giants and put a motion in the parliament. Where is it? We are still waiting, member for Gladstone. We have one day left this week and I have not heard of any such a motion. We could have saved the Premier the trouble by just supporting this motion, because this motion holds the big supermarkets to account. It calls on them for their price gouging and it goes after the big supermarkets. But guess what? It does more. It actually looks at what the Queensland government can control. That is things like electricity prices, insurance—because of the youth crime crisis—car registration costs for cars. These are all the things the Queensland government can do.

Mr Mander: Rentals.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the shadow housing minister. Rentals, housing affordability, lot land releases that decreased by 30 per cent when Premier Miles was the infrastructure and planning minister. Then we get to the member for Kurwongbah who talked for five minutes not about the Queensland government or anything the Queensland government can do but blamed Russia for Queensland's problems! I thought I had heard it all before because we know former premier Palaszczuk blamed Ukraine and Russia, but then the member blamed Rob Borbidge's government. A

government from 1996 apparently planned the Callide C explosion and caused the electricity increases we now have. What rubbish! This government has to take responsibility for things in its control. We need the Callide Power Station fixed, because the Labor government failed to maintain it. That is why we want it looked at. The government has no transparency or accountability when it comes to that.

The member for Logan talked about asset sales. I put on record again that the only party in Queensland that has sold assets is the Labor Party. They should be ashamed of their record. Let us not forget that that was the Labor Party. They talk about electricity rebates. They talk about these great cost-of-living rebates. Do they question why Queensland has to have the biggest amount of cost-of-living rebates? Is it because everything is more expensive in Queensland because of the Labor Party? That is why they have to give more rebates. Taxpayers are not only paying huge electricity prices; they are also paying to be rebated by the very government which has increased their electricity prices. It is Labornomics. It does not make sense. The government should be looking at the actual cost to reduce power prices.

We absolutely support the rebates because of the Labor government's inaction and negligence in this regard, costing Queenslanders no matter where they are. In Barron River we have a champion in Bree James; in Cairns we have a champion in Yolonde Entsch fighting the good fight; in Inala we have Trang Yen; and in Ipswich West we have Darren Zanow. In two weeks the people of Ipswich will be able to have their say on this government and pass judgement on all these crises—housing, crime, insurance and so forth.

These socialists over there would have you believe they are just normal suburban people. The Premier is trying to say that he is just a normal suburban dad. He makes his kids' lunches on Sundays. Any parent who has the time to prepare their kids' lunch for Monday on a Sunday morning ain't working hard enough. My family is struggling to do it on a Monday morning, let alone 24 hours in advance. Look at this, Mr Deputy Speaker; a fashion guru sent this through. I table a copy of a recent photo of the Premier.

Tabled paper: Bundle of photographs depicting a tie worn by the Premier, Hon. Steven Miles [\[313\]](#).

This fashion guru alleges that the tie the Premier is wearing is Gucci—\$430! That is not a suburban dad. I am wearing a Biloela tie that cost me \$19. That is suburban. That is regional Queensland. The LNP have the right priorities for Queensland's future. The Labor Party are frauds and fakes.


(Time expired)

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): I want to take some advice from the Clerk.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! When I take advice it is not an opportunity to quarrel across the chamber. Member for Kawana, I ask you to withdraw some unparliamentary language you used there.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (6.00 pm): I rise to speak to this motion, to which an amendment has been moved by the member for Gladstone. This government has made significant inroads when it comes to supporting our primary industries sector. We have done this by supporting our farmers, supporting our consumers and supporting workers everywhere.

The member for Nanango's motion sought to look at big supermarket grocery prices. Unlike the talk of those opposite, we as a government—a Labor government—have acted. We have already started. In fact, it was a pleasure to join Premier Miles and the Minister for State Development in meetings earlier this year with the supermarkets—Woolworths, Coles and Aldi—at which cost-of-living impacts were directly raised. What happened? Prices came down, down, down as a result of that engagement with those supermarkets. That is what the Labor government does. We engage with people about the problems that affect Queenslanders to make sure we reduce the cost of living.

When it comes to making a difference, we as a government make a meaningful difference each and every day in supporting our farmers, and by helping our farmers we help Queensland families. I want to give some examples in the short time I have available.

Ms Bates interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order, member for Mudgeeraba! Your interjections are not being taken.

Mr FURNER: Funding has supported 59 successful regional agribusiness projects worth more than \$52.4 million. That funding comes from the RED Grants, the Rural Economic Development Grants, that this government proudly put in place. Over the past five years the RED Grants program has provided a total of \$13.3 million in funding, supporting our farmers once again. Do those opposite hear that? We are supporting our farmers. If we reflect on the member for Nanango's motion, not once did it mention our farmers here in Queensland. It had to come from the member for Logan and the member for Pumicestone to mention farmers, because this mob opposite have turned their back on the farmers of Queensland.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Gympie!

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Theodore, you are warned.

Mr FURNER: The RED Grants projects I mentioned before supported 2,500 jobs.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on two issues. I would like to listen to the record, but I am quite sure I said the word 'farmers' in my contribution. If the member is misleading the House, I will be writing to you.

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

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My second point is that I take personal offence and I ask the minister to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr FURNER: I withdraw. Once again, those RED Grants projects have supported 2,500 jobs—real jobs in rural Queensland. Those grants directly assist farmers, and that helps our economy with productivity boosts. QRIDA is a great organisation. They are there day in and day out with First Start Loans and sustainability loans that assist our farmers of the future and the producers of today, and also of tomorrow, to ensure their properties are as productive as they can be.

As everyone knows, in agriculture we need to be at the forefront of technology. I want to turn to some of the technology that we see out in the field. The member for Lockyer would know Troy Qualischefski quite well. In fact, he is a good friend of this government. I enjoy going to Troy's property quite often. Troy has invested in technology to improve productivity and to reduce costs by using the technology of tomorrow today. It is great to see that technology come through on the back of AgTech Smart Farms. Whether they be out at Gatton or out at Emerald, farmers are following the lead of the Miles Labor government because they understand the future. They understand the future ahead of them by investing in AgTech. Those behind are still trying to work out how to invent the wheel. When it comes to farmers, we are backing Queensland farmers to the hilt.

Once again, climate change is at the forefront of farmers' minds currently. That is why we launched our low-emissions road map. I want to put on record my congratulations to AgForce but also the Queensland Farmers' Federation for supporting that. When you look at the ambitious GDP that we are responsible for, it is \$24.44 billion. That is a strong contribution from this Labor government in supporting our farmers for the future.

The LNP and its leader do not measure up when it comes to agriculture. Their pint-sized policies do not help our primary industries. Only Labor will make a difference when it comes to cost of living and supporting our Queensland farmers. That has always been the case and always will be in Queensland. We will deliver for them in the future.

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

AYES, 45:

ALP, 45—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Walker, Whiting.

NOES, 33:

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

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Pairs: D'Ath, Robinson; Howard, Millar; Pease, Camm; Tantari, Molhoek.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Ring the bells for one minute.

AYES, 45:

ALP, 45—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crawford, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Lauga, Linard, Lui, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, O'Rourke, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Walker, Whiting.

NOES, 33:

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

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Pairs: D'Ath, Robinson; Howard, Millar; Pease, Camm; Tantari, Molhoek.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion agreed to.

Motion, as agreed—

That the House:


- (a) notes that the government has established a Cost of Living and Economics Committee;
- (b) notes that the government will move a motion in the House to establish a Supermarket Pricing Select Committee to examine the cost of groceries in Queensland and the associated cost-of-living pressures;
- (c) notes that Queenslanders are paying more for their groceries, while farmers are being paid less for their produce;
- (d) notes that the Miles Labor government has provided \$8.224 billion in concessions in the 2023-24 budget to assist Queensland families and businesses with cost of living; and
- (e) condemns the LNP for not properly standing up to the big supermarkets.

HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (NO. 2)

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 500, on motion of Ms Fentiman—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (6.13 pm), continuing: As Queensland Health officials noted during the committee process, nurses and midwives being empowered to administer MS-2 Step will be especially important in the regions. They said that the requirement that only doctors offer MS-2 Step disproportionately impacts regional, rural and remote people. Due to the early time frames during which a medical termination is safe, if a woman cannot get access to MS-2 Step in her community she may have to be admitted to a hospital or clinic for surgical termination, which involves significant costs and travel. For our most vulnerable women, that additional cost and travel may prevent her from accessing the care she needs at all. I often think of Helen Garner's words when she said—

It's an awe-inspiring force, the iron determination of a woman who refuses to bear a child that she knows she cannot mother. Down through the ages, no religious anathema, no legal proscription has been able to weaken the adamant power of her refusal.

Women should not need iron determination to be able to decide if or when they have a child.

Our government introduces these reforms today to make those women's paths easier. Under our Labor government Queensland has come a long way, but to the young Queensland women who have come of age since abortion was removed from the Criminal Code and into our healthcare system I say: your right to access safe and legal abortion without being harassed outside a clinic can all very easily be undone.


Until today the LNP have been very slippery about their plans for women's reproductive rights if they were to form government. We know that at the 2020 election the LNP's key commitment to their hard right allies was to 'review' our laws that make abortion legal and accessible. I will never forget, and I will never let the LNP forget, how they horsetraded women's rights to bodily autonomy to the cooks in Cherish Life. I will never forget seeing elderly women become distressed by the sight of those anti-choice Cherish Life trucks depicting a deceased baby decades after their own terminations and stillbirths. I will never forget the LNP's hateful anti-women corflutes and the hard right activists who stood at our pre-poll booths harassing me and my female volunteers, photographing and videoing us, copying down our numberplates, calling us murderers. The LNP did that. In fact, those corflutes were on LNP A-frames. It was written all over them. Shame! That is what the LNP in Queensland stand for—harassing women and stripping their rights to score cheap political points.

In her contribution the LNP health spokesperson, that self-appointed advocate for nurses, was very quick to talk down the capacity and ability of nurses to appropriately administer MS-2 Step. It is also ironic that the member for Mudgeeraba is using a shortage of regional medical services as an excuse to argue against making more services available in the regions. Of course, what the LNP health spokesperson really means is that she and the LNP do not support regional women having access to abortion services. In truth, the LNP oppose all Queensland women having the right to abortion, and they have demonstrated that yet again by their decision to vote against these laws during Queensland Women's Week. It is very telling.

This is in stark contrast to our Miles Labor government's consistent actions to protect women's reproductive rights and enhance women's access to reproductive health care. Back in 2018, when this government acted to decriminalise abortion, we knew very well that Queensland women faced unequal access to abortion services across our state. Outside of the south-east, only limited and fragile surgical termination services were available. Due to the stigma and risk attached to criminalisation, few GPs offered access to medical terminations via MS-2 Step, so we did not just legalise abortion as health care and move on; we kept working to create equitable pathways for care, because real reform goes beyond changing laws. It is about investing in services and those pathways.

Today we are making these important legislative changes to allow nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives and appropriately qualified nurses to perform medical terminations of pregnancy, but we are not stopping there. We are investing \$1 billion in funding our women and girls' health plan. We are setting up our statewide women and girls' health hotline so that Queensland women can get accurate and timely advice about their health concerns wherever they live. Importantly, we are also committing over \$40 million to enhance women's access to termination services. Our government will always back women's reproductive choice because it is at the very heart of what we believe. The LNP will always attack women's reproductive rights because that is at the very heart of what they believe.

I am also proud to support our nation-leading introduction of midwife-to-patient ratios in this legislation today. These new laws mean that Queensland mums and bubs will be protected by a ratio of one midwife to every six patients, including babies when they are staying in the same hospital room as their parent. I congratulate Queensland midwives and the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union for their dedicated advocacy to achieve this landmark change. We cannot ever forget how, on International Nurses' Day back in 2016, the LNP voted against minimum nurse-to-patient ratios. This Queensland Women's Week, I acknowledge and thank the wonderful Queensland midwives and nurses who are working so hard to care for women in their times of greatest need right across our beautiful state. These reforms will make a real difference to the lives of Queensland girls and women. I commend this important bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (6.20 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2). In general, the bill amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011 to clarify nurse-to-patient and midwife-to-patient ratios and that a newborn baby should be counted as a patient when they are staying in a room on a maternity ward with their mother. However, it does nothing to restore the 37 maternity services that have been cut by Labor governments across rural and regional Queensland. It is these cuts to maternity services that have led to babies being born on the side of the Warrego Highway. There is no midwife-to-patient ratio when your child is born on the side of the highway.

Regional women have contacted my office distressed about the lack of local birthing options in rural and regional Queensland and the shortage of midwives. They are worried they will have to drive themselves an hour down the highway on their own from Chinchilla to Dalby in labour without the services of a midwife. Labor governments close rural maternity services and we never see these returned under Labor governments. Contrast this with LNP governments, which open regional maternity services. The LNP when in government opened birthing services in Chinchilla, Cooktown and Beaudesert.

The bill makes changes to the Quality Assurance Committee disclosure of information and clarifies what action the chief executive of Queensland Health may take following part 6 or part 9 reviews. The bill changes the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Code to allow additional health practitioners to perform an early medical termination of pregnancy through the use of a registered termination drug in response to recent changes in prescribing restrictions made by the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

Given this Labor government will most likely guillotine this debate and not allow opposition members to have their votes on the clauses recorded, I want to reiterate the position outlined by the shadow minister for health—that is, the LNP opposition will vote against all the provisions of the bill which make amendments to the Termination of Pregnancy Act 2018 and the Criminal Code during consideration in detail. I doubt very much that this Labor government will allow opposition members to have their votes and their opposition to those particular provisions recorded.

When I listen to the Labor government on this issue, I hear a government that is seriously out of touch with patient safety in the regions. It is a Labor government which is particularly out of touch with women's patient safety in the regions. There seems to be some assumption from those members opposite that everyone has access to a medical practitioner when they need one. That is not the case in South-West Queensland. There are multipurpose health facilities in my electorate that have spent up to 100 days without a doctor or a locum doctor present. All of the multipurpose health facilities have had extended periods of time without the presence of a doctor or a locum, and some of these do not have nurse practitioners. The lack of doctors and locum doctors places incredible pressure on the existing nursing staff and forces them to work outside their scope of practice. These legislation changes will place more pressure on those already stretched nursing staff, which will force them to further work outside their scope of practice.

What is clear is that this Labor government has no workforce plan for regional communities, and this is evidenced daily in my electorate by the continued gaps in doctor coverage. The availability—or lack thereof—of health services in regional and remote Queensland to provide the necessary care for women who may suffer complications following their decision to terminate a pregnancy is a clear area of concern. Should complications arise for women in a community that has no doctor presence—which is a common situation right now in my electorate—they will have to rely on the emergency retrieval services of either the RFDS or LifeFlight. They will not be able to drive two hours to the nearest doctor. Due to the ambulance ramping in this state, these aerial retrieval services are already stretched to the limit because they run out of flight hours when they get ramped at airports due to a lack of ambulances to transfer their patients to major hospitals.

The bill also replaces references to 'woman' with 'person' in termination-of-pregnancy provisions. The LNP opposition do not support these changes and we will vote against this. Our view is shared across the political and cultural divide with stakeholders, including the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union, the Australian College of Midwives, the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists—with each raising some form of reservation with these changes. The views shared by the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union and the College of Midwives Queensland Branch are particularly strong.

Queenslanders deserve so much better than what this Labor government is offering. Rural and regional women deserve so much better from this Labor government because they are denying them services. Queenslanders should show Labor the door in '24.



Ms McMILLAN (Mansfield—ALP) (6.26 pm): I rise to speak on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023. This week is Queensland Women's Week. There is no better time than the present to expand women's rights in health care here in Queensland. In 2018 our government removed termination of pregnancy from the Criminal Code, giving Queensland women the right to choose for the first time in Queensland's history. We will always protect this right, but Queensland women have told us that they are facing inequalities accessing sexual and reproductive health care. That is not acceptable. In my electorate of Mansfield, over 50 per cent of the community are female.

These women deserve safe and accessible sexual and reproductive health care that does not discriminate on the basis of their backgrounds nor their socio-economic status. We have listened and now we are delivering. This bill is a step in the right direction.

Endorsed midwives, nurse practitioners and certain registered nurses and midwives with the appropriate qualifications and training will be able to facilitate safe and accessible termination-of-pregnancy medication. Ensuring reasonable and safe access to these services is absolutely crucial for Queensland women and the recognition of reproductive rights. 'Safe and accessible' are the key words here.

Further, in Queensland mums and bubs will be protected by a ratio of one midwife to every six patients, which includes babies. A newborn baby will be counted as a separate patient when they are staying in the same hospital room as their birth parent. A trial of minimum midwife-to-patient ratios in postnatal maternity wards was completed in June 2023. This is about delivering the safest, highest quality care possible. This is something our midwives have been calling for for years, and I want to acknowledge the tireless advocacy of our incredible frontline health staff, particularly those nurses who work at the QEII and PA Hospital that serve my electorate. I acknowledge also the wonderful leadership of the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union and all members of that union, including the member for Greenslopes.

This bill is also building on our existing nurse-to-patient ratios, which have been proven to be very effective in delivering better health outcomes for patients. We know that better teacher-to-student ratios in schools deliver better educational outcomes for students, and we also know that closer nurse-to-patient ratios deliver better health outcomes for all patients. Counting babies as a separate patient to their parent will ensure our extraordinary midwives can provide safer, more comprehensive and more compassionate care to families. This legislation is nation-leading.

Meanwhile, the LNP have a history of cutting funding to health services. They have never missed a chance to compromise public health care in Queensland. The LNP refused to support our nurse-to-patient ratios in 2016. In fact, the current opposition spokesperson for health, Ros Bates, spoke against nurse-to-patient ratios in this place on International Nurses Day. This is not the only time the LNP have targeted Queensland mums. They also cut \$291,000 from the Triple P—Positive Parenting Program, a well-researched program developed by our very own University of Queensland's School of Psychology's Professor Matt Sanders and his team, backed by more than 30 years of research. This program has helped more than a million Australian families and it is a program that I have offered to thousands of families in my school communities. Women under the Miles government are provided safe avenues to make decisions about their bodies, and women under the Miles government will always be our priority.

The opposition, as we have heard tonight, will try to tell Queenslanders that they back women, but while the LNP cut funding to Family Planning Queensland for women's reproductive health services, countless women's shelters and Women's Health Queensland, our government is listening to women and is acting. We just released the brand new Women and Girls' Health Strategy, backed by a \$1 billion investment, and I congratulate our Minister for Health, the Hon. Shannon Fentiman MP, member for Waterford. Almost 12,000 women and girls were surveyed so we could make sure we delivered on issues that matter most to them.

Our government always relies on research and evidence-based decision-making to ensure we are benefiting Queenslanders and Queensland families. They told us access to sexual and reproductive health care closer to home was one of their biggest concerns and that it is what this Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023 does. Equitable access to women's sexual and reproductive health is crucial for ensuring gender equality as well as the empowerment of women worldwide, and the Miles government are trailblazers in this. It is so important to recognise that access to these services is a matter not only of health but also of social justice. In Queensland Women's Week especially, we must advocate for policies and programs that promote equitable access to sexual and reproductive health services for all women, regardless of their socio-economic status, their geographic location or any other factors, and this is exactly what our government is doing with the introduction of this bill—better health care closer to home.

I am also proud to be a woman representing one of our Queensland communities, and it is legislation like this which makes me honoured to be part of the Miles government. During this Queensland Women's Week, I would applaud anyone from the opposition to stand up in support of this bill and apologise to Queensland women and girls for never making their health and safety their priority. I commend this bill to the House.



Mr BERKMAN (Maiwar—Grn) (6.32 pm): I rise to give my contribution on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2023. We hear lots of stories in this place about our health system. We hear the government crow about its track record on health while our healthcare system is stretched beyond its absolute limits, and on the other hand we hear from the opposition going for low-hanging fruit, capitalising on issues like ambulance ramping and emergency department waiting times, trying to make out like they would somehow do a better job in government. I will have a little more to say on that later. The reality is, for as long as the government hoards a surplus while Queenslanders cannot access basic health care, and refuses to tax big corporations to pay nurses, midwives and healthcare workers fairly, no strategy or action plan or legislative reform is going to work.

This bill makes a few different reforms. I will say at the outset they are generally positive, although all incremental. None of these reforms make the kind of transformational change that our health system needs, but they are a step in the right direction. First of all, the bill amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act to ensure a newborn baby counts as a patient when staying in a room on a maternity ward with their birthing parent for the purpose of nurse and midwife-to-patient ratios. This is an important positive development and responds to a truly great campaign by the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union, the QNMU, to count the babies. It is especially important in the context of a maternity care system which is pretty daunting for people about to give birth, especially if they are outside the south-east corner. This bill also amends the Termination of Pregnancy Act and the Criminal Code to allow nurses and midwives to perform early terminations of pregnancy through the use of termination drugs. The bill also replaces references to 'woman' with 'person' in the Termination of Pregnancy Act provisions.

These developments, as I said, are all positive, but let's not kid ourselves into thinking that they are as radical as the comments section of the *Courier-Mail* might lead you to believe. Let us have a look in a little more detail at how these will sit in the landscape of our existing health system.

Counting newborn babies as a person seems a pretty obvious way to ensure ratios of nurses and midwives to patients are fair, but here we are. Strangely enough, this welcomed change and this bill will make Queensland the first jurisdiction in Australia to clarify that each baby will be counted as a separate patient when staying in the same public hospital room as their birth parent. As the QNMU said, these amendments provide much needed relief from workload pressures and ensure Queensland Health midwives feel valued, supported and heard. Ratios also enable midwives to provide Queensland families and babies with the level of care they need.

In many parts of Queensland, hospital maternity facilities have been in such a crisis, underfunded and understaffed to such an extent that some rural hospitals have been on birthing bypass for extended periods. Gladstone Hospital's 11-month maternity bypass was widely reported on, but last year it emerged that Innisfail, Mareeba, Ingham, Ayr and Dalby hospitals all had to suspend birthing services for periods during the 2022-23 reporting year. The reasons cited for the bypasses relate to workforce issues including fatigue, unsustainable on-call burdens, illness and a lack of obstetric staff or midwifery coverage. The *Courier-Mail* reported that Mareeba went on birthing bypass about 10 times and Innisfail five times. This resulted in birthing parents being transported to Cairns Hospital.

This impact on Queensland families is very real. In many parts of Queensland, having your baby near your home is simply not an option. Many local hospitals are just not birthing hospitals, meaning families have to travel hundreds of kilometres, leading to some families scheduling inductions just to ensure both parents are able to be there at the birth. Of course, in some cases, the failure of a maternity system can be absolutely tragic. The latest report on government services by the Productivity Commission found that more babies pass away during birth or within 28 days of birth than in any other state in Australia. Only the Northern Territory has a higher figure. We have a state average of 11.5 perinatal deaths per 1,000 births in Queensland compared with the national average of 8.1, and behind every single one of these deaths obviously is a devastating experience for a Queensland family and a lifetime of grief to follow.

There is one thing that can fix maternity care in Queensland and, to put it simply, it is the same thing that can fix our health system for everyone; that is, money. It is going to take billions of new dollars to create new public hospital beds, to clear the elective surgery waiting lists and to stop ambulance ramping. Again, to put it simply, no strategy or action plan is going to do that. So, it is either disingenuous or perhaps deluded for the LNP to stand up here and pretend that they would fix these things in government because we all remember their track record. We know what it looked like last time they were in power with thousands of healthcare workers losing their jobs. It is simply not credible to suggest that they would fix these issues with the same approach.

We are now left in a position where the bar has been set so low that Labor has been able to keep on underfunding our healthcare system despite any crowing about record health spending from one year to the next. A few years ago, Queensland Labor was even so bold, foolhardy perhaps, as to freeze the wages of healthcare workers during a pandemic, yet they wonder why our healthcare system is not able to take care of Queenslanders.

Improving patient ratios to reflect the new little humans in a maternity ward is a great start, but it will not fix the problems with our maternity care system or Queensland's healthcare system more broadly. We need a much bigger funding announcement to get anywhere near achieving that.


The bill takes some small but important steps towards expanding access to pregnancy terminations in Queensland by permitting nurses and midwives to prescribe a registered termination of pregnancy drug in the context of early pregnancy. As Children by Choice pointed out in its submission to the inquiry on this bill, this accords with the World Health Organization guidelines which state that a broad range of health practitioners are suitable to do this for pregnancies less than 12 weeks gestation.

Although abortion was legalised in Queensland in 2018, the barriers to actually accessing an abortion have remained indefensibly high. Again, changing the rules without actually funding the services means very little in terms of improving people's lives. Since abortion was legalised, a number of barriers have persisted, some of which have been insurmountable again, and especially, for people living in rural, regional and remote Australia.

As Children by Choice pointed out, these barriers include a lack of trained providers, high out-of-pocket costs, abortion stigma, conscientious objection and massive geographical distances to services. The reality is: many residents in regional areas still have to travel to Brisbane for surgical terminations. I note that the government's Queensland Women and Girls' Health Strategy announced this week, as well as the Termination of Pregnancy Action Plan that I understand will be released shortly, are positive developments, although I am not currently privy to what the action plan will entail. I look forward to seeing the detail.

Abortion is not just a privilege; it has to be viewed as an essential right when it comes to health care. It needs to be safe, legal and free. Right now, access to abortion outside South-East Queensland is almost non-existent and remains essentially a postcode lottery. Even here in Brisbane, accessing an abortion can be incredibly difficult if you are on a low income and cannot afford to pay. Right now, the vast majority of abortions are delivered in the private and NGO system, where costs range from \$250 to \$5,000, often with very long wait times. When abortion was legalised, Queensland hospital and health services received no additional funding for abortion services and were not compelled to provide them. Referral pathways remain incredibly unclear and completely inconsistent from hospital to hospital. Without making a serious commitment to expanding access as well as committing serious funds to this project, the Queensland government cannot rest on its laurels and consider the job of abortion reform done. I will be watching with interest to see what is announced this week.

To conclude I will say again: grand announcements without funding to match them are not going to make a difference to Queenslanders' lives. The government needs to face down the big end of town and raise revenue from those making a motza out of our current economic situation to make sure that everyday Queenslanders have the services they need. This bill does good things and has the potential to get the ball rolling on improved maternity care and improved access to abortion in Queensland, but to fully realise that it needs to come with a meaningful commitment by the Queensland government to actually fund our healthcare system to the extent it requires. Ahead of the state budget and ahead of the state election later this year, the Greens will be pushing for the government to raise more revenue from the big end of town—which can afford it—to fund better services for Queenslanders. We can have a world-class healthcare system that meets Queenslanders' needs and takes care of its own workers, but not if we keep trying to run it on the least amount of resources possible.

 **Mr BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (6.42 pm): Access to quality health care is a fundamental human right, and this bill goes some way to not only increasing access to health services for regional and rural Queenslanders but also increasing the quality of health care in terms of midwife-to-patient ratios. Before I comment on those aspects of the bill, I will respond to the member for Maiwar's contribution. Progressive coal royalties have funded a massive expansion of our healthcare system. This is well known. You would not know it from listening to the member for Maiwar's speech, but we are seeing—

Mr Berkman interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Maiwar, cease your interjections.

Mr BAILEY:—a dozen hospitals being expanded. Three new hospitals are being built. That is on top of the new hospitals we have already built in places like Roma and Kingaroy—areas that the conservative parties ignored when they were in power. We continue to work with the healthcare industry and professionals to ensure quality health care continues to increase in this state. To be frank, the funding from progressive coal royalties into our healthcare system is transformational. It is sad to see the alternative universe that the Greens party continue to put forward—they are devoid of reality—

Mr Berkman interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Maiwar is now warned under the standing orders.

Mr BAILEY: They never acknowledge the things that are actually being done. To call for yet ignore the things that are being done seems to be the Greens party's strategy. I digress.

This government pioneered nurse-to-patient ratios in 2016. We are very proud of that record. It has increased the quality of health care for Queenslanders right across our state. The ratio of one midwife to six patients including babies means a much better healthcare system for parents and the next generation. The trial that was completed in July 2023 was about laying the groundwork—working collectively with our workforce of midwives and nurses, whom we have a tremendous respect for, particularly through the Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union, to get this right. I think this measure will be welcomed by parents right across Queensland. They know that when it comes to quality health care, it is only this Miles government that has the interest in making the healthcare system better.

We have seen the opposition oppose ratios once again. What do they not understand about the 21st century? We need minimum standards of health care to ensure people are looked after in their time of need. They talk big on health, but they do not deliver in terms of voting for better health care. This is a great opportunity for the LNP to show their credentials. Once again we see weak leadership from the Leader of the Opposition—no courage, no interest in good policy, a weak approach to things and caving into vested interest—rather than focusing on the quality of health care for Queenslanders in our system. That is what we need to see.

I will comment about the access to choice for Queensland women in rural, regional and remote areas. I believe very strongly in the right to choose. It is the right of every person to make those healthcare decisions for themselves without coercion from the state or from oppressive laws. We see that right under assault worldwide. It has been taken away from millions of women in the US with the assault on the Roe v Wade decision by the Trump forces. It is not something that is secure forever; it has to be fought for. This government believes in a woman's right to choose. We also believe that women in regional, rural and remote areas should have access to that choice in a practical sense. That is what this bill provides. I am proud of this government that backs Queensland women to exercise that right and increases the access for them, if they wish to take up that right to choose. This means better health care for regional areas. Again, the LNP is failing regional Queenslanders by voting against their ability to obtain better health care.

We know what this is about. This is about our government's commitment to human rights and better health care and the opposition caving into the extreme right that is being driven by the Trumpites in the United States. We know that Amanda Stoker is not coming in here to support the status quo when it comes to the right to choose. We know what the agenda is because the Leader of the Opposition has allowed Amanda Stoker to run and join his team. What does that tell you? It tells you that those battles are in the future, but they are not willing to be honest about it.

The speaking list for this debate is very interesting. I do not see the names of the members for Clayfield or Chatsworth. We know their record on this issue, yet they do not appear to be on the speaking list.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is convention not to reflect on members who are not in the House or on the speaking list.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will seek advice. Member for Nanango, there is no point of order. The member for Miller made reference to an absence from the speaking list.

Mr BAILEY: It will be interesting to see how the members for Chatsworth and Clayfield vote on this legislation given what we know to be their small-l liberal principles—

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr BAILEY: That obviously landed. It will be interesting to see whether they continue to support their principles or whether they have been rolled by their Liberal National party room and locked into a vote. It will be very interesting to see whether they vote as per their conscience in terms of access for women and the right to choose no matter where they live in Queensland or whether they just sign up

to the partyroom vote. I will be watching. We will all be very interested to see that because we know that, with Amanda Stoker coming into this chamber, women's right to choose will be under threat from an LNP party room—

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Members to my left, order.

Mr BAILEY: We are hearing a lot of interjections from the LNP because obviously this is an issue—

Mrs Gerber interjected.

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

Mr BAILEY: They do not like their record to be outlined. The fact is when the legislation was debated in 2018 all but three of their members voted to keep the right to choose criminalised in Queensland.

Mr Perrett: As was their right.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr BAILEY: I hear an interjection from the member for Gympie and the member for Burleigh—they all voted to keep women criminalised. That is what they did.

Mr Perrett: As was their right.


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

Mr BAILEY: I remind them of their record and they continue to display that disgraceful behaviour on this bill. I expect anybody with a conscience who believes in women's right to choose to vote for this bill—full stop. There should be no compromise about that. It will be very interesting to see that because we want a better healthcare system for all Queenslanders—those in regional towns, those in remote areas, those in all parts of the state.

The reality is the technology has changed considerably so that medical terminations as opposed to surgical terminations are now often the preferred way and they are less invasive. This bill allows nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives and appropriately qualified nurses to support Queenslanders who do wish to exercise their fundamental human right to choose their future. This government will always support them to do so. We cannot rely on the LNP or the opposition to do that. They can dance around, they can use as many clever words as they want, but Queensland women need to know that if they want their right to choose maintained and expanded, as per this bill, it is the Miles government that is backing up their human rights and their healthcare system. It is the LNP who are their greatest threat.

They are getting Amanda Stoker, a far right extremist, into this chamber if she wins a seat—we will wait and see how that goes. She is being allowed into the Crisafulli team, the Leader of the Opposition's team. She is not coming here to make up the numbers. She is coming here with her agenda. She will knock someone off the frontbench on that side; there is no doubt about that. We will stand firm against that sort of right-wing extremism in the Miles Labor government. We will fight it to the end.

This is an important issue for Queensland women. I congratulate the Premier and the ministers for bringing forward this bill. This will mean better health care and better human rights for Queenslanders, particularly women, right across the state as well as patients.

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (6.53 pm): I rise to make a contribution on the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2). This bill seeks to amend four acts. Today I will speak specifically to the amendments proposed to the Termination of Pregnancy Act.

The amendments proposed further demonstrate this government's progressive and dangerous agenda. Rolled into this very important bill which supports the fantastic and essential work of midwives in supporting the health of Queenslanders is a dangerous expansion of the practitioners list of who can provide medical termination of pregnancy. This is at a cost of \$40 million to the taxpayer. That is \$40 million that could be spent on saving lives in remote and regional areas, not destroying them. It could be spent on much needed renal care such as renal services in my electorate. People quite literally are choosing to just die rather than displace themselves from family and support services to travel to some remote area on the coast. They say, 'I will just go off my renal treatment and I will just die if you can't provide that treatment.' But here we are spending money on making it easier to take human lives through that abortion process.

Termination of pregnancy, or more accurately ending an unborn child's life, is not something to take lightly and, indeed, should not have been introduced into this state in the first place. I am still baffled that after the big abortion vote in this House there was cheering and hugging. I do not think anyone involved in the whole process of termination of pregnancy is happy. It is not something to celebrate. It is a very sombre and sincere journey to go through. Associating jubilation with anything along those lines is difficult to understand to say the least.


This bill seeks to add very important and complex duties to the already full plate of health practitioners such as midwives and nurses. I note that word 'health practitioner' is no longer reserved for our most highly trained medical practitioners. What we have presented here is a bill that will terminate more lives—the lives of unborn children—and it will do so by allowing more less-trained practitioners to prescribe and administer abortion medication.

I note the concerns raised by the National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in Australia. The president of the NASOG, Dr Gino Pecoraro, was called to help save the life of a woman in 2023 after she was prescribed an abortion pill in a regional location. How many women and girls will be at risk from potentially fatal side effects? For a woman or girl to seek termination of pregnancy shows she is going through a time of great distress. So many times in this House I hear, 'We will have the support services and this will be done properly.' However, by the time these sorts of things roll out to Normanton, Julia Creek or Doomadgee, I can assure honourable members it is not how we in this House envisage it.

We need to nurture and support these women, not make it easier for them to make a life-changing—indeed life-ending—and potentially dangerous decision. Any of those new laws that we have been putting through regarding abortion have not had the commensurate level of protection—psychological support or support before and after. None of that has been made mandatory. We are all talking about the welfare of the woman, but the government is not making mandatory all these support services that should go before or after they make such a life-changing decision. It can destroy people's lives if they make the wrong decision.

Our dedicated midwives and nurses are some of the most hardworking health practitioners in the state. We should not be burdening them with the additional responsibility of prescribing and administering medical termination of life and the repercussions that come with that responsibility. I have heard a lot tonight and throughout the debate that it is always about the women's rights. We are here for the unborn children's rights and, in some cases, the born children's rights because babies have been dying on tables here in Queensland. How any of us can consider that acceptable I do not understand.

We spend so much time in this House trying to preserve life: 'Let's provide medical attention', 'Let's put in workplace health and safety so we do not have death', 'Let's look at traffic conditions so we can preserve life.' However, when does a life become a life? Is it when the child is five years or 10 years old? Is it when the baby is 20 weeks or 30 weeks old? These are human lives. We are talking about women's rights. What about that baby's rights? There are abortion survivors around the world who have gone on to live happy, fulfilling lives. That opportunity would be denied by everyone voting for this legislation here tonight because they are in a hurry to take away that option to have life. We should be here trying to preserve life and provide opportunities for people to have life, not take it away.


 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (6.58 pm): I rise to support the Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2). I will start by talking about the ratios when it comes to midwives and nurses. I am incredibly proud to be part of a government that installed that nation-leading provision. I am very thrilled that there is now a ratio when it comes to mums and bubs. I think it is great. It is a show of our support and respect as a government for nurses and midwives. People know that I could talk under wet cement about the Prince Charles Hospital in my electorate and also the RBWH, which is in Minister Grace's electorate by about 200 metres. So many of the staff, including the midwives, nurses, social workers and others to whom this bill will apply, live in my patch and I am so proud to represent them.

I want to say thank you for the kind words of members like the member for Mount Ommaney when it comes to parents who leave hospital bereaved. These are parents who have great support in our public health system but who sadly leave hospital with an empty baby seat. I want to give a shout-out to Precious Wings and Kerry.

Debate, on motion of Mr Sullivan, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Edwards, Mr T


 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.01 pm): On 16 February my grandfather—my Papa—Tom Edwards passed away peacefully in his sleep. I rise to honour him tonight not just because of his role in my very existence and his impact on my life and my values but because he was an extraordinary Queenslander who made an enormous contribution to the Ipswich community he loved so very much. Papa was a sparky turned salesman who sacrificed so much to give opportunities to everyone in our family. His life was about service—to his customers and to his community. He left school at 15 to become an apprentice electrician at his dad's business, RT Edwards. Roy, my great-grandfather, had started what became our family business for 77 years after he lost his job at the North Ipswich Railway Workshops during the Great Depression. He borrowed a few pounds off his aunty and he rode his bike door to door doing electrical repairs until he saved up enough money to set up a small shop.

At just 19 years of age, Tom was handed the reins. Through determination, aspiration and hard work, he grew RT Edwards from a small shop on East Street into a retail icon, employing 350 Queenslanders across 21 stores. He was at the forefront of electrical innovation—from connecting communities to power for the very first time to the introduction of TV, the age of the iPod and online sales. Everyone in our family grew up around that business and we learned so much from watching how he operated. I loved visiting the shop from as soon as I could walk. I learned so much following him around the sales floor and seeing how warm and genuine he was with everyone he met, and that was his secret—people. He made everyone feel valued, especially his staff.

Papa could never sit still and constantly kept himself busy. For over 25 years he served as chair of Retravisation Queensland. He was a life member of the Ipswich Show Society, a member of the Rotary Club of Ipswich for over 55 years, a member of the St Andrew's Hospital board and a life member of the Electrical Contractors Association of Australia and served in so many other voluntary roles.

Papa was proud of Ipswich. He advocated passionately for the city to have a dedicated radio station and was a driving force behind bringing a university campus to Ipswich. Faith was central to his world view. He dedicated countless hours to the Raceview Congregational Church as a life deacon and in many other roles. Fittingly, we celebrated Papa's beautiful life a couple of weeks ago in that very church, across the road from the old Queenslander he grew up in. Papa was a true gentleman and a devoted husband for 64 years to my grandmother Ivy. Vale, Thomas Haddon Edwards—Papa. On behalf of my family, thank you for everything.

Algester Electorate, Women's Week

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (7.04 pm): I provide my sincere condolences to the member for Bonney and his family on their loss.

Every year in March we celebrate the achievement of Queensland's women and girls with a great line-up of Queensland Women's Week events. As we have heard already this week, the Miles government is investing in female-specific programs and initiatives to improve lives and create stronger, healthier communities. Queensland Women's Week is also a week to acknowledge the efforts of women and girls taking genuine action to achieve gender equality.

In my electorate of Algester there are hundreds of incredible women and girls making a significant impact in our community: from the dedicated team at Belong with Miranda Mallet and Trish Edington providing support and connection to some of our most vulnerable residents to Di Henderson, the secretary of the Lions Club of Algester and Parkinson, who goes above and beyond to support others with fundraising to support sick kids, raising money to buy vital equipment for local ambulance committees and schools, and supporting a range of other initiatives including the well-attended Algester Queensland Day celebrations.


In Hillcrest we have Kathy and Tomeeka Smith from Defenders for Hope, which helps survivors of domestic and family violence and women experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness whilst also running local op shops. They involve the broader community in supplying Defender support packs that are specifically prepared for the individual circumstances of families, youth, homeless Queenslanders or those with sensory needs. Our school principals, deputy principals and teachers also dedicate their day to empowering and strengthening the resilience of Queensland school-age girls, and

they include Sue Howell from Calamvale Special School, Lisa Starmer from Calamvale Community College, Murri School's Tanya Saltner, Janine Leach at Algester State School, Natalie Trew from Acacia Ridge State School and Pallara State School's Jayne Farrell.

I have also had the pleasure of working alongside the Algester electorate's YMCA youth parliamentarians. Most recently Algester youth parliamentarian Saakshi Datt held the portfolio of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships and helped organise NAIDOC Week celebrations in the electorate. Just two weeks ago I met incredible Calamvale Community College graduate Mahalia Mairu, who this year starts her tertiary education at Griffith University studying a Bachelor of Contemporary Australian Indigenous Art. Mahalia has earned high distinctions in the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation's art competition over consecutive years.

The women of the Algester electorate are united in their collective efforts to make our community a better place, each bringing their own brand of innovation, passion and understanding. I am pleased to be able to recognise many of these amazing women at my upcoming International Women's Day and Queensland Women's Week breakfast later this week in the Algester electorate. I want to wish everybody in the Algester electorate and across our great state a very happy International Women's Day and a happy Queensland Women's Week.


Currumbin Electorate, Fight 4 Youth

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (7.07 pm): Over the past couple of months I have travelled this state to speak with stakeholders about youth crime. In particular, I have travelled this state to speak with community-based organisations that are delivering what I would call gold standard early intervention programs. What I have discovered is that many of these fantastic non-government charities or community-based organisations that are working tirelessly to step up and address the youth crime crisis gripping our state do not receive any ongoing funding from the state government. Due to the rising costs because of the cost-of-living crisis, many of these fantastic organisations are struggling to keep their doors open. One of these organisations is a local charity in my own backyard of Currumbin. I have spoken about the great work that it does many times in this House, and I have written to the minister more times than I can count to advocate for funding for it. I am talking about Fight 4 Youth, run by the wonderful Leisa Logan—a charity that receives no ongoing state funding. Despite reaching out to the government for support and my continued advocacy for it, it is now at risk of closing its doors due to the rising costs because of the cost-of-living crisis and a lack of funding from the state government.

Fight 4 Youth is an early intervention charity making a real difference on the ground to the safety of our community with its inclusive, multicultural youth centre, which supports both youth at risk of becoming offenders and coming into contact with the youth justice system and youths who are already in the youth justice system and serious repeat offenders. It provides a diverse range of youth programs including a school-based suspension program, crime prevention for young offenders, life skills for disengaged youth and community service programs. Leisa and her team have been running these youth programs for free for the last 8½ years, donating their time and skills to strengthening relationships in our communities and reducing youth crime and antisocial behaviour. It has partnered with the local QPS and also our schools to deliver its suspension program.

Fight 4 Youth is at risk of closing its doors because of a lack of funding. It is at risk of not being able to continue to deliver these services. I say to the state government and to the youth justice minister that if they are serious about trying to address youth crime and if they are serious about early intervention programs, they need to start funding early intervention programs that are delivering gold standard early intervention in our communities. These organisations are doing the job of the state government. They are turning the lives of youth around and they deserve funding from the state government. In a last-ditch effort, I want to tell the House that it is holding a fundraiser. Tickets are only \$30, so if you can come along please support it. It is on 31 May from 5 pm. It is called Fight for a Cause.

Women and Girls' Health Strategy

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation) (7.10 pm): Too many women have experienced feeling dismissed or unheard when seeking the health care that they need. Our mothers, our grandmothers, our daughters, our sisters—most can probably cast their mind to a time that they have had to push to be heard, to have their pain taken seriously, to get the treatment they need and the care that they deserve. I, like many Queensland women, am not a stranger to this feeling and I have heard from women in my electorate of Nudgee stories with similar concerns. When the health minister released our new Women and Girls' Health Strategy this week, a first in our state's history, I thought and reflected on the

experience of my mother in her mid-40s, the age that I am now. For two years she was told that her pain and growing abdominal discomfort was bloating, menopause and, ultimately, just something in her head—anything but the very real pain that she was experiencing. At 46 she was diagnosed with advanced stage ovarian cancer and died a week after my 28th birthday. I do not know what an earlier diagnosis might have meant to her life and to mine, but women know their bodies and they should be heard.

This is not the experience that our government wants for Queensland women and girls. While I absolutely commend each and every healthcare worker in our state, including my husband—himself a clinical educator—and I commend the excellent care that I have received in other stages in life, including during my pregnancies and hospitalisation of my children at different times, there is more work to do to improve the system as a whole, and that is what we are doing. We are acting. We have heard the voices of over 12,000 Queenslanders that helped to shape our new Women and Girls' Health Strategy, a first in our state's history—a strategy that will deliver a huge expansion to women's health care with things like free nurse-led women's health clinics, better care for pelvic pain and endometriosis, public access to IVF for those facing medical conditions which risk their fertility and a dedicated women's health helpline, just to name a few.

Like many Queensland women I am a mother and, like many, I have experienced the grief of the loss of a pregnancy or, in my case, two. To know that our new strategy will also include increased mental health resourcing to support Queensland women through this and other deeply challenging maternal experiences is to be assured that the support needed to navigate such a difficult time in a woman's life will be accessible. Our government is one that is here for women, whether it is delivering on their health needs, acting on their right to physical safety or their economic security. It is only a Labor government that will truly hear, respect and respond to the voices of all Queensland women.

Gympie Electorate, Power Supply



Mr PERRETT (Gympie—LNP) (7.13 pm): I table a nonconforming petition from 869 residents and a photo of a substation on Curra Estate Road.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding the upgrade and establishment of infrastructure to ensure a sustainable and reliable power supply in Curra and surrounds [314].


Tabled paper: Photograph depicting a Curra substation site [315].

This petition adds to the one organised by Celeste Rigby and tabled on Tuesday. Curra residents are fed up. They are forced to endure rolling extended power outages. It is unacceptable. *Gympie Today* called it Third World conditions. One resident said, 'It feels like we are stuck in the Middle Ages.' There have been more than a dozen outages since just before Christmas. Some have lasted days; all during heatwaves. It is untenable. This has been ongoing for decades and the situation keeps getting worse. Constant assurances it is being fixed are unreliable. Claiming they have been caused by weather events is gaslighting. Residents are keeping tabs on when and how long these outages are. They know they are not planned and caused by weather events. They are sick of the excuses.

When you gaslight residents they wonder what you are hiding. Has this resulted from years of ignoring problems and deteriorating infrastructure, a lack of care, of maintenance and planning for a growing region? The government has form. Residents point to an unused substation which is overgrown with weeds and is a dumping site for equipment. Ergon says it is for anticipated future development. The site was purchased more than a decade ago. Since then 140 homes have been built just 200 metres away.

The blackouts are creating significant risks and massive health, personal and financial hardship. A palliative care nurse had to transfer a dying patient to the hospital because medical equipment and air conditioning would not work. Ergon told her to call emergency services. An elderly couple were trapped in their electric controlled chairs. Residents are vulnerable when fridges do not work, medications which require temperature controlled storage are compromised, personal hygiene is compromised, communications do not work and essential home healthcare equipment does not work, home water pumps do not work, you cannot shower, toilets do not flush, life-saving equipment either does not work or is damaged, the same with computers and CPAP machines. Residents are cut off, unable to communicate because they cannot charge phones, devices or access TVs. Under soaring cost-of-living pressures the last thing people need is lost productivity from the inability to work from home, unreliable medical equipment and appliances or lost food. Many on low incomes or pensions feel forced to buy generators and employ an electrician to ensure connection. The minister says it will be fixed at the end of the month; Ergon says the middle of the year. No-one has faith.


Housing, Critical Response Teams

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (7.16 pm): We on this side of the House know that housing is a national challenge that followed the economic impacts of the global pandemic of a number of years ago that is still having economic impacts on us today. There are pressures on homeowners, renters, those in affordable and social housing and also on our pensioners in our retirement villages. Our Homes for Queenslanders plan is a plan that continues our response to supporting those in challenging situations. We have had recent announcements of 20 per cent boosted funding to our non-government organisations and I want to pay tribute to the three NGOs in Bundaberg, Regional Housing Limited, St Vinnies and the Salvation Army, and all of their staff who do an incredible job to respond to the challenges on the ground in Bundaberg. I also want to make sure that I pay tribute to our hardworking public servants through the Department of Housing who work hard each and every single day to ensure that individuals and families have a roof over their head and are safe during these very challenging times.

Last week Minister Scanlon came to Bundaberg to announce the rollout of the critical response team. The critical response team will be dedicated housing staff. That means that their sole focus will be going out to those locations where we know that there are people sleeping rough, taking down their information and finding out what is the best way that we can assist them, whether it is through social housing or RentConnect, and making sure that we are getting a roof over their heads. I pay tribute to the minister. I asked the minister to walk through one of those hotspots in Bundaberg with me and to talk to people who were doing it tough. Through our conversations we then linked those people with the department and that very night they had accommodation. One of those individuals was a gentleman—it was his first night of being homeless—and another individual was a mother looking after her son. We got them accommodation that very night. That is what the critical response team will be doing in Bundaberg, but also as it rolls out across Queensland.

I want to pay tribute to Amy and Floyd who, through our RentConnect program, have been able to find a house. Amy and Floyd are your everyday Queensland mum and dad. They go to work, they make sure that the kids go to school and they are building a home for their family. Every renter can think of the house they are in as a home if it means that their family are there together and safe. That is what our plan is: Homes for Queenslanders. It is a home for families; it is a home for every Queenslanders.

Noosa Electorate, Transport Infrastructure


 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (7.19 pm): I would like to send my condolences to the member for Bonney. Grandpas are magic. It is only eight years until the Brisbane Olympics—that is two terms. The projected impacts require serious commitments in multiple realms, including strategic transport to mitigate further congestion, parking rage and environmental carnage for Noosa. With the Sunshine Coast rail line project being partially funded there is hope as well as concern. Will the modal shift that has been touted for decades eventuate, lessening our overburdened M1 and its tributaries or will it lead to more cars when they hop of at Caloundra en route to their Noosa base?

With the Commonwealth government increasing net inward migration to over half a million in 2022-23 yet making no real contribution to what is needed and cancelling grants already approved for the states, I am very concerned. My community is constrained and under ongoing strain. To accommodate Olympic visitors as well as projected population increases within our region, we must finish the projects that are already underway such as the next stages of the Tewantin bypass. With the population explosion to our north, we need the north coast rail study finalised and the rail shuttle from Gympie North to Nambour initiated. We need pedestrian crossings at our hot spots and an end to the inappropriate volume of heavy haulage that has decimated our sleepy villages. We need better public transport links to hospital and university precincts to our south and essential bicycle path links. A faster rollout of smaller electric busses is a must.

Noosa is already gridlocked every weekend and has been since COVID, whether into Hastings Street or in the line-up to the North Shore. To reduce volume, the state must release those long-awaited recommendations regarding Cooloola. It must work with the Noosa council on projects to address congestion and resident amenity in preparation. What will that look like? Resident permits? Visitor parking stations and electric shuttles? Safe transit bike lanes or pathways? There are lots of questions. The old adage that congestion itself will keep visitor numbers manageable has been shown to be a furphy—just ask any resident or visitor who has sat for two hours as they tried to reach their home or holiday let just a kilometre down the road.

We need to see a coordinated plan as currently there are only fragments, silos and a vacuum. We need the three levels of government to work together with binding bilateral and bipartisan agreements to fund infrastructure and initiatives without the uncertainty that changing governments bring. We need more than hype. We need solid reassurances. Let's see the action now so we can celebrate later.

Stafford Electorate, School Transport Infrastructure Program


 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (7.21 pm): I rise to celebrate the fantastic news that our School Transport Infrastructure Program, STIP, has achieved great results for two local school communities. At Wavell Heights, I have been onsite with the principal many times where \$307,000 is being spent across school and parish land as well as on the council road access. This will double the drop-off and pick-up zones. I think everybody who has kids will know what that means. Huge improvements will be made to pedestrian access and safety for students, which is really our priority. It will also provide improved cover so that kids do not get wet when it rains or burnt on hot days, particularly at pick-up time.

I thank Matt and the entire leadership team. Over the past 18 months or so they have worked closely with government to get us where we are today. I am very proud of what has been achieved. I look back on the early meetings and compare that to where we are today, with secured funding. I cannot wait to see the work begin, obviously around school demand. I thank the DTMR officers, the Minister for Transport, who signed off on it, and the former minister for transport who instigated the program. It is great to see.

Secondly, I want to talk about the Turner Road precinct and two projects that will impact three schools. Mount Alvernia College, Padua College and St Anthony's Primary School are effectively co-located. It is quite a unique situation. They will receive \$479,000 to improve three crossings that are among the busiest across the north side. The zebra crossings will be turned into wombat crossings, which will slow down traffic. That is great news for what is called the Foth, the Franciscans on the Hill community. I cannot wait to see that. There is close coordination between all three schools across four co-located campuses, plus the two OSHC providers that operate onsite.

The strength of the application was recognised in the cross-campus existence of students that already exists. Shockingly, when we sent the application to the LNP council they said, 'No, we don't think you need to do anything. We don't support your application, but we won't stop you going ahead with it.' Basically, they graciously said that they would not stop us from doing their job. A week later, they found extra money for a location that was 500 metres away and totally unrelated to our plan. I will keep working for my community. I will keep working for our schools in a coordinated fashion and I am not going to let politics get in the way of it.

Bremer River Bridge

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (7.24 pm): We have had 'rail fail' and now we have 'bridge fail'. Ipswich West residents are being kept in the dark over the Bremer River Bridge delays. On 29 February, *Greater Springfield Today* published an article titled 'Did Bremer bridge heal itself? No answer from TMR.' The article states—

The saga of the crumbling Bremer River Bridge on the Warrego Highway continues as Transport and Main Roads defends seven months of unspecified works that have failed to yield any progression, or to reveal a plan to repair it.

It is very interesting that the article went on to quote the former member for Ipswich West, Jim Madden, who talked about the things that people in Ipswich West and surrounding areas see as bandaids solutions. That was put to the then minister for transport and main roads, who pretty much used the Schultz defence: 'I know nothing!' The more things change, the more little changes.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Obviously I find those comments personally offensive. I ask that they be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): The member for Miller finds your comments offensive. Do you withdraw?


Mr MINNIKIN: I withdraw. Crossovers for contraflow and associated infrastructure are being installed at the Bremer River Bridge due to maintenance work being done on westbound issues. That would indicate that significant closures will be happening soon but—and here is the rub—residents are not being told anything prior to the Ipswich West by-election. Last year TMR identified significant

maintenance issues on the westbound Bremer River Bridge, hence the article. The department has since imposed load limits and speed reductions, which are not only significantly impacting heavy vehicle movements but also causing inconvenience to the good burghers of Ipswich West.

We know all too well about the impacts that 'rail fail' had a couple of years ago, and now we have 'bridge fail'. TMR, through the minister, is not being transparent so that, pre-poll and on the big dance day, the people can use their 2B lead pencils to cast proper judgement. This government does not want Queenslanders to know exactly what is happening with that important piece of infrastructure.

If this government's behaviour is not going to change then it is time to change the government. The people of Ipswich West can start that change at their by-election. The LNP has a great candidate for Ipswich West in Darren Zanow. Darren has been hitting the ground running. He has been doorknocking. He knows exactly the lay of the land. I have spent time out there with him, as have many of my colleagues from this side of the chamber. I can tell the House that he absolutely knows what is required—that is, a change to an LNP member at the coming by-election. Darren will be the man.

Mundingburra Electorate, Investment

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (7.27 pm): This morning Premier Steven Miles reminded us of the involvement of the LNP opposition leader, David Crisafulli, in the savage cuts inflicted on Queenslanders when he was in government with Campbell Newman. I was reading a *Courier-Mail* article dated 4 September 2012 in which the LNP premier Campbell Newman is quoted. The article states, 'Premier Campbell Newman denies cutting frontline services despite 200 health jobs—including 45 nurses—being axed.' Those 45 nurses were in Townsville.

The rot did not stop there under the LNP's reign of terror—cutting, sacking and selling. The opposition leader, David Crisafulli, cut and ran from the state seat of Mundingburra, knowing that his LNP government had caused so much damage across North Queensland. The opposition leader was a minister in the Campbell Newman LNP government that closed the 123-year-old Stuart State School in my seat of Mundingburra. I was there with the mums and dads and their children who were crying about the loss of their beloved school. The care factor from the opposition leader, David Crisafulli, was nil! There is a shopping list of LNP asset sales, sackings and cuts right across Townsville. The LNP opposition leader, David Crisafulli, was there all the way and did nothing but support it and promote it. There is a stark difference between the Miles Labor state government, which has the Big Build program that is already delivering positive results for Queenslanders, and those opposite, who walk around with their empty folders collecting stamps. There is a very stark difference.

I am immensely proud to say that I am delivering for the people of my seat of Mundingburra and the region. I will remind the deserter of Mundingburra what is being delivered for my constituents—things he failed to deliver: the \$530 million expansion of the Townsville University Hospital with 143 new beds, new theatres and a new rooftop helipad; \$99 million for the second bridge for Bowen Road, making it a four-lane river crossing; \$97 million for the upgrade of Stuart Drive to four lanes; \$17 million for the Townsville Community Learning Centre upgrade, with a new school hall and new classrooms with state-of-the-art teaching aids to assist those with a disability; \$13.5 million for the new William Ross School Hall; \$9 million for the new active transport corridor for the residents of Wulguru, Stuart and Fairfield Waters; and the list goes on. I have done that as a first-term state member for the seat of Mundingburra and I will continue to deliver for the people of Mundingburra.

The House adjourned at 7.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Crandon, Crawford, Crisafulli, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gerber, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Head, Healy, Hinchliffe, Hunt, Janetzki, Katter, 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, Mullen, Nicholls, O'Connor, O'Rourke, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stevens, Stewart, Sullivan, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting