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Email: hansard@parliament.qld.gov.au

Phone (07) 3553 6344

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 2 May 2024

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THURSDAY, 2 MAY 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.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

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 Rochedale State School in the electorate of Mansfield and Moorooka State School in the electorate of Toohey.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Gygar, Mr TJ



Hon. SJ MILES (Murrumba—ALP) (Premier) (9.31 am): I move—

1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Terence Joseph Gygar, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.
2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the Members of the Parliament of Queensland, in the loss they have sustained.

Terry Gygar was born in 1947 in Tamworth, New South Wales. He moved with his family to Queensland as a nine-year-old, finishing his schooling at St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace. He decided at a young age to serve and protect his country, joining the Army Reserve and then the regular Army in 1967. For two years, he served in Vietnam.

After heeding the call to serve his country, Terry Gygar turned his service to the community. He was elected to this House as the Liberal member for Stafford in 1974. It would be a turbulent and historic time in Queensland politics and Terry Gygar was at its heart. Along with Liberal colleagues who became known as the Ginger Group, he stood up to and took on the power of his coalition partners and Joh Bjelke-Petersen on a number of issues such as the demolition of Cloudland and the Bellevue Hotel.

Political skirmishes led to all-out war with some in his own party, the Nationals and Sir Joh when the Ginger Group stood by their principles over parliamentary reform and transparency, demanding the establishment of a public accounts committee. It would tear the coalition apart, but Terry Gygar was a man of conviction who fought for what was right. He would lose his seat, though, at the ensuing state election. He returned to parliament at a by-election a year later, serving for another five years. I did not know Terry but Lane Calcutt tells me he was a really nice man.

Post parliament, Terry Gygar turned to law and worked as a barrister before the supreme, federal and high courts, before a distinguished career in academia at Bond University. Terry Gygar's was a life well lived: decorated soldier, a politician of principle and conviction, and a successful student and teacher of the law.

Terry Gygar sadly passed away in March. I know the House will join me in thanking Terry Gygar for his decades of service to the military, law, academia and our democratic processes and institutions, and in passing on our condolences and best wishes to Terry's wife, Linda; daughter, Corinne; brother John and his wife, Val; who are with us today. Vale, Terry Gygar.



Mr CRISAFULLI (Broadwater—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.34 am): The opposition supports the motion moved this morning by the Premier to recognise the service to this House and the state of Queensland by Terry Gygar, a former Liberal Party member for Stafford. Terry created for

himself three distinct careers: as a soldier serving in Vietnam, as a member of this House and as a lawyer and academic at Bond University.

Born in New South Wales, Terry Gygar completed his schooling at St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace, before joining the Australian Army in 1967 after a period in the then Citizen Military Forces, now the Army Reserve. Terry's time in the Army was characterised by accelerated promotion. After gaining a commission from the Officer Training Unit at Scheyville, serving in the infantry and graduating with flying qualifications from the Army Aviation Corps at Point Cook, Terry was promoted to lieutenant and served in the 161 Independent Reconnaissance Flight unit in Vietnam in 1970 and 1971. In December 1972, he resigned his regular Army commission with the rank of captain and continued to serve in the Queensland University Regiment until 1986.

Commencing a law degree at the University of Queensland in 1973, Terry was instrumental in aiding the Liberal student responses to the newly elected Whitlam government on campus. It was here that he honed his skills as an accomplished debater and vocal advocate for his cause in what was regarded as a challenging domain for his side of politics. The December 1974 election, which saw Terry elected as the member for Stafford, was groundbreaking: 17 National Party members took their seats for the first time as well as a further 10 new Liberal members. That election did much to change the face of Queensland politics and, in time, Terry Gygar would be at the forefront of that change.

Terry will be remembered as one of this House's most vocal advocates for a new approach to politics in the last quarter of the 20th century. He believed the best debate was robust debate, whatever the issue. He was determined never to leave the House in any doubt as to exactly where he stood on an issue.

On one occasion, Terry moved a motion condemning the demolition of the Bellevue Hotel on the corner of George and Alice streets in April 1979. Though defeated by 30 votes to 41, 12 other Liberals voted in support of the motion. This morning I spoke with Linda over coffee with you, Mr Speaker. She informed me that, when Terry found out where the bricks were sent after the demolition, he went and grabbed them and built a front fence for somebody. That shows the fortitude of them both as a couple.


At the same time, Terry Gygar served on a range of parliamentary and party committees, believing that such involvement could only improve the effectiveness and the standing of the parliament at a time when it was not held in high regard. Despite all this, Terry remained an assiduous worker in his electorate. Before electorate offices acquired a capacity for direct mail and extensive technology, Terry pioneered the use of the limited resources available at the time—a dictaphone, a typewriter and, later, a word processor—to keep in touch with his constituents. Over time, his pioneering efforts were adopted by a number of his parliamentary colleagues to strengthen their connections with their own electorates.

In 1983, Terry Gygar was defeated but returned to the House in a by-election in August 1984. His defeat and re-election did nothing to curb his desire for change or his impassioned advocacy of those things in which he believed. He never took a backward step and was always prepared to defend his position.

In December 1989, Terry lost his seat and was propelled towards his third career as a lawyer and academic. He completed a law degree at Bond University, graduating with honours and being awarded the university's inaugural Gold Medal in Law. Upon graduation, he was offered an appointment as assistant professor in the Bond University Faculty of Law. At various times, he held the positions of Associate Dean of Law, Chief of Staff to the Bond University Vice-Chancellor and Acting Director of External Relations. Terry Gygar's academic achievements were significant, including gaining a Master of Laws in 2014.

Terry's time at Bond University provided a further opportunity to demonstrate his preparedness to fight for causes in which he believed. In 1999, when Bond University's existence was threatened, he was a vocal advocate for the campaign to keep Bond University as a private institution and celebrated when it won its full independence.


Whatever challenge Terry Gygar took on he did with enthusiasm, unstinting drive and dedication. His success in three careers—as a soldier, a member of this House, and a lawyer and academic—are to his great credit and for which different communities will remember him. Yet it is as a husband and father that Terry will be remembered by his family. We offer our condolences to his wife, Linda; his daughter, Corrinne; and his brother John and his wife, Val, who are present in the gallery today. Terry Gygar fought the good fight and will remain in the memories of very many people. Vale, Terry.

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (9.39 am): I rise to support the motion of condolence for the former member for Stafford, Terence 'Terry' Gygar. It was touching to meet his family before this morning's debate. I thank the Speaker for enabling that. Over the years since Terry's service the electorate of Stafford has changed in terms of demographics. At the good will of the ECQ, boundaries have moved in and out. The seat was abolished by the ECQ in 1992 but recreated in 2001 with the amalgamation of the then Chermside and Kedron electorates. It is indeed an honour and a privilege to speak on behalf of the broader northside community to pay tribute to Terry Gygar and his service. I did seek permission from his family to refer to him as Terry rather than 'the former member' to be more personal. With the reintroduction of the electorate of Stafford it is an even more meaningful honour to speak as the member bearing the name of the electorate that Terry served.

I never had the privilege of meeting Terry—perhaps we mixed in different circles—but I did know his name, and I will come back to that shortly. I want to associate myself with the contributions from the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition because what is clear is that Terry's life was a life of service. From the research I have delved into and as has been outlined, his life really was one of different versions of service: the military, at home and abroad. As it turns out, his time in Vietnam coincided with that of my uncle and godfather. Political differences aside, he served his community well. He was a supporter and member of many local organisations. I do not want to be flippant on a day like today, but I am not sure his family will have this front of mind. I want to share that research has shown that back in the day he was patron of the Kedron Heights Kindergarten, a beautiful community kindy that is thriving today. I hope Terry found it amusing, as I do, that the Kedron Heights kindy is at the bottom of a hill.

In terms of political service, he was first elected in 1974 until his defeat in the 1989 Goss government election. I mentioned earlier that I did not have the privilege of knowing Terry but that I knew of him. Having grown up in a somewhat political household—I do not want to be referred to the Ethics Committee—having grown up in a very political household—mum and dad—I was taught about this almost mythical creature 'Terry Gygar' who had lost his seat to our own legend Denis Murphy but who had the political skill and community connection to win it back for the Liberals at the by-election, even when that by-election was only caused because of the death of Denis Murphy. Politically that is saying something. It is also obvious from Terry's background that he was a member of substance. Again not of my political persuasion, but I respect the work that he did internally on his side of politics, in youth politics, in policy committees and then in this House in state committees. He was not a flake. He was not a blow-in. He was the real deal. He was a man of substance.

I have thought long and hard about how to convey this next contribution with honesty, sensitivity and respect—and I genuinely hope that his family and the Leader of the Opposition take it in the spirit in which it is intended: the time that Terry served in this parliament was one of great cultural change for Queensland, but also linked to what could be delicately described as a time of great challenge to integrity and institutions in government and to democracy itself. I believe the history books will record Terry Gygar to be on the right side of history. I believe that he should rightfully be remembered as a man of impeccable character and community focus. Those words, of course, mean nothing compared to the grief felt by his family, and they are foremost in our minds, but let the record show that in uniform, in this House, in law and in academia, he leaves a fine legacy indeed. Vale, Terry Gygar.

 **Mr LANGBROEK** (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (9.44 am): Terry Gygar was a decent man. Others have spoken of his Army, academic and political career. I want to speak a little about when I first got to know him, which was after the unsuccessful by-election that I contested in 2001. The Liberals had three seats in that particular parliament and I had run in a by-election to replace Rob Borbidge who had been the National Party member for Surfers Paradise. A whole army of Liberal volunteers, none of whom I knew, came to help. We were not successful in that by-election but subsequently Terry came and spoke to the branch. Being a member of the Liberal Party at that stage in Surfers Paradise, which had been held for over 20 years by the National Party, having someone like Terry come to tell us about his history and the things that had motivated him to join the Liberal Party and define what liberalism meant to him was something that was pretty powerful for me and that I never forgot through all the subsequent years that I saw him here, which I will refer to later.

Terry told me that he was motivated through his Army service to run for the Liberal Party because of the Maritime Union boycotting the transport of munitions during the Vietnam War. Many Australians saw that as abrogating their responsibility to support our troops. For those who want to speak about character, he showed absolute character in what he did and then ran for Stafford. As the member for Stafford has referred to, he subsequently lost to Dr Denis Murphy who was renowned as a great friend of Peter Beattie and historian for the Labor Party who unfortunately never got to give his maiden speech. Terry told me that he was ready with military precision when the by-election was called and

subsequently beat the National Party candidate by a couple of hundred votes because of that military precision. It was those preferences that subsequently propelled him over the line to return here until 1989 when, it has been mentioned, he lost with the election of the Goss government.


He would speak to me at times when he would come to this House with his students from Bond Uni, where we have heard that he became an esteemed lecturer. He would often bring his students here. Many of them were from overseas, as Bond students are, and I used to think it was quite perplexing—they were quite perplexed, I think, about state politics in Queensland given that they had come from countries all over the world. Many students enjoyed taking his class at Bond Uni. He wrote a mootings manual that is referred to in his significant achievements. Bond University has a stellar reputation when it comes to international moot competitions. The member for Mermaid Beach is not here, but Bond University is in his electorate. Students from Bond compete very successfully in those international competitions and it was Terry Gygar who instigated that success.

I also want to refer to another time that not many members will know about. The member for Clayfield may well remember this. In 2007, after the election of the Rudd government, the eight Liberals who were here thought it might be a good time to dispose of our then leader under the cover of a new election. Unfortunately, we had an even number of MPs, which can be a little difficult in a leadership ballot. As I was the secretary of the parliamentary Liberal Party at the time, I recorded the ballots. I have given them to David Fraser who has the records of the Liberal Party from that period. I cannot remember how many ballots there were—I think it was 19—but it was four all every time. I do not think anyone has ever referred to this publicly, apart from Eric Idle from Monty Python at a concert over at the convention centre joking that he was the then leader of the Liberal Party. The person we brought in to be the mediator was someone who had the respect of everyone on our side, and that was Terry Gygar. We finished with a result that ended up with the then member for Caloundra, Mark McArdle, as the leader, Tim Nichols as the deputy and I had to wait for another day!

Government members interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I had loftier ambitions, Mr Speaker. One of the things that we have tried to ascertain is whether he was on the committee that oversaw the refurbishment that many members of my vintage will remember. I thought he was. In the late seventies this building was covered with red and white tarpaulins because of West Indian termites. We built the annexe in the late 1970s. I was at the University of Queensland and did not really know what happened in this place—and some would suggest I still do not really know what happens here. He told me that they spent \$30 million refurbishing this place. The member for Bonney and I often do tours and we talk about that. This building was completed in 1868 and just over 100 years later when they decided to refurbish it, Terry said they spent \$30 million doing it. The equivalent in 2006 or 2007 would have been \$300 million, and it would be even more now, but of course it is our finest heritage building. As we have heard, Terry was very proud. He was a staunch defender of tradition in terms of buildings such as the Bellevue Hotel and the parliament itself.

As I said, he was a very decent man whose company I always enjoyed. When he would bring students here from Bond, he would normally get a couple of us to speak to them not about politics but to welcome them to the parliament and explain a little about our system. I was very sad to hear of his loss. I want to pass on my best wishes to Linda and the family.

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (9.51 am): I rise to join this condolence motion to express my great sadness at learning of the death of Terry Gygar. I join the member for Stafford in having had a strong awareness for many years of Terry Gygar in his role as the member for Stafford—obviously, I also served the electorate of Stafford. I heard the references to his great, extensive patronages. Terry Gygar was a great patron of so many community organisations in that part of the north side. Indeed, when I was first elected as the member for Stafford in 2006, he was the patron of a number of organisations. I would come along and introduce myself to the group and subtly hint that I would be happy to serve as a patron if they would like to have me. They would say, 'No, no, no, Terry's been looking after us'—and he had been even though by that stage he was deeply ensconced on the Gold Coast. He remained engaged and supportive of those organisations and communities.

Terry was, as we have heard from all contributors to this condolence motion, a man of principle and a man of integrity. That is borne out by the level of service that he contributed in all of his realms of contribution: as a soldier, as a parliamentarian, as a lawyer and as an academic. In all the dealings I had with him—and most of them were not too dissimilar to the member for Surfers Paradise—while he was in that role at Bond University and bringing groups to this parliament, he reached out to me as the member for Stafford and wanted to engage me by inviting me to be part of those opportunities as

well. It was a great pleasure to meet with the students and to meet Terry and to learn from him and talk to him about this place and about Queensland more generally. He was always very generous in the ways in which he contributed his insights and shared them with someone from the other side of the political divide. He was genuine about sharing the insights that we all could share with his students and with those people he enjoyed bringing to this place, because of the many associations he had not only as a parliamentarian but also as he felt like a custodian of this House.

Hence, I think one of his high points was very much as part of the Ginger Group, alongside Terry White and others in the Liberal Party at the time, when he moved the motion referred to by the Leader of the Opposition condemning the demolition of the Bellevue in 1979. I think it was on 24 April—some four days after the demolition occurred. He, along with so many others, turned up and was amongst the chaos of the Deen brothers taking down the Bellevue with, might I say, very little of what we would regard today as workplace health and safety. In regard to some of the processes we have seen with the refurbishment of the Annexe in terms of the exclusion zones and all sorts of things, it was not the way it was done in 1979 on the other side of Alice Street. In Terry's motion concerning the demolition of the Bellevue, he spoke of seeing a police officer hit by one of the trucks and of other bystanders impacted by the poorly managed nature of the demolition. He was across everything. He heard the news and came to be a witness to what was going on.

Terry Gygar's career as the member for Stafford was one that was emblematic of the political times but also of his nature and his commitment. We have heard references to his innovation and his commitment to connecting with his community. His election as the member for Stafford came in December 1974. It was a bit of a wipe-out for the Labor Party at the time. The opportunity was taken up by so many members across the aisle. He did so in a way where he took greatest advantage of the connections and identity that he already had.

Obviously, I pay tribute to his service to our nation as a member of the Australian Army and his service in Vietnam—something with which many members of the Stafford community at that time identified. It was very much a residential area for soldiers connected with the Enoggera Barracks. There was a lot of defence housing and public housing occupied by Army families, including Keith Payne VC.

His election in 1974 came off the back of the opportunity that the broader political environment established but also off the connections that he—and probably only he alone—could have made in so many ways with that community. He built on them and he sustained them. It was really only the circumstances of the 1983 election that resulted in him being displaced and not being successful at that election. We saw the split in the coalition—the coalition agreement being torn up by Terry White—and the reverberation that happened from traditional National Party and Country Party associated people, of whom there were many, and particularly ones who might have been more of the DLP background rather than the traditional Country Party background in Stafford. Their votes did not flow to him as Liberal candidate. If we look at the records of that election, there was great leakage of preferences to the Labor Party candidate, Denis Murphy.


The other element of that was the uptick in opportunity for new approaches, new faces and new capability in the Labor Party at the time. It was still a bit too early for the full swing—that came back to revisit Terry in 1989—but Denis Murphy was seen as a great hope for the Labor Party. He was a capable person of great intellect and insight who, sadly, as we have heard alluded to, not long after his election in 1983 was struck down by cancer and this inhibited his ability to serve, and did not get the chance to deliver his first speech in this House. I acknowledge the member for Surfers Paradise's reference to the 'military operation' that swung into action. The local Liberal Party behind Terry Gygar took advantage of that situation both ruthlessly and, as we all do in political contest, absolutely appropriately.

I have heard reference to this from people locally over many years—people like Ken Storey, a great stalwart of the Labor Party in that part of the world. He said that Terry Gygar continued to act like the member. He got out there and continued to engage, particularly in the absence of Denis Murphy. When that by-election occurred—and there are many stories about that by-election and what went on, including the commitment to having a dental hospital, which is still there effectively within the grounds of the Stafford State School, which is a very poor place to have a dental hospital, but it was a very effective combination of actions by the government at the time.

Ultimately it resulted in preferences then flowing back to Terry Gygar for his re-election in 1984 in that by-election only to be subsequently and ultimately defeated, despite his good standing and good connection with the community, in the significant sway that happened after 32 years of conservative rule in Queensland. The election of the Goss Labor government in 1989 saw Terry defeated by Rod

Welford in the seat of Stafford. That was again part of the confluence of statewide matters that even overtook the extraordinary way in which Terry Gygar had entrenched himself—to use another military term—in the electorate of Stafford.

Finally, I want to reiterate how Terry Gygar was regarded by all—on all sides of politics and in all parts of the community as far as I have ever seen—as a man of integrity and of absolute commitment to his public service. I express my condolences particularly to Linda and the family and pay my very best respects to the service that Terry Gygar has rendered to this House and to the whole of our community. Vale, Terry Gygar.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (10.01 am): Perhaps more than any members in this House I have a long history with Terry Gygar. Terry Gygar was the member for Stafford when I joined the Young Liberals in 1983 obviously as a very young and impressionable student back in those days. Terry came along to branch functions, events and conventions and was always willing to dispense of his wisdom, his knowledge and his views on just about everything in particular.

I do want to thank the member for Surfers Paradise for reminding me of things that I thought I had long forgotten and had fallen out of my mind but obviously are still burning in the member for Surfers Paradise's mind, to which I say to the member for Surfers Paradise: I see you are still waiting!

I also want to associate myself with the comments made by the Premier, the opposition leader and other members. My electorate of Clayfield has changed many times over the years since I have known it and since I have represented it. I now have parts of the electorate of Stafford in my electorate following the redistribution that occurred in 2017 particularly in the north-western corner of Stafford Road, Kedron Park Road and Gympie Road where it heads north out of the city. I remember talking to Terry because Terry was appointed as part of the campaign team in 1986 when a then fresh faced Santo Santoro was taking on Done Lane in that election—an election that was lost ultimately by 16 votes.

Terry was integral in using and bringing technology to the campaign at a time when fliers and dodgers were printed on Roneo machines. I do not know if people remember them. You would load them up with ink and roll them around and get these horrible purple bits of paper flying out the other side.

Mr Minnikin: Smelt good.

Mr NICHOLLS: Yes, it smelt good, as the member for Chatsworth said—who is obviously from a different background! I know we cannot talk about youth crime!

Terry was a big believer and an early adopter of technology in terms of word processing and ICT and photocopying, getting mail out in bulk, getting information out and making sure our campaign workers standing on the street corners had something in their hand to give every shopper who was walking into Coles or Woolworths or the chemist so that they left with something. His motto was always to make sure they never left without a message in their hand. It is a motto and practice that I have followed today.

The modern practice today of standing by the side of the road and waving a billboard gets your name out, but I do not think it is as effective as what Terry used to practice and which I think those of us who are successful in marginal seats continue to practice—that is, making sure you leave a calling card in everyone's hand. Terry was an expert at that. He learnt hard. I said, 'I'm a marginal campaign seat fighter. I'm a Liberal in a Labor seat.' That is how he went into every election, knowing that he was up against it and fighting hard to make sure that he won every last vote, that he left no stone unturned.

His belief, as the member for Stafford and the member for Sandgate have both raised, was in being prepared, in having proper planning, and that would provide you with the great outcome that you were seeking. He fought hard every step of the way. He fought all the way up until 1989. In 1989 he was the campaign director appointed by Angus Innes for the by-election at which Santo Santoro was elected in brilliant style. He then had to go on to fight again at the next election in November 1989 which saw the Goss government sweep to power. Unfortunately Terry could not combat that great change in society that came through at that time.

He remained a loyal and stalwart believer in the Liberal Party and Liberal Party values. He never gave up on those. It was reflected in everything he did. The member for Surfers Paradise is right: when we needed to help resolve that dreadful deadlock that we were stuck in, Terry was the man that everyone agreed with because he brought common sense, he brought a sense of decency and a sense of realism to the issues that we faced. He helped us resolve that and move on successfully. He was a stalwart in that regard. He continued to be so in his academic career.

He would often ring up and say, 'I have a group of students coming up from Bond. Would you mind booking and paying for the barbecue area up on level 8? I'll send you the cheque.' We would have these groups of students come through. He would always ask and seek contribution about what was happening in the House. They would sit up in the gallery looking down in the evening, when we used to sit later in the evening, observing the behaviour in the House. We would explain what went on and the meaning of tired and emotional and how that came to play out as they watched what was happening in this place. He was a great believer in the values of this place as a parliament, of what you could do in this place and how this place made a real change to people's lives. He continued to strive for that whether that was personally or in his academic achievements, which were many and manifest, and we have heard about that today.

I join with other members of this House in expressing our condolences to his family and our appreciation for the service of Terry Gygar to this parliament, to his country in his Army service and to academia at Bond University, an institution he dearly loved. Vale, Terry.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, will you please indicate your agreement by standing in silence for one minute.

Whereupon honourable members stood in silence.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, question time will commence at approximately 10.54 am.

TABLED PAPER

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

MEMBER'S PAPER


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

Member for Noosa (Ms Bolton)—

Document, undated, titled 'Chair's Foreword: Draft Interim Report on the Inquiry into Youth Justice Reform'

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Cost of Living, Electricity Rebate

 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Premier) (10.09 am): I know that rising mortgage payments, rents and grocery prices are putting pressure on every family budget. I know that because everywhere I go in Queensland people tell me. It is why we are preparing the biggest cost-of-living relief package in Queensland's history as part of our upcoming budget. But some things are just too urgent to wait.

Today our government is delivering the single biggest cost-of-living initiative by a state government ever: \$1,000 for every single Queensland household. That rises to \$1,372 for our seniors and most vulnerable. This lump sum will be credited to energy bills from 1 July this year. This means that the overwhelming majority of Queensland households will not pay any bill for the first quarter of the next financial year. Many Queenslanders will not pay an electricity bill again until 2025. Anything not used in the first bill will stay on their account for the next bill, the bill after that and the bill after that. We expect this will save Queenslanders more than \$2.5 billion in the next financial year. It is only possible because we are making multinational mining companies pay their fair share through progressive coal royalties and because Queenslanders own their energy assets. They will always own their energy assets under a Labor government.

Today's announcement is about helping Queenslanders make ends meet and fighting inflation. People tell me how much our energy rebates have helped them. Nelda says she has not paid an electricity bill in over a year thanks to solar power and subsidies. Nicky and Pauline say the rebates were greatly appreciated, and Ja-nellie says she just got her lowest bill in many years. Recent ABS data shows the \$550 rebate has helped lower electricity bills by 9.35 per cent. Today's announcement is almost double that, which will drive this down even further and help keep inflation in Queensland lower than the national average.


Queensland already has the lowest energy bills on the east coast of Australia, as confirmed by Canstar Blue. I want to thank Christine from Canstar Blue for joining the Deputy Premier and me today to make this important announcement. From their research, they say the average Queensland quarterly electricity bill is \$315. That is 10.5 per cent lower than South Australia, nine per cent lower than New South Wales and about two per cent lower than the ACT and Victoria.

Mr Head interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Callide, cease your interjections.

Mr MILES: There will always be more to do, but I will do everything I can to put money back in the pockets of Queensland families—every Queensland family in every part of Queensland—today and every day.

Cost of Living, Electricity Rebate

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (10.13 am): Since the Premier and I took office we have been absolutely clear that providing cost-of-living relief to hardworking Queenslanders is our No. 1 priority. Today the Premier and I are proud to announce that our government will not only deliver the biggest single electricity rebates in Queensland history; they will be the biggest power rebates ever delivered by an Australian government.


Opposition members interjected.

Mr DICK: Don't they love it on the other side! This means that every single Queensland household will get \$1,000 off every single household electricity bill across the state. That is what Labor delivers. This means that every single Queensland household will get \$1,000 off their power bill in the second half of this year. These are the biggest power bill savings that Queensland families have ever seen. I am pleased to advise the House that Queenslanders on a concession card, including seniors and pensioners, will continue to receive the Queensland electricity rebate of \$372. That means that from July vulnerable households will receive a total rebate of \$1,372 and 205,000 small businesses will also benefit as we continue our \$325 power bill rebate for them.

Our government can deliver these rebates—the rebates that no-one else in Australia is delivering—because of the strength of our budget. The strength of our budget is built on the strength of our revenue, including revenue from progressive coal royalties. Another reason we can deliver these nation-leading rebates is our public ownership of electricity companies. That includes generators, transmission, distribution—even retail in regional Queensland. This new \$1,000 rebate will be applied from July and it will come as one lump sum. By delivering this rebate to Queenslanders' power bills as a lump sum we are ensuring it cannot be clawed back by any future Queensland government that might try to cover a loss of revenue or have an obsession with lower debt.

Today I will introduce a supplementary appropriation bill into this House to lock in these rebates and protect them from any future Queensland government that might try to cut or reduce them. The Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill will deliver this record nation-leading cost-of-living relief that will make a real difference to Queenslanders across the length and breadth of our great state.

Cost of Living, Electricity Rebate

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Minister for Energy and Clean Economy Jobs) (10.16 am): Today we stand extra proud and tall as members of the Miles Labor government because this is a government that delivers for Queenslanders. This is a government with a strong track record of delivering nation-leading cost-of-living support when Queenslanders need it most. We have never stood idly by while fellow Queenslanders were doing it tough. Today I am pleased that we have been able to deliver the nation's greatest package of support to help households make ends meet.

Through energy rebates to date, I am advised Labor has already ensured that Queenslanders' bills are up to 78 per cent lower than in some parts of New South Wales. Today, with our world-beating \$1,000 cost-of-living rebate for every Queensland household, Labor delivers relief from the pressures Queenslanders are feeling. Through Queenslanders' power bills we are putting money back in your pocket to use at the grocery store, when you put petrol in your car or when you pay your rent. This is a government that is truly on the side of Queenslanders.

This is considered policy and household relief from a Premier who truly cares. In fact, the Premier, Deputy Premier and all members on this side of the House understand, and we are prepared to act when Queenslanders need our help. This is not policy arrived at through good luck by indulging in fantasies that the energy market will make everything all right. Four words: public ownership and coal royalties; that is how we have got the job done. But our ambition does not stop there. We have a plan for Queensland's future to put downward pressure on prices permanently. That takes the form of the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, delivering 22 gigawatts of the cheapest form of energy—renewables. Public ownership of energy generation now and into the future will ensure an orderly


transition. The Job Security Guarantee will ensure that energy workers who want a good job will have a good job. We put that into law.

Mr Head interjected.

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

Mr de BRENNI: Regional Queensland is poised to reap the windfall from new industry jobs—from battery manufacturing in Townsville to building electrolyzers in Gladstone—laying the foundation for a prosperous, clean economy. Queenslanders, you have spoken and this government has listened. When every dollar counts, the only government that Queenslanders can count on is a Labor government.

Housing Affordability


 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works) (10.19 am): From the biggest energy rebate in the country to free kindy, TAFE and freezing car rego, it is this government that is taking action to put more money back in the pockets of Queensland households. Through our Homes for Queenslanders plan, we will deliver more affordable housing and make renting fairer, providing direct cost-of-living relief with a \$160 million package to provide more subsidies, grants and other supports to renters. We are also helping first home owners break into the market by doubling the First Home Owner Grant and increasing our regional finance loan support.

Today, I will be introducing legislation to help thousands more Queenslanders buy their own home. We do not want home ownership to be available only to those who have access to the bank of mum and dad. That is why we want Queensland to become the first state in the country to legislate the Help to Buy scheme. With just a minimum two per cent deposit, Queenslanders can receive a contribution of up to 40 per cent for a new home. It will open the door of home ownership for thousands of Queenslanders later this year—if the LNP stop putting up barriers at every turn. For the program to happen, Help to Buy will need to pass at both the state and federal level, but right now the LNP and the Greens are blocking this legislation in Canberra. Peter Dutton and Queensland's federal LNP MPs have all voted 'no' on Help to Buy and are gearing up to do the same when it hits the Senate. One of their MPs had the gall to say—

I don't know anyone who wants to skip hand in hand with the Australian government down the path to the first front door that they have ever owned.

I can tell the House right now that there are Queensland families keen to be a part of this program so they can buy their own home. We on this side of the House back Queenslanders on home ownership and on cost-of-living support, and we stand up for our state. Slick slogans do not increase home ownership. Policies like this do. It is only this Labor government that can be trusted to deliver more homes for Queenslanders with a comprehensive plan to help first home owners, support Queensland renters, boost social housing and support for homelessness organisations while building more homes faster.


Seniors, Cost of Living

 **Hon. C MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (10.21 am): This morning many of our seniors will have woken up—probably very early—to hear that pensioners and eligible seniors will get more than \$1,300 off their electricity bills from 1 July. It means the majority of seniors who are feeling the weight of rising cost-of-living pressures will not pay one cent for electricity in the next financial year. We are meeting the expectations of our key senior stakeholders—the Council on the Ageing and National Seniors. Both asked for more government support for electricity rebates, and that is exactly what we are delivering.

The electricity rebate is an absolute boon for seniors on top of the practical help available through this new Miles government, and we do have a lot on offer. In fact, there are 18 concessions, rebates and discounts available to eligible seniors. As well as the most substantial electricity rebate now, there are subsidies for rates, water and medical aids, including hearing aids. Seniors can get free spectacles and dental treatment at our public dental clinics and hospitals. There are concessions on car and boat registration and public transport in Queensland and in other states, including long-distance train travel. There are fishing permit discounts and cut-price tickets for many of the shows and reduced entry fees at our wonderful art galleries and museums. All of this is only possible because of our increased coal royalties from big mining companies because we own our energy assets and because we are keeping those assets in the hands of Queenslanders—Queenslanders who, like our seniors, have worked hard for our state and deserve more support when they retire.

How do our seniors find out about what is on offer? They can go to one of our very popular Seniors Expos or Seniors Savings Pop-Ups, which are up and running for 2024. In the past three years, more than 16,000 senior Queenslanders have attended one of these events. These pop-ups and expos give seniors the chance to meet a Queensland government cards and concessions specialist. They can chat with these friendly specialists about what they are entitled to through savings, concessions and rebates. The need for these expos and pop-ups has never been greater. We have Seniors Expos coming up in Bundaberg, Bribie Island, Surfers Paradise and Townsville. I encourage older Queenslanders to find one near them and make sure that they are accessing all of the rebate services and supports to which they are entitled. Queensland seniors deserve our respect and they deserve the practical cost-of-living support that they are getting from our Miles government.

Small Business, Cost of Living


 **Hon. LR McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development) (10.24 am): We have listened to Queenslanders who have said that, despite our booming economy, they are feeling national cost-of-living pressures and they need more support. The new Miles government is taking action, with \$1,000 off every Queenslanders' power bill. That also means more money in the pockets of Queenslanders to spend in our almost half a million small businesses.

I am advised that around 350,000 of those businesses are sole traders, family and home-based businesses, also feeling the pressure of increased household bills and national cost-of-living pressures, so they too will benefit from \$1,000 off their energy bill. For the around 200,000 small businesses with an electricity bill at work, we are extending our \$325 share of the highly successful \$650 small business electricity rebate in the new financial year. That brings the total support for small business electricity bills to \$975. We will continue to advocate on behalf of Queensland's small businesses to ensure the continued \$650 rebate with a federal co-contribution.

Queensland has the best cost-of-living relief for small business so they are able to grow, thrive and compete with the big end of town. This builds on our existing support for small and family businesses through our on-time payment policy that requires payment on time, every time. We are also providing further backing through a network of high-quality small business wellness coaches and expert financial counsellors. More than 3,000 clients have been provided free, confidential, one-on-one counselling for small business owners experiencing or facing financial hardship. These practical services are available because the Miles Labor government gets it and is backing small business in whatever way we can.

It is not solely about small business owners: more than one million Queenslanders work in small businesses. By keeping our energy assets in public hands and taking on big mining companies to deliver progressive coal royalties, we are able to take direct action to put more money back in the pockets of Queenslanders and the bank accounts of our small businesses. The LNP voted to sell our assets and want to hand back billions to multinational mining companies. They would simply cut our rebates.

Housing

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (10.27 am): Since 2018, our population has grown from five million to 5.581 million. The Miles government's Homes for Queenslanders plan forecasts the need for a million new homes in our state by 2046, including 53,500 social and affordable homes. We need more homes, we need places for Queenslanders to go to work and we need our communities to be part of the conversation.

Today we are releasing the proposed development scheme for the Woolloongabba Priority Development Area—PDA—for public consultation. The proposed Woolloongabba plan is a 40-year vision intended to enable more housing, including social and affordable housing, more jobs and more urban public spaces. The plan proposes a revitalisation of the Woolloongabba precinct and its connections to South Bank, the Brisbane River and the CBD, with a key focus on our government's new Woolloongabba Cross River Rail station.

Affordable housing is a top priority for this government, and that is why the plan includes the provision for 20 per cent of new homes as affordable or social housing. This accords with the Miles government's commitment to providing more social and affordable housing. We are calling for public

submissions on the draft plan which will deliver around 14,000 additional homes. This would support a population of around 24,000, up from 4,300 today.

It is also envisaged that the precinct would provide workplace and business opportunities for around 36,000 workers—almost three times what is currently provided for in the area. These mixed-use precincts will provide the potential for economic activity for sectors such as health, education, hospitality and entertainment.

The plan would also deliver the Miles government's commitment to 50 per cent open space within the Cross River Rail precinct, including a new central park. There would also be a network of new active transport corridors including a creek to cliffs green corridor linking Kingfisher Creek with the Kangaroo Point cliffs and the Green Bridge. The plan represents a significant change to the precinct, and that is why we want people to have their say. From today, community members are encouraged to have their say about Economic Development Queensland's proposed development scheme named the Woolloongabba Plan. Consultation will remain open until 14 June 2024.

Priority development areas play a critical role in managing the growth of our state. PDA development schemes are designed to strike the balance between unlocking the economic and development potential for an area with the delivery of high-quality, environmentally sustainable and affordable housing and employment opportunities. Queensland has 35 PDAs declared which have already delivered over 36,000 dwellings and development lots. The Miles government is determined to plan a coordinated, balanced and innovative future for our fast-growing state that creates the homes, workplaces and open spaces Queenslanders deserve.

Coal Royalties



Hon. SJ STEWART (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals) (10.30 am): Our resources industry continues to go from strength to strength in Queensland, supporting more than 70,000 direct jobs and helping generate \$18.2 billion in royalties in the 2022-23 financial year for Queenslanders. That is a huge amount in anyone's book, and that money is being used to help all Queenslanders thanks to our progressive coal royalties. The action we took as a government to bring in these royalty changes to capitalise on record high coal prices means every person in Queensland benefits from the resources they own.


We are doing this through today's announcement by the Premier to give a \$1,000 rebate to all Queenslanders on their power bill. We know inflation, rising mortgage repayments and the increased costs of groceries are making life really difficult for many Queenslanders, which is why we are focused on providing cost-of-living relief through this year's budget. The only way we can give Queenslanders \$1,000 off their power bills is because we own our public assets and because of our progressive coal royalties.

We continue to see the resources industry go from strength to strength in Queensland, with the latest ABS statistics showing coal exploration expenditure was up 41.9 per cent year-on-year to \$239.3 million, reaching its highest level since 2014. Exploration is the lifeblood of the resources sector and is essential to maintain a pipeline of new projects and jobs into the future. New projects mean more jobs and more royalties for all Queenslanders.

Right now we are seeing the benefits of new projects in Central Queensland, like Pembroke Resources Olive Downs project. I had the great pleasure of officially opening this \$1 billion steelmaking coalmine complex last month near Moranbah. More than 700 people were employed during the construction of the project and an operational workforce of 1,000 people is anticipated at peak production. I was at the site two years ago when we turned the first sod on the Olive Downs project and it was great to be back to officially open the mine. Mines like Olive Downs help generate royalties for all Queenslanders which allow us to provide cost-of-living relief for everyone.

We are a government that values and supports the coal sector. That is for the tens of thousands of jobs it supports and sustains, for the valuable contribution it makes to regional Queensland economies, for the important role it plays as Queensland embraces a decarbonised future and for the royalties it generates for all of Queensland. These are royalties that support our infrastructure delivery and cost-of-living relief. It is these progressive coal royalties that are building the brand new Moranbah hospital that the former mayor of the Isaac Regional Council, Ann Baker, fought so hard for. These are the royalties that mean we can give \$1,000 off everyone's power bills. We will always back Queenslanders and I am proud the resources industry is playing a key role in doing this.

Cost of Living, Health

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (10.34 am): The Miles Labor government knows families are doing it tough right now, which is why we are stepping up efforts to help ease cost-of-living pressures, like today's huge announcement of \$1,000 for Queensland households towards their electricity bills. This is the largest cost-of-living relief package in our state's history, and of course it is delivered by a Labor government. We are not just providing cost-of-living relief through power rebates. Across our health system, the Miles Labor government is putting money on the table so that Queensland families do not have to. It is why we have invested \$40 million to provide flu vaccines to Queenslanders—completely free of charge. We have already seen a very strong start to the uptake of the flu vaccine, but with the weather beginning to cool down, I want to again urge everyone to please get their free jab.


For the first time, our government is investing \$90 million to roll out the life-saving meningococcal B vaccine for free for infants, children and teenagers—saving families hundreds of dollars. We have just launched a \$31 million RSV vaccination program to eliminate financial barriers for parents wanting to access the new vaccine for their bubs.

We are also making it easier and cheaper for Queenslanders to access basic medicines and treatments. Last week I launched with the Premier an Australian first Community Pharmacy Scope of Practice Pilot in Cairns, which enables pharmacists to treat and prescribe medicines for common health conditions. We know that it is becoming harder and harder to visit a GP, especially one that bulk-bills. That is why we have made the decision to expand the pilot to encompass the entire state of Queensland. This means that Queenslanders will be able to get treatment and management at their local pharmacy for things like asthma, school sores, nausea and vomiting, mild pain and inflammation, earaches, support to quit smoking, eczema, acne and hormonal contraception.

Our pharmacists are highly trained and regulated health professions; it just makes sense that they use their expertise to its full scope in order to deliver cheaper, more accessible health care to Queenslanders. Participating pharmacists must go back to uni so you know they are getting the right training to ensure they can safely treat Queenslanders. The training covers assessment, diagnosis and management of simple health conditions. This whole scheme is designed to supplement, not replace, existing services and give Queenslanders more choice to access health care close to home.

Pharmacists across North Queensland are expected to start providing services over the coming months, and the pilot will gradually expand as more pharmacists complete the required education and training. It is just one more example of how the Miles Labor government is delivering new and innovative solutions to ease cost-of-living pressures. Whether it is energy rebates, free flu shots or giving Queenslanders the ability to get health care directly from pharmacists in their communities, we are listening and delivering for Queensland.

Cost of Living

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algeria—ALP) (Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts) (10.37 am): Our government knows that national cost-of-living pressures mean more Queenslanders than ever are turning to government and non-government services for assistance. While visiting neighbourhood centres, emergency relief providers and community organisations right across the state, I have seen and heard firsthand how the demand for cost-of-living relief support has increased. That is why the new Miles government is delivering record cost-of-living relief to help vulnerable Queenslanders wherever we can. Some families and individuals are experiencing financial stress for the first time and are turning to support services for help.


To assist with financial literacy and resilience, the Miles government is investing over \$7 million for these services statewide. These programs help Queenslanders improve their financial knowledge, access affordable financial products and manage the factors that are contributing to their financial difficulties. Importantly, we are also funding 193 providers across the state to deliver emergency relief funding to those who need it most. We doubled the funding to emergency relief providers in 2022-23 as a direct response to the calls of service providers, like our incredible neighbourhood centres. In 2023-24 we provided a further \$3.3 million to expand the emergency relief response across the state.

I have heard the stories of Queenslanders from right across the state—from Anglicare in Rockhampton, Centacare in Cairns, ECHO in Malanda and Belong in my electorate, to name just a few—about the growing pressures that families and individuals are experiencing. When we hear stories like these right across Queensland we know that more needs to be done. That is exactly why the Miles Labor government is taking \$1,000 off every Queenslanders power bill from 1 July.

The new Miles government has listened to Queenslanders and is delivering the biggest cost-of-living relief measure in Queensland's history. This initiative means the average household will not pay a cent on their next quarterly energy bill after 1 July. It is only because our government has delivered progressive coal royalties that we are able to take direct action and put more money back in the pockets of Queenslanders. We can only do this because we have kept our energy assets in public hands. Programs like free kindy, free TAFE and freezing car rego are all made possible by our coal royalties and because we own our energy assets.

New Premier Steven Miles and Labor are delivering more money directly back to Queenslanders. Those opposite do not want Queenslanders getting their fair share of resource profits and they have continually voted against keeping energy assets in public hands. Only the new Miles Labor government can be trusted to keep our assets in public hands and deliver cost-of-living relief to Queenslanders.

Beef Australia 2024

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.41 am): Thank you, Mr Speaker—

Mr Boothman: The fire ant's friend!

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Theodore—

Mr FURNER: What a dropkick.

Mr SPEAKER:—you know what is going to happen. You are warned under the standing orders.

Mr FURNER: In just three days time, the greatest event in agriculture is coming to the beef capital of Australia—Rockhampton. I know every member on this side of the chamber is so excited to be there in just three days time. Beef Australia 2024 looks—

Mrs Frecklington: How many jets?

Mr Bleijie: How many jets is the government taking up there?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Thank you, member for Kawana.

Mr FURNER: Why don't you listen? You might learn something.

Mrs Frecklington: Pick me up in Kingaroy.

Mr FURNER: I know your ears are painted on, but you might learn something for once.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister.


Mr FURNER: Beef Australia 2024 looks to surpass all previous records, with 100,000 expected to pass through the gates at the Rockhampton Showgrounds to see, touch and taste Queensland's best agricultural export beef. Queensland has 49 per cent of the Australian cattle herd and it is our most valuable export, at \$7.1 billion, and it is consumed in more than 60 countries around the world.

Beef Australia has promoted the industry since 1988 and the current chair, Bryce Camm, is a champion for the sector. His and his team's efforts in bringing the event together and persevering through COVID's Beef 2021 means that this year's event is extra special, and we will see a return of the international visitors. Throughout the week there will be exhibitors, eateries, events, the return of the Ken Coombe OAM Tech Yards and Innovation Hub and, most importantly, cattle on display. This will also be a celebration of the 200-year birthday for the Australian Agricultural Company, AACo, one of the leading beef businesses in the world, even though it started out with sheep.

The Miles government is a strong supporter when it comes to Beef Australia and to agriculture, with a cabinet meeting being held in Rockhampton during the week. Whether it is action on cost-of-living pressures or support for the agricultural sector, the Miles government is leading the herd. The latest Rabobank survey notes that the state's beef producers are leading this upturn in sentiment, with 85 per cent now expecting economic conditions to stay the same or improve in the year ahead.

Next week there is no greater place to 'steak-out' than in Rockhampton where the very best of Queensland's agriculture is on display to Australia and the world. With the announcement today of cost-of-living relief, I know that many Queenslanders, with that money in their pocket, can go to the butcher or supermarket and purchase some of the best steak in the world.

Consumer Protection, Cost of Living

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (10.44 am): Across the country, Australians are feeling

cost-of-living pressures in ways they never have before. They are feeling the pinch when they fill up the car, pay their mortgage and go to the supermarket. On top of the Miles government giving cost-of-living relief through cheaper power bills with a rebate of \$1,000, which we know will make such a difference to households, that is why it is even more important than ever for Queenslanders to get what they pay for.

Australian consumer law protects Queenslanders from false or misleading conduct. It also provides them with automatic rights when they buy goods and services. When goods and services do not meet these standards, we are entitled to a remedy from the business we purchased from. I am pleased to say that most traders do the right thing by their customers, providing refunds, repairs or replacements once they become aware of an issue, but Queenslanders can rest assured that when things go wrong with a business they can turn to the Office of Fair Trading for help.

The Office of Fair Trading helped a record number of consumers get refunds, repairs, replacements and other compensation in 2023. They finalised 20,985 complaints across the state, an increase of 1,675 complaints from 2022. This includes securing a full refund of \$26,000 for a consumer whose vehicle broke down the night they purchased it. In another case, items were recovered and \$13,000 worth of repairs were arranged for a consumer whose furniture had been lost and damaged by a removalist. They were also able to get \$11,827 back for two Queensland pensioners whose flights had been cancelled due to the pandemic in 2020. The couple had been going back and forth with the trader for over three years before making a complaint to the Office of Fair Trading, which secured a full refund for them.


I am pleased to announce that, under this government, the Office of Fair Trading clawed back more than \$13 million for Queensland consumers. The highest number of consumer complaints was once again in the personal and household goods category, which consistently ranks highly in the Office of Fair Trading's annual complaints list. It includes purchases of everyday items such as whitegoods, appliances, computers, clothing and footwear, so it is no surprise this continues to be at the top of the list. Complaints about motor vehicle sales, personal and household services, fuel and motor vehicle services and repairs rounded out the top 5 most complained about categories in Queensland in 2023.

No matter what the issue, Queenslanders know they can trust the Miles government to stand up for their consumer rights and to work with businesses to deliver fair outcomes. I encourage any Queenslanders who believe they have not been treated fairly and have been unable to reach an outcome directly with a business to lodge a complaint with the Office of Fair Trading. They are ready to help.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, question time will conclude today at 11.47 am.

Electricity Prices

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (10.47 am): My question is to the Premier. How much higher have Queensland's underlying power costs risen over the past 1,073 days following the failure of the Callide power plant?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for his question. As I was able to outline in my ministerial statement earlier, Queenslanders have amongst the lowest power prices in the country, in large part thanks to the actions of this government. We kept our energy assets in public hands. We have a detailed plan to use renewable energy to further drive down power prices, and today we have announced a plan to put \$1,000 credit on every single Queenslanders' household electricity bill, further driving down what they pay for power. This is after those opposite oversaw an increase in the price of power of 43 per cent. Those frontbenchers opposite argued for the closure of power plants because power prices had become too cheap. Why did they want to drive up those power prices? To make those companies look more profitable so they could sell them off. On this side of the House, on the day we deliver these—

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). It was a very specific question asking about underlying power cost increases due to the Callide power plant failure.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member. There were more elements to the question but I ask the Premier to return to the particular component of the question as it was asked.

Mr MILES: Today, this government is delivering the biggest energy rebates in the history of the Commonwealth and those opposite come into this place whingeing and whining. Instead of talking

about household bills and how we can take care of Queenslanders, those opposite continue on their crusade to oppose the public ownership of our energy—

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

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

Mr POWELL: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b). The question was: how much higher have Queensland's underlying power costs risen over the past 1,073 days following the failure of the Callide power plant?

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Glass House. Whilst I appreciate your point of order, it is my job to look at relevance. I am listening to the answer. The Premier is being relevant. As I have stated at one point already, there is a particular component of the question that I think must be addressed.

Mr MILES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. What I can say with absolute certainty, and Queenslanders can know this with absolute certainty, is that power prices will always be lower under a Labor government. We will make sure that our energy assets are not for sale because we will use progressive coal royalties to fund rebates. We will make sure that Queenslanders own their assets and benefit from their assets. We will make sure that we continue to generate more and more of our energy using renewables because we know that is the cheapest way to deliver power to industry and to households.

Electricity Prices

Mr CRISAFULLI: I have a further question to the Premier. The energy regulator found that Queensland's wholesale power prices soared to an average of \$118 per megawatt hour in the first three months of this year while the rest of the country saw prices fall to \$76. Why does Queensland have the highest underlying energy costs in the country?

Mr MILES: Frankly, that question from the Leader of the Opposition is deeply misleading. Last week the March quarter CPI showed that electricity bills in Queensland were 9.5 per cent lower than they were the year before.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The level of interjection is too high. I ask members to my right to stop gesticulating. One person has the call, and it is the Premier.

Mr MILES: The Leader of the Opposition cherrypicks one data point that he thinks proves his point. I can advise the Leader of the Opposition that just this morning—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my left: there have been points of order made in relation to the previous question not being addressed. Now I am hearing the Premier's response—with difficulty—but I believe he is being relevant. I would ask that you hear the response to the question.

Mr MILES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I was saying, the Leader of the Opposition selectively chooses data to bring in here to mislead this House and Queenslanders. For example, just this morning, electricity prices in Victoria were \$157; in Tasmania, \$151; in South Australia, \$137; and in Queensland, thanks to renewables, negative \$20. You can pick and choose wholesale prices at any point in time to try to make a point. What matters is what it says on people's power prices.

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

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

Mr POWELL: I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b).

Mr Miles interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I will ask the Premier to not interject while I am taking a point of order.

Mr POWELL: The question pertained to wholesale average power prices and underlying power costs—that is not what the Premier is referring to.

Mr SPEAKER: There are elements to the question where you are correct in repeating the question back to me but there are counterpoints which are using different data points, as I hear the response. That does not mean that the question is not being answered; it means that it is being addressed in a different way.

Mr MILES: As I was saying, what matters—

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you. You have just had an opportunity, member for Glass House.

Mr MILES: What matters is what people actually pay. What matters to Queenslanders is not some data point that is chosen by those opposite; what matters is what their bill says. It matters how much it costs them to power their homes; how much it costs their employers to power their businesses. What we know is that those prices are lower in Queensland than in comparable states. We know that we have been putting downward pressure on prices since the highs of the LNP years when the figures were being artificially inflated to make them better to sell off.

Last week, the March quarter CPI showed that electricity bills in Queensland were 9.5 per cent lower than they were a year earlier. I know that is counter to the narrative that the Leader of the Opposition wants to pursue but that makes it a fact, that makes it true. I know that the Manager of Opposition Business wants to stand up and say the facts are not relevant—‘do not answer the question with facts, please’—but on this side of the House we will continue to do so.

Cost of Living

Mr TANTARI: My question is of the Premier. Can the Premier outline how the Miles Labor government is reducing household bills for Queenslanders, including in my community of Hervey Bay, and is the Premier aware of any risky alternatives for Queensland?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Hervey Bay for his question because I know that he is pleased to hear today that every single household in Hervey Bay will receive \$1,000 credit on their bill. There will be \$1,000 credit for every household in Hervey Bay, every household in Bundaberg and in Maryborough—every household in every part of Queensland. That is not all—vulnerable households will receive even more. There will be a \$1,372 credit on their electricity bill. For those on this side of the House, it is a happy day. It is a cause for celebration. Whenever we can use our progressive coal royalties to tax multinational coal companies and put those dollars onto the electricity bills of Queensland households, it is a good day. It is a good day because it is delivering to Queenslanders what they tell us they want.

Everywhere I go in Queensland—whether that is the shops at Mango Hill, the cafe I visited in Hervey Bay last week, or in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone, Wide Bay or the south-east—people tell me that the most important concern for them is rising costs. What government can do to help them with those rising costs is to use our progressive coal royalties to deliver cash into their household budget through their electricity bill. This is only possible because of the progressive coal royalties, that the LNP are opposed to, and because of our public ownership of electricity assets, which the LNP are opposed to and voted against just last sitting week.

I know that the Leader of the Opposition will want to hold a press conference today and say that he supports our electricity rebates because he is, of course, trying to be the tiniest target in the history of Australian politics. The fact is: you cannot support these rebates if you do not also support progressive coal royalties and the public ownership of electricity assets. They come as a package. When the Leader of the Opposition stands up and says that he supports our \$1,000 electricity rebate, he should also fess up to the fact he has told the resources council he will get rid of the progressive coal royalties and he has voted against the public ownership of electricity assets. All three things have to come together—you cannot just pick the one you like.

Mr SPEAKER: I give a reminder to members to please address their comments through the chair and not at other members.

Electricity Prices

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: My question is to the Premier. Since the government came to power in 2015, underlying power prices have risen by 176 per cent in Queensland. Will the Premier admit power rebates need to be given to hardworking Queenslanders because, under Labor, Queensland has the highest power costs in the nation?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Nanango for her question. I am particularly glad they decided the member for Nanango should ask this question. After all, she is the very person who argued that power plants should be closed because power prices were too cheap. She is the very person who said to her community that—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and I ask that the Premier withdraw.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members to my right. Premier, the member has found that personally offensive. Will you withdraw?

Mr MILES: I withdraw. I would note for the member for Nanango that just because she deleted the press release off her website does not mean we do not still have a copy. We know that the member for Nanango announced the closure of power plants because prices were too low. It was making it too hard for the member for Clayfield to hock them around Eagle Street telling people they would be able to buy them really soon. They oversaw an increase in power prices of 43 per cent. On this side of the House we are acting to lower power prices. Compared to New South Wales, power prices in Queensland are nine per cent lower; compared to the ACT, two per cent lower; compared to Victoria, 1.5 per cent lower; and compared to South Australia, 10.5 per cent lower.

Mr Powell interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Glass House, I am going to warn you under the standing orders. You have consistently been interjecting after I have tried to give you some guidance.

Mr MILES: As I have indicated, what is important to Queenslanders is not some made-up theoretical, dodgy—

Mrs Frecklington: The question, admit it.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango!

A government member: Slippery.

Mr MILES: Yes, slippery; what matters to Queenslanders is what they actually pay.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I have two points of order, that—

Mr SPEAKER: Excuse me. Member, you need to understand that I may not be aware what you are referring to, so could you please explain?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Fair call. Thank you, Mr Speaker. The point of order that I was standing on is I heard the Premier say something very distinct under his breath. I take personal offence and I ask him to withdraw.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! That is not an opportunity for everyone to talk whilst I am seeking advice from the table. Apparently there are two points of order. I will deal with the first. Premier, I believe you have used language which is unparliamentary. I will ask you to withdraw.

Mr MILES: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Is there another component to your point of order?

Mr MILES: This line of questioning is going to look pretty silly to Queenslanders when they start getting their electricity bill and it says 'zero'. In fact, for many of them it will be negative because they will be in credit. Because they are all watching question time at home, they will say, 'What was that member for Nanango talking about when she was saying that electricity prices were going up, because my bill is zero?'

We on this side of the House care about what people actually pay on their bills and we care about making sure that that is lower. We will never act to artificially inflate power prices like the member for Nanango argued for because our priority is delivering what Queenslanders tell us they want, and that is more money in their household budget.

Cost of Living

Mr SMITH: My question is of the Deputy Premier and Treasurer. Can the Deputy Premier please outline how the Miles Labor government is delivering nation-leading cost-of-living relief, including in my community of Bundaberg, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any risky alternatives?

Mr DICK: I thank the member for Bundaberg for his question. Is it not a great day for the people of Bundaberg who, in the second half of this year, are going to get \$1,000 off their power bills? It is not just people in the electorate of Bundaberg, but everyone in Queensland will benefit from the greatest electricity rebate this country has ever seen delivered by the Miles Labor government. Not only is this bill relief going to be the best and biggest in the country's history, it is the right thing to do for Queenslanders and Queensland families. They deserve this.

Mr Bleijie interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana!

Mr DICK: Anyone who has spent five minutes listening to a Queenslander knows that we need to look after them and we need to deal with cost-of-living pressures on Queensland families. It is exactly why—it was the No. 1 reason—the Premier and I announced that we would put our shoulders into that when we took office last year, that we would prioritise cost-of-living relief—

Mr Bleijie interjected.

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

Mr DICK:—and now we are delivering for Queenslanders. Do honourable members hear those on the other side of the chamber baying and crying out and decrying it? That is because we have absolutely hit the target to support Queensland families and the LNP absolutely hate it. They hate providing cost-of-living relief to Queensland families.

I was asked by the member for Bundaberg, ‘What is the risk?’ The risk is the LNP. When they say they are going to reduce debt and they are going to cut revenue and then they make a \$6 billion promise to the member for Maroochydore—a \$6 billion black hole in their fiscals—because they are going to build a rail line to Maroochydore by 2032, that leaves them with one option, and that is to cut. That is why I am going to introduce the cheaper power bill into the House later today. That is going to be a locked box to protect these electricity bill rebates for Queenslanders so that no future government can get their grubby hands on those rebates and take them away from Queenslanders.

Do honourable members know what is underlying this? That is the LNP’s desire to cut and cut hard and to punish Queenslanders. They did it when they were last in government. They were delighted to cut concessions in their first budget, and who was crowing about that? It was the member for Broadwater. He was front and centre with those cuts. That is all they ever do in government in Queensland.

We are proud of these electricity bill rebates. We are proud that they are supported by progressive coal royalties, which Labor will support not just across the forward estimates; we will support them permanently—forever—to deliver back to Queenslanders. There is no autobabble, no weasel words and no slick slogans: we will take those coal royalties, give them back to Queenslanders and make a difference in the lives of Queenslanders wherever they live in our state.

Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro Project

Mr JANETZKI: My question is to the Premier. Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro was initially set to cost \$12 billion. Now the Premier concedes it will balloon past that, with some industry sources saying it will cost in excess of \$20 billion. How much will the cost blowout of the Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro scheme cost Queenslanders on their power bills?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for his question about a project that is absolutely critical to our plan to achieve our renewable energy targets. That plan has detailed cost modelling in it which indicates that power bills will be \$150 cheaper thanks to this plan. The question that those opposite need to answer is this: if they will not build the storage component of the plan, what will they replace it with? Now that they—

Mrs Frecklington: The question was: how much will it cost?

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Members to my left, the question has been asked. I do not wish to hear continually, ‘How much will it cost?’ That was a component to the question. It is bordering on tedious. I really need to hear the response so I can ensure the standing orders are upheld.

Mr MILES: If those opposite will not build the dam that provides the storage for that renewable energy plant, what will they replace it with? They have signed up to our targets. We welcome them signing up to our emissions reduction targets. That bipartisan support is very welcomed. However, they have no plan to achieve those targets because the Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro scheme is central to achieving the level of storage necessary to achieve the emissions reduction targets that I have signed up to and that the Leader of the Opposition has signed up to. Therefore, if they are not going to support the Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro scheme, they need to outline their alternative to achieve the emissions reduction targets that now have bipartisan support.

Of course, we know the Leader of the Opposition, in his attempt to stay a small target, will not outline what their plan is but the federal LNP have made it very clear: it is nuclear reactors in Queensland. The LNP plan is to replace the pumped hydro dams that we intend to build with nuclear

reactors, which we know would be five to six times more expensive and which we know would leave future generations of Queenslanders with a legacy of radioactive waste to manage in their communities.

On this side of the House we have a detailed and costed plan to achieve our emissions reduction targets. We welcome those opposite supporting those targets. Taking that out of contention for the election in October is welcomed, I am sure, by all future generations concerned about climate change. However, you cannot just sign up to the target; you also have to deliver a plan.

Cost of Living, Relief

Ms McMILLAN: My question is of the Minister for Energy and Clean Economy Jobs. Can the minister update the House on how the Miles Labor government's cost-of-living support will help people in my community of Mansfield and is the minister aware of any risky alternative approaches?

Mr de BRENNI: I thank the member for Mansfield. As my neighbouring member of parliament, I know that she is absolutely focused on delivering for households in the electorate of Mansfield. For families, for battlers and for the young and old, the member for Mansfield is there for them. She understands just how much taking \$1,000 off energy bills will mean to every single household in Mansfield and, in fact, every single household across Queensland. She knows that that will actually put most households in the electorate of Mansfield into credit in the next quarter. The member for Mansfield is delivering real help that could go towards someone's grocery bills. It could mean new shoes on the feet of schoolkids for term 3 of this year.

When this side of the House looks across Queensland, when we look at places like Mansfield, what do we see? We see working families. We see young renters. We see mums and dads and grandparents. We see people from every nationality. We see small businesses by the hundreds of thousands. What the LNP opposition sees is an inconvenience.

In this place there are some things, no matter how long ago they happened, that you never forget. Those of us on this side of the House will remember that a decade ago the LNP imposed a cost-of-living tax on the most vulnerable renters, including 914 vulnerable renters in the electorate of Mansfield. No-one will ever forget that the member for Everton imposed a 25 per cent tax on the most vulnerable citizens of Mansfield—a 25 per cent tax on their pharmaceutical benefits and a 25 per cent tax on allowances for mobility devices. They were supposed to buy wheelchairs and walkers—

A government member: He stole their wheelchairs.

Mr de BRENNI: I take the interjection; he took their wheelchairs away from them. At the same time, the member for Broadwater inflicted even more pain. He let power bills for those same vulnerable Queenslanders and for all Queenslanders go up by 43 per cent. He sat in the cabinet and did nothing. That is what he did. He did nothing. This government overturned those taxes on the most vulnerable and we gave the money back to Queensland households. Today, Labor has delivered again.

The choice for all Queenslanders, including everyone in the gallery, could not be clearer: a Miles government that delivers for every household, every family and every small business in the state or the born-to-rule LNP. They have just one plan for Queenslanders. It is a plan for more pain and Queenslanders know it.

Miles Labor Government, Travel Expenses

Mr PURDIE: My question is to the Premier. How many power bills could the cost of the Premier and police minister flying two private jets to the same place, minutes apart, pay for?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for his question. As I have outlined earlier in the week, I will always spend as much time as I possibly can in regional Queensland because I think that is a very important part of a premier's job. The member asked a question about my travel last week.

I can advise the member that last week I was in Townsville where I met with local police. I talked about the expansion of the police academy that will allow us to train the extra 900 police personnel that we announced in the Community Safety Plan. I met with the team running the Polair helicopter in Townsville. Every person I spoke to in Townsville told me that, when they see that helicopter in the air, they know that it is there backing up our cops on the ground as they intercept and stop stolen cars before those inside go on to commit more crimes.

I was in Cairns where I announced that we would provide another Polair helicopter after they had been so successful in Townsville. I was clear that I wanted to make sure that Cairns and Far North Queensland have the same aerial support for the hardworking police on the ground.

Dr Rowan interjected.

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

Mr MILES: I also visited Mackay. I went out on the road with a team of co-responders to see how Youth Justice and police work together in a single car to intervene early and stop young people who are at risk of offending from going on to offend. I saw how that is preventing crime and giving those young people an even better start in life while, at the same time, other people avoid becoming victims of crime.

Mr PURDIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The question was clear. It was about the cost of two private jets going to the same place minutes apart and how many bills that would pay for.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member. I did hear the question. I believe a similar question has already been asked this week and an answer has been provided to it. If the Premier made that indication then he can answer the question as he sees fit.

Mr MILES: The question was about the places that I went to last week. I am more than happy, in this place, to tell members about the places I went to last week and the things that I did last week to talk to Queenslanders about their concerns and then come back here—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b). The question was not about where the Premier had been. It was about how many power bills would be covered by the cost of two luxury private jets. I ask for the Premier to be brought back to the question.

Mr SPEAKER: I have just ruled on relevance and you are asking about relevance again, member. I will determine, under standing orders, what is relevant and the Premier is not being irrelevant. That I can certainly say.

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The calculations that are requested in the question rely on a completely hypothetical assumption of what power bills might be. I would ask you to consider ruling it out of order.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Everton, you can cease your interjections. You are warned under the standing orders. Please continue, Leader of the House.

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I urge you to consider the requirement and the rule for questions not to be asked that are hypothetical.

Mr SPEAKER: I will give you the same response that I gave the member for Kawana, which is that I am listening to the response from the Premier. I am determining if he is being relevant under the standing orders. I believe he is. I have allowed the question on the basis that the Premier is providing that response.

Mr MILES: What will be clear to every one of those Queenslanders with whom I met last week in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Hervey Bay and Bundaberg is that I have then come here and announced plans that go directly to their concerns: community safety and cost of living. I could not have done that without the use of that transport.

Coal Royalties, Cost of Living

Mrs GILBERT: My question is to the Minister for Resources and Critical Minerals. Can the minister outline how the Miles Labor government's progressive coal royalties are supporting Queenslanders with cost-of-living relief, including in my community of Mackay, and is the minister aware of any risky alternatives?

Mr STEWART: I thank the member for Mackay for the question. The Miles government supports the resources sector for the royalties and jobs it generates, particularly in regional Queensland. I will stand up every day in this House and tell Queenslanders how much the Miles government supports our resources sector. This government has always backed the entire resources sector, and that includes our coal sector. More than 70 per cent of Queensland's coal exports is steelmaking coal. Steelmaking coal is going to be needed to build the wind turbines, the solar panels and the infrastructure we need in our Big Build projects. Right now there is great confidence in the steelmaking coal industry. We have seen that through Whitehaven Coal's announcement that it has completed its financial acquisition of BMA's Daunia and Blackwater steelmaking coalmines. That shows great confidence. This clearly shows that the resources sector in which I work is absolutely booming.

In another sign of the confidence in our resources industry and Central Queensland's future, last month I officially opened Pembroke Resources's Olive Downs project near Moranbah. This \$1 billion project has supported hundreds of jobs in construction and will generate millions of dollars in royalties for Queensland. We make no apologies whatsoever for supporting regional communities like Mackay, Moranbah and Glenden to ensure they have a great future. Since 2015 there has been \$21 billion invested or committed to resources projects, creating more than 8,000 jobs. We continue to back the resources industry and the more than 70,000 jobs it directly supports, as well as the billions of dollars in royalties it generates for all Queenslanders.

Because of our progressive coal royalties, as well as the fact that we own our assets, we can help Queenslanders with cost-of-living relief right now and well into the future. We are doing this through a variety of measures which include the announcement today that Queensland householders will receive a \$1,000 rebate on their electricity bills from July this year. Queenslanders own the resources under the ground and they deserve their fair share and they are getting this back into their pockets through the \$1,000 rebate. We know the LNP does not support the progressive coal royalties scheme, which means there will be a budget black hole and cuts to cost-of-living relief. The LNP voted to sell our assets and to hand back billions to multinational mining companies. Put simply: these rebates for all Queenslanders would be gone under the LNP. It is clear they will back multinationals over everyday Queenslanders.

Cross River Rail, CFMEU

Mr BLEIJIE: My question is to the Premier. This morning the Federal Court granted an urgent injunction to stop the CFMEU from blocking access to the Cross River Rail worksite. When will the Premier intervene to ensure the safety of all workers from CFMEU thuggery and violence on all Queensland construction sites?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Kawana for his question. To his question about intervening, I can advise the House that I do not have any power to intervene there. It is a private sector employer governed by the Commonwealth Industrial Relations Act. As I indicated yesterday, like any employer managing industrial relations matters, they should use the avenues available to them. What I understand from reporting this morning is that that is precisely what that employer has done and that that system has operated as it is intended—as it was designed to do. This is a matter for Australian government industrial relations law. It is a matter for those relevant courts and for the Fair Work Commission.

Mr Crisafulli: Maybe someone who had connections with the CFMEU.

Mr MILES: Let me take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. He talks a tough game about the CFMEU, but I am told—I understand—that he has privately promised them that he will not change our Best Practice Industry Conditions.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. My diaries are public. I have never met with anyone from the CFMEU and I ask the member to withdraw a factually incorrect statement.

Mr SPEAKER: No, member. You are taking personal offence?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I take personal offence.

Mr SPEAKER: The member has taken personal offence. Will you withdraw?

Mr MILES: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

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

Mr MILES: At the same time, the member for Kawana is telling boardroom lunches for some of the state's biggest developers that the LNP will get rid of the Best Practice Industry Conditions. The member for Kawana is telling the top end of town—their mates at the top end of town—

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am personally offended by the constant making up of stories by the Premier and ask him to withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: No, member. I am going to give some guidance, members. I appreciate there is a lot of heat in the chamber this morning. Member for Kawana, you will take personal offence and I will deal with it. It is not an opportunity to provide additional context. Premier, the member has found those comments personally offensive. Will you withdraw?

Mr MILES: I withdraw. We have a situation where one leader of the LNP is offended by the suggestion that they are keeping BPICs and another leader of the LNP takes personal offence at the suggestion that they are getting rid of BPICs. Is it one or the other?

Mr CRISAFULLI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Premier is being misleading.

Mr SPEAKER: No, Leader of the Opposition. I have just given guidance to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. If you have taken personal offence, get to the point. It is not a chance to talk about whether comments are factual or non-factual. There is an opportunity and a process to write to me if you think someone has misled the House. Are you taking personal offence?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I will write to you, Mr Speaker.

Mr MILES: It is not just out there that they are trying to tell two different stories to different people; it is in here as well: 'We are for it', 'We are against it', 'We are for it', 'We are against it.' They tell their branch members, 'Don't worry about the emissions target. We will get rid of that when we win', but then they tell Queenslanders, 'We are deadset. We are on board for these emissions targets,' despite the fact they have no plans. What do they tell Peter Dutton? They come in here and say, 'We are not for nuclear', then David Littleproud says he will tell them what they are for and against.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under 118(b). My question did not involve emissions targets. It was about workers' safety on construction sites.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Kawana, I was listening to the response and the Premier, as I heard him, responded directly to the point of it being a private sector industrial relations matters under the Fair Work Commission. The question has been answered, as I heard it. I cannot rule it irrelevant when it was directly relevant to the question.

Cost of Living

Mr SAUNDERS: My question is to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works.

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Pine Rivers, you are warned. I have asked for questions to be heard in silence.

Mr SAUNDERS: Can the minister outline how the Miles Labor government is listening and delivering for Queenslanders, including through cost-of-living relief, and is the minister aware of any risky alternative approaches?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for the question. I am sure the good people of Maryborough will be very happy to wake up this morning to the news that every Queensland household is getting a \$1,000 energy rebate. Whether it is bringing train manufacturing back to Queensland or cost-of-living relief, that community knows exactly who is on their side. Of course, we are very proud to be delivering the biggest energy rebate in the country. That goes alongside our rental reforms and rental support to make sure we are providing grants, subsidies and bond loans to renters in this state—all part of our Homes for Queenslanders plan, a \$169 million package.

Of course, we know how those opposite feel about renters. The member for Everton lets us know quite frequently how he feels about renters and we know exactly what he did last time they were in government—cut millions of dollars of funding to the very organisation that provides support for renters in this state. It was not just renters and public housing tenants that he and those opposite had a problem with, it was pensioners and seniors as well. Who can forget when they tried to cut concessions for 435,000 seniors and pensioners?

We know the member for Clayfield gets a bit triggered when we remind him of his record, but the fact is that he is still sitting opposite. The fact is most of the same people are sitting over there—the people who deliberately tried to make pensioners and seniors spend more money on their energy bills. Then we have the same member for Nanango, who ironically is the opposition's cost-of-living spokesperson—the person who said the quiet part out loud when she admitted they were turning off generators to drive up prices. We know why they did that. That was deliberately done to try and flog off those assets. We know that is still part of their plan because last week they again doubled down and voted in this House against public ownership.

Sure, the member for Bonney had his way on emissions reduction targets. Good on him for being able to get the support of the members for Southern Downs, Gympie, Condamine, Callide and Burdekin—backing in their colleague; solidarity—but they could not bring themselves to go that far on

public ownership. They still back privatisation. We know that the risk is still very clear because if those opposite do not back progressive coal royalties they do not back public assets remaining in state hands. It means they cannot back energy rebates. We know that they have a track record of cutting—whether it is for renters, public housing tenants or energy rebates. Those opposite cannot be trusted to deliver the priorities for Queensland.

CFMEU

Mr MANDER: My question is to the Premier. Did the Premier raise concerns about the rising militancy of the CFMEU when he met with them on 25 March?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Everton for his question. I can advise the member for Everton that our conversation centred largely on how we can ensure state government jobs are good jobs for Queensland tradies, how we can ensure they are safe workplaces—that tradies come home to their families at the end of every day—they are well paid, they are training apprentices and they have women and First Nations people on their workplaces.

On the topic of meetings, I think it would be appropriate if those opposite disclosed whether this line of questioning was proposed to them in the meeting that they held with CPB lobbyist Scott Emerson on 21 March. I understand that Mr Emerson is a lobbyist for CPB. He met with the member for Chatsworth and staff of the Leader of the Opposition on 21 March 2024. We know that from the member for Chatsworth's publicly disclosed diaries and not from the lobbyist register, because that meeting has not been disclosed on the lobbyist register as is required by law. There are some important questions here on integrity for those opposite to answer. Why did this Liberal aligned lobbyist not disclose this meeting?

Mr Saunders interjected.

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

Mr MILES: Was it to hide the fact that it was to brief the opposition on the line of questioning that they should pursue today on behalf of CPB? Will those opposite rule out having illegal meetings with lobbyists? Will those opposite disclose the content of that meeting as required by Queensland's tough integrity laws? It is time for those opposite to hold themselves to the standards that they purport to hold us to when they come in here. If members meet with lobbyists, those meetings should be disclosed on the lobbying register: the purpose of those meetings; the client that they are meeting—

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Deputy Premier, you will direct your comments through the chair.

Mr MILES: And they should acknowledge the potential conflict in bringing this line of questioning to the House.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I will wait for silence.

Cost of Living, Relief

Mr BAILEY: My question is of the Minister for Communities. Can the minister outline how the Miles Labor government is supporting Queenslanders, including in my southside community of Miller, with cost-of-living relief, and is the minister aware of any risky alternatives?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for Miller for his question and for his incredible advocacy for his community. He knows how important cost-of-living relief is for his community and the important role that neighbourhood and community centres play in his community. In fact, as a result of his incredible advocacy, we have been able to have the largest uplift in base funding for neighbourhood centres that we fund in his electorate in Graceville and Sherwood. We have seen a brand new neighbourhood centre in Yeronga, which I very much look forward to visiting with him in the near future.

We know that neighbourhood centres are where people are increasingly turning to for more support as they work through the challenges of national cost-of-living pressures. That is why this financial year has seen our government deliver \$8.2 billion in cost-of-living relief. That is a 21 per cent increase on the previous year. In response to emerging needs, our government has announced further cost-of-living support measures which include: rolling out the \$44 million Climate Smart Energy Savers rebate for energy efficient appliances; doubling the first home owners grant to \$30,000 until 30 June next year; freezing registration fees for next financial year; freezing fare increases on Queensland public transport services in 2024; and today, on top of all of that, the new Miles Labor government will be

taking \$1,000 off every Queenslanders' power bill from 1 July. What an incredible cost-of-living measure.

Of course, there is more to be done. We have seen a record \$5.6 million allocated for emergency relief through our community organisations. We have over 193 providers that deliver these cost-of-living pressure measures through our emergency relief funding. Emergency relief is an important program. It is the program where we see food vouchers, food parcels and fuel vouchers. It is where we see essential items provided and bill payments supplemented for those who need it the most. More and more Queenslanders are turning to our neighbourhood centres and to these providers for that support.

We know that those opposite do not see this program as that important. In 2012 the LNP slashed emergency relief funding, discontinuing the program that supported the most vulnerable Queenslanders. That is their record. That is what they see in terms of emergency relief. Today we see them fighting back against the \$1,000 rebate for electricity bills. We know that all they will do is cut these essential services and these essential provisions that help those most vulnerable. Queenslanders can rely only on a Miles Labor government to ensure we serve them.

Emission Reduction Targets

Mr KATTER: My question is to the Premier. The government has announced today that it is blowing more than \$2.5 billion on deceiving Queenslanders that emissions targets will not hit their wallets. Will the Premier tell Queenslanders how much more he will spend on covering up the impact of the 75 per cent emissions reduction targets passed last sitting week by both Brisbane-based parties?

Mr MILES: I thank the member for Traeger for his question. It is disappointing that the Katter party remains the only major party in this chamber that does not support action on climate change, that does not support targets to reduce emissions, that denies the science of climate change, that refuses to accept that we should do our fair part in reducing emissions. Obviously Labor supports those targets. We proposed them. They are supported by the Greens political party and by the LNP, but the Katter's Australian Party continues to come in here and oppose them and reject them. That is very disappointing.

Those emissions reduction targets for us are about making sure that the blue-collar workers in our industries right across this state have job security into the future. The fact is that global markets are demanding that our exporters deliver to them products with lower carbon footprints. If we cannot do that—if our exporters cannot supply those products produced using stored renewable energy—then our trading partners will look for those products elsewhere and in the process we will lose those heartland blue-collar industrial jobs reliant on cheap energy because they are energy-intensive industries.

While we welcome the ongoing support for those emissions reduction targets from the Leader of the Opposition, it is a shame to still be receiving questions from the Katter's Australian Party implying that those targets are anything but in the best interests of Queensland and Queenslanders. We will continue to support them because it is important and because it provides to our exporters firm renewable energy so they can continue to provide products into those markets.

I think it is good that the state election this year will not be a continuation of the climate wars—probably the first one—because the LNP have signed up to those targets, and I welcome that. What is different though is that we have a detailed plan to achieve those targets, a plan that those opposite have opposed. We need to know—and we need to know now—what is their alternative, if it is not pumped hydro storage? Where will they put the nuclear reactors and how will they manage the nuclear waste?

Seniors, Cost of Living

Mr WHITING: My question is of the Minister for Child Safety, Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Multicultural Affairs. Can the minister advise how the Miles Labor government is supporting Queensland seniors with cost-of-living support, including in my community of Bancroft, and is the minister aware of any risky alternatives?

Mrs MULLEN: I thank the member for the question. I know he has many active seniors within his electorate who will be very excited by today's announcement by the new Miles Labor government. Eligible seniors and pensioners will receive \$1,372 off their electricity bills from 1 July. Not only will they receive the annual \$372 Queensland electricity rebate but also this significant \$1,000 additional rebate. As I have said before, that will mean most seniors will not pay one cent of electricity for this coming financial year. As Darren Young, the CEO of the Council on the Ageing, said this morning, 'Older

Queenslanders will see this energy rebate as a great help in reducing their cost of living. It is very welcome news.'

How can we do this? We can do this by keeping Queensland assets in public hands, by taking on the big mining companies through increased coal royalties. What can we expect from those opposite? We can expect so very little or maybe a lot—a warehouse sale of our assets, billions of dollars returned to international mining companies? We know that during their brief stint in government they did not even consider Queensland seniors important enough to give them a minister. I have said it before: if we wait for them to introduce a policy for seniors, I will be eligible for a Seniors Card!

They slashed the seniors budget by 63 per cent when they were in power. Given the opportunity to do the same again, Queensland seniors will lose access to programs that keep them active and combat loneliness. They stand to lose this substantial electricity rebate, along with subsidies for water, rates and medical aids. Will they also have our free spectacles and free dental services at public dental clinics and hospitals in their sights? These are much needed services. Public transport and long-distance train travel—these are all important. These concessions and rebates are helping senior Queenslanders with cost-of-living pressures.

Many of these Queenslanders are retirees. Speaking of retirement, there is one mention—one mention—of seniors in the LNP's much lauded 'right priorities' policy document. That one mention is that they will help senior Queenslanders stay in employment so they can delay retiring. Instead of enjoying their golden years where they can access discounted fishing permits and theatre tickets and concessions for car and boat regos, the LNP want to keep our seniors working. Now there is something to look forward to!

Youth Crime, Reforms

Ms BOLTON: My question is to the Minister for Education and Minister for Youth Justice regarding the government response to youth justice reform recommendations. Can the minister advise as to when a review will be completed on the impact of serious repeat offender declarations in order to consider recommendation 53 for expanding the scope of declarations through lowering the threshold?

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: I think a large part of that question is relating to a bill before the House with regard to the rule of anticipation. I am going to rule the question out of order.

Seniors, Cost of Living

Mr SKELTON: My question is of the Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water. Can the minister advise what the Miles Labor government is doing about water bills for pensioners and supporting cost-of-living measures, and is the minister aware of any risky alternatives?

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

Mr BUTCHER: The Miles government is firmly focused on delivering for Queenslanders. Whether it is cost of living, building the infrastructure our communities need or creating the jobs of today and tomorrow, we are listening and we are delivering. We have made a commitment to water discounts for irrigators in regional Queensland. The Queensland government also has our concealed leaks policy, which was supported by not only members on this side of the chamber but members on that side of the chamber, knowing full well that some of the most vulnerable in this state will now get support through the Miles Labor government when they have a concealed leak. They can now get support from this government to help pay their bills. It was really impressive to see so much support from members on this side in helping me to put this policy forward to make sure that vulnerable people here in Queensland are supported.

Not only that, but we have also delivered a \$55 discount off power bills when we had to lower the water in Wivenhoe Dam. It was great to see the efforts people made to support that and to make sure that this discount was given to Queenslanders, particularly in South-East Queensland. As I said, we have been giving water discounts to our regional irrigators now for the last three years in relation to a 50 per cent discount for horticulture growers and also a 15 per cent discount across the board to our irrigators, for those farmers who have been doing it tough as well in relation to assisting with the cost of living here in Queensland.


This Labor government will continue to deliver on cost-of-living support not only on big-ticket items—for those people in the gallery here today—such as \$1,000 off your power bill, but if you are a pensioner you will get even more, and if you are a business in Queensland you will get even more again. This Labor government today has drawn a line in the sand for the people of Queensland on the cost of living with \$1,000 coming to your bank account and by supporting other discounts across the board in Queensland.

(Time expired)

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Electricity Prices

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (11.48 am): I rise to make a ministerial statement on commentary made by the LNP today during question time about power prices and the impact of the Callide incident. For the benefit of the House I can provide some further facts. The Callide power station incident occurred on 25 May 2021. I am advised that the average Queensland wholesale spot electricity price on the day prior to the incident, 24 May 2021, was \$101.98 per megawatt hour. I am further advised that the average Queensland wholesale spot electricity price on 1 May 2024 was \$76.15 per megawatt hour.


Government members interjected.

CHAIR: Members to my right, I need to hear the Deputy Premier.

Mr DICK: This shows there is simply no truth to the allegations being made by the LNP today.

CHEAPER POWER (SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION) BILL

Message from Governor

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (11.49 am): I present a message from Her Excellency the Governor.

Mr SPEAKER: The message from Her Excellency recommends the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill. The contents of the message will be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*. I table the message for the information of members.

MESSAGE

CHEAPER POWER (SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION) BILL 2024

Constitution of Queensland 2001, section 68

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


A Bill for an Act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the consolidated fund for a particular department for the financial year starting 1 July 2023

GOVERNOR

Date: 2 May 2024

Tabled paper: Message, dated 2 May 2024, from Her Excellency the Governor, recommending the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill 2024.

Introduction

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (11.49 am): I present a bill for an act authorising the Treasurer to pay amounts from the Consolidated Fund for a particular department for the financial year starting 1 July 2023. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Cost of Living and Economics Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill 2024.

Tabled paper: Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill 2024, explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights.

I am pleased to introduce the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill 2024—or, as it will be known in the House and across Queensland, the cheaper power bill. The cheaper power bill will do exactly what the title of the bill says it will do: it will deliver cheaper power bills to Queenslanders; \$1,000 to every single Queensland household. All of that money is there to help Queensland families who are struggling with global and national cost-of-living pressures.

Fundamentally, the cheaper power bill is a reflection of our Labor values. Whether it is coal in the ground or our publicly owned energy assets, Labor believes that the people of Queensland deserve to share in the wealth of our state. These rebates will be funded by our coal royalties, including our progressive coal royalties—the royalties that the LNP refuse to support permanently without change across the forward estimates and beyond.

These are the biggest power bill savings Queensland families have ever seen. The full amount of this rebate will be targeted as a single one-off credit on power bills from 1 July 2024. We are doing this specifically to prevent any future government from revoking or reducing the rebate. These rebates belong to Queenslanders, not to some future government hell-bent on reducing debt and lowering taxes. Importantly, the existing \$372.20 in electricity rebates provided to pensioners and seniors will also continue and will be paid to eligible households on top of the \$1,000. This will mean that those vulnerable households will get a total rebate of \$1,372.20.

I should note that the existing rebate is the subject of an ongoing approval, and accordingly that expenditure is not being sought through this cheaper power bill.

Small businesses are also doing it tough, and to support these businesses right across the state the cheaper power bill will deliver a \$325 electricity rebate provided through a single payment in 2024-25. This is the same amount the state funded in the current financial year.

While royalties are the key to this rebate, the other reason we can afford to pay it is because we are not spending \$3.4 billion on the Victoria Park vanity stadium—the Victoria Park vanity project the LNP leader is desperate to build.

The objective of the cheaper power bill is to seek supplementary appropriation for the 2023-24 financial year for unforeseen expenditure of \$2.267 billion relating to our additional power rebate initiatives. Unforeseen expenditure represents the portion of expenditure from the Consolidated Fund by individual departments that exceeds the amount approved for those departments in previous appropriation acts. Pursuant to section 35 of the Financial Accountability Act 2009, unforeseen expenditure may, on my recommendation as Treasurer, be authorised by the Governor-in-Council. Unforeseen expenditure must be formally approved by parliament via an appropriation bill.

This morning the Governor-in-Council authorised unforeseen expenditure for the 2023-24 financial year of \$2.267 billion. This unforeseen expenditure is being paid from the Consolidated Fund to the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts, which will administer the funds for the rebate support. Parliamentary approval for the unforeseen expenditure is now being sought. We are presenting this unforeseen expenditure to parliament at this time in a separate supplementary appropriation bill, reflecting our government's commitment to bringing such matters to the parliament in a timely manner. This promotes transparency and accountability before parliament and the people of Queensland.

As I said, this approach locks in this expenditure, preventing it from being revoked, reduced or cut by a future government that may prioritise lower taxes and debt reduction. This bill authorises the delivery of the appropriation that will be used to provide timely cost-of-living relief to Queensland households. I commend the bill to the House.

First Reading

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (11.54 am): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Referral to Cost of Living and Economics Committee

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Cost of Living and Economics Committee.

Declared Urgent

Hon. CR DICK (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment) (11.54 am), by leave, without notice: I move—


That under the provisions of standing order 137, the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Bill be declared an urgent bill and the Cost of Living and Economics Committee report to the House on the bill by Friday, 17 May 2024.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

HELP TO BUY (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL

Introduction

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works) (11.55 am): I present a bill for an act to refer particular matters relating to the Help to Buy scheme to the parliament of the Commonwealth for the purposes of section 57(xxxvii) of the Commonwealth Constitution and to amend this act and the Statutory Instruments Act 1929 for particular purposes. I table the bill, the explanatory notes and a statement of compatibility with human rights. I nominate the Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Help to Buy (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2024.

Tabled paper: Help to Buy (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2024, explanatory notes.

Tabled paper: Help to Buy (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights.

I am pleased to introduce the Help to Buy (Commonwealth Powers) Bill. In February this year our new Miles Labor government announced our Homes for Queenslanders plan—a comprehensive housing plan backed by an initial additional investment of more than \$3 billion. Under this plan we have set an ambitious target to ensure that every Queenslander has access to safe and secure housing now and into the future.

Our plan works across the entire housing system. Among other investments and initiatives it commits to deliver: one million new homes by 2046, including 53,500 new social homes; a \$160 million Renters Relief Package; a \$350 million infill fund to deliver more housing, particularly affordable housing, in the private market; and a 20 per cent funding uplift for Queensland's hardworking specialist homelessness services alongside more money for emergency accommodation like hotels and other forms of accommodation to help Queenslanders doing it tough.

Alongside these initiatives, one of the central pillars of our plan is helping first home owners into the market. For many Queenslanders, especially young Queenslanders, home ownership feels increasingly out of reach. We do not want home ownership to only be available to those who have access to the bank of mum and dad. That is why we are determined to pull every lever available to ensure that the great Australian dream of home ownership is accessible to all Queenslanders.

Over the past eight years we have supported 69,000 first home buyers with home owner grants. As part of our Homes for Queenslanders plan we have doubled our first home owner grant to \$30,000, making it the most generous in the country. Importantly, it focuses on new builds. This is deliberate: serving double duty to boost more supply into the market. In Homes for Queenslanders we also pledged to fast-track our participation in the Australian government's new Help to Buy scheme. Today this bill will do just that, and Queenslanders will be at the front of the queue when the Commonwealth bill is passed later this year.

Unfortunately, this program is at risk because the LNP and the Greens in Canberra are blocking it. In fact, every single member of the Queensland LNP voted against the legislation in the House of Representatives. We have seen the Leader of the Opposition go to water as well on the shared equity scheme. Last year at the Media Club he backed a shared equity scheme, but he has been totally silent since he got his marching orders from Peter Dutton. We even heard his hand-picked candidate for Oodgeroo say that a shared equity scheme is 'really dangerous'. That is the real view of the LNP on programs that actually help people.

The fact is that right now the LNP is standing in the way of more Queenslanders owning their own home. If they do not back Help to Buy it is simple: they do not back more people getting into home

ownership, because Help to Buy is exactly the kind of program the Leader of the Opposition said he cared about. Help to Buy is a shared equity program to help low to middle income earners buy new or existing homes. This will be achieved by accessing an equity contribution from the Australian government. Housing Australia will administer the Help to Buy scheme and will offer shared equity arrangements to 10,000 eligible Australians annually. The Australian government will support home buyers who have a minimum deposit of two per cent to receive an equity contribution of up to 40 per cent on the purchase price of a new home and 30 per cent for an existing home.

In order for the Commonwealth Help to Buy bill to be enacted, a state must first pass referral legislation, and I am incredibly proud to say that Queensland will be the first to do so—advancing this bill to deliver the Help to Buy scheme. There is a strong advantage for Queensland to be the lead participating state, as this will ensure Queenslanders can access places in the scheme as soon as it becomes operational and will be able to share in the unallocated places in the first year of operation in addition to the approximately 2,000 shared equity arrangements anticipated to be available in Queensland each year over four years.

The bill will refer legislative power to the Commonwealth parliament for the purposes of the Help to Buy scheme under section 51 of the Australian Constitution. This will provide the constitutional basis for the Commonwealth Help to Buy scheme bill which, when passed, will facilitate the scheme to operate in Queensland and the Australian territories and allow other states to refer power or adopt the Commonwealth legislation to enable the scheme to operate in their jurisdiction.

The Help to Buy scheme will not impact Queensland's housing policy and other policies to administer their own shared equity or homebuyer scheme such as the Pathways Shared Equity Loan program and the First Home Owner Grant. The bill protects the state's interests should an inconsistency arise between state laws and the Commonwealth's Help to Buy scheme in the future. This includes a provision in the Commonwealth bill to allow the state to declare that a matter is an excluded matter to which the Help to Buy scheme does not apply.

The bill also includes a provision to allow the state to declare that a state provision is a displacement provision. The Commonwealth act will not operate to the extent that an inconsistency would arise between the Help to Buy scheme and the displacement provision. Provisions of this kind are standard in referral legislation.

This government is committed to ensuring that prospective Queensland buyers have every opportunity to purchase their own home. When this bill returns to the House in the coming months, every member here will have the opportunity to make their position known. Will they stand on the side of first home owners—of Queenslanders looking to get into the market—or will they cower, backing their buddies in Canberra at the expense of young people who want to get into the market? The Leader of the Opposition has shown time and time again that he is all talk and no action, so I will not hold my breath.

First Reading

Hon. MAJ SCANLON (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works) (12.01 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 Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee

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

Declared Urgent; Portfolio Committee, Reporting Date

Hon. MAJ SCANLON (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works) (12.02 pm), by leave, without notice, I move—

That, under the provisions of standing order 137, the Help to Buy (Commonwealth Powers) Bill be declared an urgent bill and the Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee report to the House on the bill by Friday, 7 June 2024.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

EMERGENCY SERVICES REFORM AMENDMENT BILL

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE BILL

MARINE RESCUE QUEENSLAND BILL

DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill

Resumed from 1 May (see p. 1450).

Clauses 32 and 33, as read, agreed to.

Clause 34—



Ms BOYD (12.03 pm): I move the following amendments—

1 Clause 34 (Replacement of s 25 (Staff of QFES))

Page 36, before line 1—

insert—

(3A) Subsection (3) does not apply to the employment of a person as a scientific officer in QFR.

2 Clause 34 (Replacement of s 25 (Staff of QFES))

Page 36, after line 11—

insert—

scientific officer means an officer who—

- (a) holds a tertiary qualification in applied science, chemical engineering, chemistry or science that is directly relevant to the performance of the functions of the office; and
- (b) does not perform firefighting or incident control functions or duties.

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

Tabled paper: Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, explanatory notes to Hon. Nikki Boyd's amendments.

Tabled paper: Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Nikki Boyd's amendments.

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 34, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 35 to 53, as read, agreed to.

Clause 54—



Ms BOYD (12.04 pm): I move the following amendments—

3 Clause 54 (Insertion of new ch 3, pt 9A, div 5B)

Page 46, line 4, 'subsection (3)'—

omit, insert—

subsection (2)

4 Clause 54 (Insertion of new ch 3, pt 9A, div 5B)

Page 46, lines 5 to 12—

omit.

5 Clause 54 (Insertion of new ch 3, pt 9A, div 5B)

Page 46, line 13, '(3)'—

omit, insert—

(2)

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 54, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 55 to 92, as read, agreed to.

Schedule—



Ms BOYD (12.05 pm): I move the following amendment—

6 Schedule 1 (Other amendments)

Page 95, after line 16—

insert—

39A Section 104DA(6), definition *emergency alarm*, ‘QFES’—

omit, insert—

QFR

Amendment agreed to.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Third Reading (Cognate Debate)



Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (12.06 pm): I move—

That the Emergency Services Reform Amendment Bill be now read a third time.

Question put—That the Emergency Services Reform Amendment Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (12.06 pm): I move—

That the State Emergency Service Bill be now read a third time.

Question put—That the State Emergency Service Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (12.06 pm): I move—

That the Marine Rescue Queensland Bill be now read a third time.

Question put—That the Marine Rescue Queensland Bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.



Hon. N BOYD (Pine Rivers—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Disaster Recovery and Minister for Corrective Services) (12.07 pm): I move—

That the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, as amended, be now read a third time.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title (Cognate Debate)



Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (12.07 pm): I move—

That the long title of the Emergency Services Reform Amendment Bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the Emergency Services Reform Amendment Bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (12.08 pm): I move—

That the long title of the State Emergency Service Bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the State Emergency Service Bill be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

Hon. MT RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (12.08 pm): I move—

That the long title of the Marine Rescue Queensland Bill be agreed to.

Question put—That the long title of the Marine Rescue Queensland Bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

 **Hon. N BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Disaster Recovery and Minister for Corrective Services) (12.08 pm): I move—

That the long title of the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be agreed to.


Question put—That the long title of the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL CODE (DECRIMINALISING SEX WORK) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 15 February (see p. 257).

Second Reading

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (12.09 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

On 15 February 2024, I introduced the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 into the Legislative Assembly. The bill was referred to the Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee for consideration and, on 12 April 2024, the committee tabled its report which made two recommendations. I thank the committee for its careful consideration of the bill.

A total of 176 submissions were received by the committee in the course of its inquiry. I extend my thanks to those organisations and individuals who made submissions and gave evidence before the committee. I know that many of those organisations and individuals are joining us in the gallery today to watch this significant debate, and we welcome them. I would also like to echo the sentiments made by the member for Bancroft as chair of the committee and thank those submitters and witnesses who courageously gave the committee the benefit of their experience and insights. The committee recommended that the bill be passed. I thank the committee for its support. I table the government response to the committee's report.

Tabled paper: Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee: Report No. 4, 57th Parliament—Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, government response.

The government response supports the committee's second recommendation that the regulation of sex work, including land use and planning applications related to sex work businesses, be no more and no less than for other legal businesses. The objective of the bill is to establish a legal framework that will enact a safe, decriminalised sex work industry in Queensland while improving the health, safety, rights and legal protections for sex workers. What this bill is fundamentally about is that every Queenslanders deserves to be safe at work, and that includes sex workers.

What we know about the current legal framework regulating sex work in Queensland is that it is not working. The framework incentivises a system where sex workers avoid the attention of regulators and police. The framework has led to an industry where most sex work is actually criminalised. No worker in Queensland should work under a legislative framework that actually increases their

vulnerability to exploitation and violence. In 2024, this is not good enough and that is why the Miles government introduced this bill in the House this year.

As I noted in my explanatory speech, the bill implements a number of the recommendations requiring legislative amendment made by the Queensland Law Reform Commission in its report *A decriminalised sex-work industry for Queensland*. The 47 recommendations of the QLRC report provide an evidence-based path towards the decriminalisation of Queensland's sex work industry. That path leads to improving the safety of sex workers, while balancing the needs and expectations of the community.

Over the course of the committee's examination of the bill, the committee heard many examples of how Queensland's current sex work framework leads to sex workers experiencing isolation and vulnerability. The committee heard from sex workers who have to choose between working safely and working legally. Submissions made to the committee highlight the need to change Queensland's sex work industry so that sex workers' safety could be improved. The committee heard that people in the industry suffer from unwanted advances and aggression from clients. Others have described facing discrimination and stigma as a result of their job. These experiences are felt across the sex work industry.

The committee's report on the bill identified that the decriminalisation of sex work in Queensland will improve the health, safety, rights and legal protections for sex workers. The QLRC stated—

Our review has found that regulating sex work as far as possible under the same general laws as other work is a better way to enhance safety, promote health and protect the human rights of people working in the industry.

One of the primary objectives of this legislation is to ensure that Queensland fosters an environment of inclusion and safety for sex workers and contribute to reducing the stigma and discrimination experienced by those in the sex work industry. The government is committed to decriminalising sex work to ensure that sex workers can work safely and legally. The bill proposes a legal framework which decriminalises the sex work industry whilst also introducing new offences to protect children from involvement in sex work and to protect against the use of coercion to induce sex work. The bill will create a framework which treats sex work as legitimate work instead of as a crime.

Before I speak further on the bill, I would like to foreshadow that I will be moving amendments during consideration in detail to address a minor technical drafting issue in relation to the Liquor Act 1992 amendments in the bill, as well as to amend the Planning Act 2016 to implement recommendation 21 of the Queensland Law Reform Commission report. The bill amends the Liquor Act 1992 to retain the status quo in relation to maintaining the current adult entertainment legislative framework and the prohibition of unlawful sex work occurring on liquor licensed premises. Sex work by a sole operator is currently not unlawful under the Criminal Code. The Liquor Act amendment to be moved during consideration in detail changes a reference within the proposed definition of 'sex work business' from one or more sex workers to two or more sex workers, to ensure sole operators are not captured by provisions of the Liquor Act which do not currently apply to them.

Amendments to the Planning Act 2016 will implement recommendation 21 of the QLRC report to support existing sex work businesses that are not operating lawfully to become compliant within a 12-month period from the bill commencing. I will also move a technical amendment to the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024 to support implementation of that act.

The committee heard that sex workers experience barriers to exercising their rights along with significant stigma and discrimination. A number of submissions received by the committee from current and former sex workers stated that they experienced barriers accessing accommodation due to being a sex worker. The bill proposes that protections under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 be strengthened to address these issues and safeguard the human rights of sex workers. The bill, through clauses 4 and 6, amends the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 to repeal the protected attribute of 'lawful sexual activity' and replace it with the new attribute 'sex work activity.' The new attribute is defined to mean—

... the provision by an adult person of services for payment or reward that involves a person participating in a sexual activity with another person, or services that involve the use or display of the person's body for the sexual arousal or gratification of another person, and includes being or having been a person who provides those services.

The definition is drafted in this way to ensure that a person working in the sex work industry not involved in sexual activity themselves may still attract the protection of the new attribute. I note the Queensland Law Society's concerns expressed to the committee in relation to the words such as 'sexual arousal and gratification'. I pause to note that the same phrase is used in a definition of commercial sexual services to be included in the Criminal Code by the bill. 'Sexual arousal or sexual

gratification' is a phrase that is in use in section 35 of the Victorian Crimes Act 1958 which provides a definition of 'commercial sexual services'. That definition is in use in a number of offences which support the operation of the decriminalised sex work industry in that state.

The bill repeals section 106C in the Anti-Discrimination Act, which aligns with the principle that sex work should be treated the same as any other business. Accommodation providers will still be able to continue controlling the use of their premises. In explaining its recommendation, the QLRC stated that a motel operator can have policies about the use of their rooms to carry on certain kinds of commercial activity that attracts clients, since the purpose of a motel is to provide short-term accommodation to travellers or tourists. These are the kinds of rules that would also apply to hairdressers and physiotherapists to stop a business being run from the rooms of a hotel. The QLRC explained further—

The issue would be that the person was using the room to conduct a business that attracts clients to the room, not that they were a sex worker or were engaging in sex work.

Underpinning the QLRC report's recommendations in relation to the criminal law is that Queensland's criminal laws need to distinguish between sex work and exploitation. Sex work is that which occurs between consenting adults. The bill includes offences to safeguard against exploitation. The bill will repeal chapter 22A, prostitution, of the Criminal Code. Chapter 22A currently makes all sex work a crime, apart from sex work that occurs in licensed brothels or where a sex worker works alone. In implementing a decriminalised framework for sex work in Queensland, the repeal of this chapter is critical. However, recognising the need to safeguard against the involvement of children in sex work and the use of coercion, the bill creates three new offences in chapter 22, offences against morality, of the Criminal Code which relate to the involvement of children under the age of 18 years in commercial sexual services.

The existing offence at section 218—procuring sexual acts by coercion et cetera—of the Criminal Code is also amended by the bill. Proposed new section 217A of the Criminal Code creates the offence of obtaining commercial sexual services from a person who is not an adult which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment. The maximum penalty is increased to 14 years imprisonment if the child is under 16 years of age. The maximum penalty increases to life imprisonment if the child is under 12 years of age.

An offence of allowing a person who is not an adult to take part in commercial sexual services is proposed by new section 217B of the Criminal Code. The maximum penalty is 14 years imprisonment. An offence for conduct relating to the provision of commercial sexual services by a person who is not an adult is proposed by new section 217C of the Criminal Code. The maximum penalty is 14 years imprisonment. The purpose of these offences is to safeguard the vulnerability of children from exploitation. The offences are not intended to criminalise the child but rather to focus on the conduct of those people who involve children in commercial sexual services.

The bill's amendments to existing section 218 of the Criminal Code provide a safeguard to ensure participation in the sex-work industry is voluntary by ensuring the offence captures coercion in the context of commercial sexual services. The maximum penalty for this offence remains unchanged at 14 years imprisonment.

The amendment to existing section 218 specifies that examples of coercion include intimidation or threats of any kind; or assaulting a person; or damaging the property of a person; or making false representations or using false pretence or fraudulent means. The examples of coercion which are set out in the bill are not exhaustive. Depending upon the circumstances, a person may be prosecuted for this offence where the person is coerced to provide commercial sexual services through the improper use of a position of trust, the taking advantage of a person's vulnerability, or the supply or offer to supply a dangerous drug to the person.

The serious organised crime circumstance of aggravation in the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 will be available in relation to each new offence proposed by the bill and will remain available where a person is charged with the offence under section 218 of the Criminal Code.

A definition of 'commercial sexual service' is inserted by the bill at section 207A of the Criminal Code. It provides that a commercial sexual service is a service involving a sexual act engaged by a person for payment or reward under an arrangement of a commercial character. To ensure the offences capture both physical and non-physical contact, the existing definition of 'sexual act' currently defined in section 218 of the Criminal Code is used. Services involving the 'use or display of the person's body for the sexual arousal or gratification of another person' are also included in the definition.

The bill amends the District Court of Queensland Act 1967 to ensure the District Court has jurisdiction in relation to the offence under new section 217A relating to obtaining commercial sexual services from a person who is not an adult due to the maximum penalty being life imprisonment where the child is under 12 years.

The bill makes amendments to the Liquor Act to maintain the status quo until consultation and final determination is made about the extent and nature of adult entertainment and sex work which can occur at liquor licensed premises. The adult entertainment code, which restricts allowable behaviour for adult entertainment, is maintained. Requirements relating to adult entertainment permits will remain in place. To maintain the prohibition on persons with an interest in a sex-work business from applying for or holding a liquor licence or permit under the Liquor Act, the bill replaces the definition 'interest in a brothel' with 'interest in a sex-work business'. Importantly, this restriction is not intended to apply to sole operator sex workers as sex work by sole operators is not unlawful under the Criminal Code. The bill also amends the Liquor Act to remove the Police Commissioner's role in approving the adult entertainment code. Any future changes to the code will only require approval by the Commissioner for Liquor and Gaming.

The committee heard several public submissions that questioned whether the decriminalisation should extend to the adult entertainment industry. These complex policy issues were not addressed in the QLRC report which require separate consultation and consideration by government. A working group has been established with key stakeholders to provide advice to government this year. The government will consider any findings closely, along with further work, to ensure definitions amended by this bill, including references to escort services, are fit for purpose.

Several submissions made to the committee held concerns that without changes to local government law decriminalisation would not have the intended benefits to the sex-work industry. New sections are proposed to be inserted by the bill into the Local Government Act 2009 and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 to prohibit local governments from making a local law that prohibits or regulates sex work or the conduct of a sex-work business. The intent of these provisions is to prevent local governments from making local laws about sex work to ensure there is a consistent, statewide approach to sex-work regulation. This meets the Queensland Law Reform Commission's recommendation 23 that local governments' power to make local laws should be restricted so that a local law may not be made which prohibits or regulates sex work. These amendments are in accordance with recommendations of the QLRC report to restrict local laws regarding sex work to ensure the aims and benefits of decriminalisation filter down to local government areas throughout Queensland. However, it is also important to note that, under the proposed amendments, a local government would still be able to make a local law which applied universally to all business types, including sex work. For example, local governments would not be restricted from making local laws about advertising generally, as long as they are not specifically targeting sex work or the conduct of sex-work businesses.


As I previously mentioned, the serious and organised crime circumstance of aggravation applying to the new offences in the Criminal Code is established by the bill. It will also remain available where the coercion offence in section 218 of the code has been charged. Therefore, the bill amends schedule 1C relating to prescribed offences of the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992. It includes the offences in proposed new sections 217A, 217B and 217C of the Criminal Code. Section 218 of the Criminal Code, although being amended by the bill, is already prescribed as an offence to which the circumstance of aggravation applies.

The government acknowledges that the current regulatory approach will be significantly changed by decriminalising the sex-work industry in Queensland. One of the recommendations of the QLRC was for there to be a legislative requirement to ensure the operation of the legislation giving effect to the changes is reviewed by a committee no sooner than four years and no later than five years after decriminalisation is implemented.

The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 is amended by the bill to provide a legislated requirement for the new regulatory framework to be reviewed. This act is also amended to include transitional provisions which relate to the repeal of the Prostitution Act 1999. The bill will repeal, in its entirety, the Prostitution Act 1999. Many of the concerns identified by the QLRC and in submissions received by the committee are addressed by the repeal of the Prostitution Act 1999. Primarily, these concerns are that the current regulatory framework stigmatises sex workers, increases their exposure to violence and exploitation and fails to safeguard their human rights. The repeal of the act will, amongst other things, have the effect of removing public solicitation offences; removing the current prostitution licensing provisions and abolishing the Prostitution Licensing Authority; removing sex-work-specific advertising provisions; and repealing sex-work-specific health offences. The introduction and passage of the bill

will align Queensland with other jurisdictions in the country that have decriminalised sex work, including New South Wales, the Northern Territory and Victoria.

The Miles government is proud to present a bill which decriminalises sex work and is a step towards improving the health, safety and rights for sex workers while meeting the expectations of the community. Once again, I thank all of the submitters to the committee and all of those who came forward during the QLRC's inquiry. To all of those who are joining us today and to those who are no longer here and cannot join us, we recognise their advocacy over so many years. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (12.27 pm): Often described as the 'world's oldest profession', there is evidence that prostitution—sex work—occurred over 4,000 years ago. Sumerian records dating back to 2400 BC are the earliest recorded mention of prostitution as an occupation. These describe a temple brothel operated by Sumerian priests in the city of Uruk, an ancient city east of the Euphrates River. In the classic historical work from the 5th century BC *The Histories*, the Greek historian Herodotus documents shrines and temples where sacred prostitution was a common practice. In later years, sacred prostitution and similar classifications for females were known to have existed in Greece, Rome, India, China and Japan. However, many of these practices came to an end in the western world when the emperor Constantine decreed Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Since those times, prostitution—what today and in this bill is described as sex work—has continued in various forms and under many guises unabated. Sometimes regularised, inevitably tolerated, often outlawed, occasionally glamorised, often included in popular culture from Tolstoy and *Les Misérables* to *Trading Places* and *Pretty Woman* and a multitude of TV shows, attitudes have changed over the years, particularly in the western world. In Queensland much of our recent political, policing and legal history has been defined by the Fitzgerald inquiry. It might pay to recall that in May 1987 acting Queensland premier Bill Gunn established that commission of inquiry after the media reported possible police corruption involving illegal gambling and prostitution. The results of that inquiry are, of course, well known.

This parliament has dealt with this issue on a number of occasions in the past. The 1991 parliamentary CJC report on prostitution makes for fascinating reading. It is instructive to note the attitudes of parliamentarians in this place over 30 years ago when considering the idea of decriminalising and regulating sex work and how times have changed since then. It is also interesting to see the split in the recommendations of that committee. The majority, consisting of two Labor members and two National Party members, opposed the establishment of licensed brothels and the decriminalisation of sex work. The minority, consisting of two Labor members and one Liberal, supported the alternative, although with serious concerns and conditions attached. It would seem a far cry from how committees work today.

By 1999, one of those minority Labor MLAs was Premier and chose to enact the Prostitution Act 1999 to regulate for a highly regulated licensed brothel industry. The guiding principles of that legislation were said to ensure quality of life for local communities; safeguard against corruption and organised crime; address social factors which contribute to involvement in the sex industry; and ensure a healthy society and promote safety. The act commenced operation in July 2000. Not for the first time today, I am reflecting back to my days at the Brisbane City Council. I can recall one of the earliest brothels in Brisbane opening across Breakfast Creek from my electorate in Abbotsford Road, Maine, next to what is now Hoppy's Car Wash.

There was another review into prostitution by the CMC in 2004. It made further recommendations that were not implemented. Since July 2000, the law has remained largely stagnant while, of course, the world has moved on, both with technology and with broader societal change. Today we are now discussing what would have been almost unthinkable in Queensland 30 years ago—the decriminalising of sex work. This bill follows a lengthy review by the Queensland Law Reform Commission and is the result of its report No 80 of March 2023. As always, I thank the Law Reform Commission and its members for the power of work that they do in producing these reports. They are well researched, lengthy and provide valuable information. That report followed the referral by the then attorney-general, and now health minister, of the issue of regulating a decriminalised sex-work industry in Queensland. The scope of the review was to recommend a framework for a decriminalised sex-work industry in Queensland with particular regard to—

- (a) the development of an appropriate legislative framework required to give effect to a decriminalised sex work industry;

- (b) the extent to which existing legislation should be repealed to give effect to a decriminalised sex work industry, including the Prostitution Act 1999, Prostitution Regulation 2014, Chapter 22A of the Criminal Code and provisions of the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000;

In my view, these are the two most important references in the review but, of course, there were many other ancillary matters to be considered in the reference and they are taken up in the commission's report. The essence is that the government had already made up its mind to decriminalise the sex-work industry. The government was unwilling to consider or investigate any other method of addressing sex work in Queensland. The failure to do so, and especially to consider the so-called 'Nordic model' of regulation of sex work, is considered by many submitters to the Law Reform Commission and the committee investigating the bill as a failure of consultation by the government, noting the many submissions made to the commission and the committee in support of that model of sex-work regulation. That model, broadly speaking, proposes an asymmetric method of regulating sex work by penalising the buyer of sex services, not the sex worker.

Typically, such a system also seeks to encourage workers to stop sex work by offering pathways out of the business. It has been adopted with variations in a number of countries including Sweden, Finland, France, Canada and Ireland. So if that model was to be rejected, as the government has done, it should have been done so fairly and fully after proper investigation. The government dismissed that model out of hand. Now there may well be good reasons for doing so including the concern that sex workers will still be targeted by police; that they may be denied housing and accommodation; that they may be denied access to financial services; and that they may be subject to further violence and harm from clients seeking to avoid police prosecution or even arrest. It is claimed that criminalising buyers makes it harder for sex workers to screen clients and to share information about unsafe or criminal clients—again, potentially raising issues of harm.

Interestingly, in its 2015 Select Committee on the Regulation of Brothels, the New South Wales parliamentary committee concluded the government should not criminalise sex work where it is consensual activity between adults. The committee stated that it is undesirable to stigmatise sex workers by requiring them to be licensed and forever recorded as having worked in the industry. That committee of the New South Wales parliament also found it was equally undesirable to criminalise the clients of sex workers as suggested by the Nordic model. Clearly, there are substantive issues to be considered in determining the appropriate way to address sex work. There are arguments on both sides. Whether the government's preferred method, or another way, is suitable has not really been considered.

The LNP believes that all workers, and those in vulnerable positions particularly, should be protected from criminal exploitation, coercion and harm. They should have access to the protections the law offers. This includes being able to report offences to and rely on the police and other institutions and laws of the state, as well as enjoying freedom from discrimination in a considered and balanced way. We strongly believe that there must be powerful and clear mechanisms to prevent and punish exploitation, coercion and trafficking as well as to protect children. A society that values the family as a central tenet of our community can do no less. It is with this in mind that we frame our response to this bill.

Currently, there are two legal forms of sex work in Queensland. The first form of lawful sex work is that provided in a licensed brothel. The second is that provided by a sole operator or 'private worker'. In this instance, a sex worker works alone from premises providing either in-house or outcall services, or both. Sex work in any other form is illegal in Queensland. This includes sex work engaged in or by escort agencies, unlicensed brothels, massage parlours, street workers publicly soliciting and two or more sex workers providing sex work from a single premises. Most sex work in Queensland, according to the reports, occurs outside the licensing framework, meaning that it happens outside the current 17 legal brothels in Queensland—previously 20 was the number used. It is mostly provided by sole operators at unlicensed premises or through escort agencies. Sex work, performed at unlicensed premises or arranged through escort agencies, is unlawful, as the reports tell us. According to the Queensland Law Reform Commission report, at present 90 per cent of workers operate outside the licensed brothel system. This often leads them to work in dangerous situations, particularly when they are forced to work alone. Those figures do not seem to be contested.

The stated objective of this bill is to establish a legal framework that will enact a safe decriminalised sex-work industry in Queensland while improving the health, safety, rights and legal protections for sex workers. It proposes to do this by repealing prostitution offences in the Criminal Code, the Prostitution Act and prostitution regulation. It removes the current licensing system and specific obligations on brothel licensees by a complete repeal of the Prostitution Act and it updates

discrimination protections for sex workers in section 106 of the Anti-Discrimination Act. It does act to restrict local governments from making local laws that prohibit or regulate sex work through amendments to the City of Brisbane Act and the Local Government Act. It inserts new offences in the Criminal Code to protect against the involvement of children in commercial sexual services and in the procuring of sexual services using coercion. The Attorney-General has outlined some of the attributes of those new sections in her contribution earlier.

It amends the Liquor Act 1992 to maintain the status quo on the conduct of adult entertainment and the prohibition of sex work occurring on licensed premises and it provides for a legislated review requirement to assess the effectiveness of the framework after four but less than five years after commencement. In short, the bill decriminalises sex work completely and removes sex work specific regulation entirely.

As I say, it requires a review of the effectiveness of these measures after four and before five years after commencement. This means that the regulation of sex work will rely on other existing laws, such as the general provisions of the Criminal Code, to deter criminal activity; the provisions of occupational health and safety laws to govern worker health and safety; general advertising laws that apply to all other types of businesses will apply in relation to sex-work business; and likewise in relation to planning laws, where will be no local laws specific to or prohibiting sex work. General amenity and public nuisance laws apply, again with no specific provisions for sex work. In short, sex work is to be treated as no different to any other form of business.

While there is no doubt there is much wrong with the current laws about prostitution—and there is—the LNP believes these changes, without some degree of regulation and oversight, particularly in relation to planning, potential criminal involvement in sex-work businesses and in striking the right balance in the Anti-Discrimination Act, will not deliver what we all want, which is safer and better outcomes for the community as a whole and sex workers in particular. The absence of a planning regulation available for scrutiny by the committee months after the bill was introduced is an area of concern, and we still do not see that regulation. This matter was raised in the committee and, having read the transcripts and the committee report, I have to say it was not satisfactorily answered by those officers of the department responsible for its preparation.

The bill does enact recommendation 23 of the Queensland Law Reform Commission report, and that shows that the intent of the legislation is to take power away from a local government to prohibit sex-work businesses or regulate sex work or sex-work businesses in a way different to other businesses. The LGAQ raised its concern in both its written and verbal submissions to the committee. The LGAQ opposed this change, submitting it amounted to a sex-work business being treated differently to other businesses with no regulation able to be applied. It is intended that there be no requirement for separation distances from other sensitive land uses or other sex-work businesses. The Queensland Law Reform Commission argued planning provisions should guide sex-work businesses to the same extent as other commercial and home-based businesses; home-based sex-work businesses should be treated like any other home-based business regarding land use; and sex-work services should be guided towards centre or commercial zones, mixed-use zones and, in recognition of existing arrangements—that is, for the existing 17 established brothels—industrial zones and strategic port land. In our view this is not protecting community amenity.

We believe there are certain instances where community views on the desirability of a sex-work business being near homes, schools, churches or other places of worship or sensitive institutions is highly debatable. While the intention might be to treat sex-work businesses just like any other, the reality is that very many people in the community do not regard them as 'just another business'. Many would feel extremely uncomfortable and concerned about the conduct of sex services businesses anywhere near a place children congregate or frequent. How would people feel if a sex-work business, for example, was to open next to the South Bank Parklands or on one of the premises located there or in a newly developed commercial centre with childcare and kindergarten facilities as well as a playground? We are left wondering in these circumstances what constitutes a home business. Is it two sex workers? Is it three? Is it four? What hours can they operate? Unlike most businesses operating a normal nine-to-five or thereabouts workday, it is entirely conceivable that sex-work businesses would work 24 hours a day and predominantly at night and into the early morning hours. Local residential communities may be rightfully upset at that scenario. Under this bill, local authorities are emasculated and local communities are given no right to have their views considered.

Let us look at the Prostitution Licensing Authority's submission and evidence. The Prostitution Licensing Authority's submission supports decriminalisation. However, it also calls for a regulatory regime for the operation and ownership of sex-work businesses in Queensland. Again, the submission

made by the chair of the authority indicates the concerns that he has raised. These are reasonable concerns validly made in a reasoned submission. Those concerns include the potential for criminal involvement in the ownership and management of brothels with all that that entails. The licensing authority says in its submission—

Of particular concern are risks of criminality around money laundering, worker coercion and people trafficking. The regulation on which the current licensing system is founded is designed to prevent the influence of organised crime in the industry and operate in synergy with law enforcement.

That submission goes on to say—

There is opportunity to contemporise the regulatory system to reduce the administrative constraints to the benefit of the industry without abandoning the oversight measures necessary to maintain industry safeguards for operators, sex workers and their clients.


The authority's chair, Mr Colin Forrest SC, makes those same valid observations in his testimony to the committee. These are not unreasonable submissions that have not been thought through. They are the submissions of someone with experience as the chair of the authority in the licensed brothels sector. He makes it clear that he does not speak for the unlicensed part of the industry, but he observes the dangers that may occur in a completely decriminalised system. Notably, the government ignores this suggestion and it is hard to discern why given the state does regulate other business activities with a potential for harm. We regulate the liquor industry; we regulate the gaming industry; we regulate the sale of tobacco; and, perhaps more relevantly, we regulate tattoo parlours. These are all businesses where the state has some form of interest in protecting the community and acts to do so. It imposes regulatory controls.

The Queensland Hotels Association made a submission. They were disappointed that they had not been consulted regarding the bill considering the potential impact it has on over 1,200 hotel and accommodation tourism businesses across the state. Notably, they do not support the repealing of section 106C of the Anti-Discrimination Act. The repeal of this provision, which is the provision that allows an operator to act to not provide that accommodation to a sex worker, would mean an operator would not be able to prohibit a sex worker from conducting business in a rented room. The provision was inserted in the act to specifically deal with that issue; a court case had been brought. In fact, QCAT found in favour of the sex worker and against the owners of a small motel in relation to that matter. It was subsequently overturned on appeal, I might say.

The balancing of the rights of the accommodation provider and the sex worker, which is always the case when we talk about these matters—a balancing of rights—has in our view in this instance tipped the scales too far and the rights of private property owners to determine who uses their premises and what for must take precedence. No-one would expect a motel to allow a mechanic to service cars in his car park because he or she rented a room. In the instance envisaged by the bill though, the accommodation provider would have no choice.

The LNP does support strengthening criminal laws around coercion and exploitation and any attempt to involve children in sex work. We support the intent of the new provisions in new sections 217 and 218 that the bill proposes to insert. Again, this can be done within a regulatory framework designed to also limit the opportunities for criminal behaviour in the first place. One is not exclusive of the other. You can strengthen the criminal law in relation to coercion, exploitation and the involvement of children in the provision of commercial sex-work services, but you can also still have a regulatory environment. One does not exclude the other.

I want to also acknowledge the very many submissions from those in support of the government's proposal and those who wish the bill to commence sooner rather than later. My contribution and the LNP do not seek to diminish those individuals' and groups' contributions. I went to many of the meetings that were held here and spoke to many of the people involved in that side of the case, if I can put it that way. They do make valid points around aspects of worker health and autonomy. However, in this instance the LNP believes these aims could well have been achieved by a regulatory model that would ensure benefits for the sex workers while at the same time address valid and real concerns of many about the potential for criminal involvement and influence, coercion, extortion and trafficking as well as those concerned about the ability of local authorities to take steps to address community amenity concerns that may well be raised and those who are concerned about the issue of being able to manage and control accommodation provided. In those circumstances, the LNP will not be supporting this bill.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.48 pm): I rise to support the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. As honourable members would know, I was chair of the committee that conducted the very thorough examination of this bill. With this bill we will follow the

New South Wales, Victorian, Northern Territory and New Zealand examples in fully decriminalising sex work.

The member for Clayfield talked about the need for a licensing body. No other jurisdiction in Australia is going down that path. None have that. The member talked about the Nordic model. We had only a few submissions that talked about how good the Nordic model would be. Among those advocating for that model was the Australian Christian Lobby. It is their preferred model. We did not see any overwhelming evidence in the submissions about the preferability of that model. I commend the good work of the Law Reform Commission and all the sex-work practitioners who, for many years, have worked to present a very strong and, I believe, unanswerable case for why we need to change the laws in this state. The committee explored very carefully and considered deliberately all aspects of the submissions and evidence.

The central tenet of these changes is to protect workers and increase worker safety, which reflects what the Attorney-General has already talked about today. It is very clear that the current regime is not safe for workers. Under current laws, people are forced to work alone. The current laws say that you can only work as a single operator or in one of the 17 licensed sex-work establishments. Respect Inc said that currently it is an offence if two sex workers are working in a pair—for example, contacting each other for safety, checking with each other at the end of a booking, driving another sex worker to a call-out or even hiring a receptionist to screen calls. I do not think disallowing such practices is an acceptable way to run a workplace in modern Queensland.

Sex workers want workplace health and safety protections to apply to them as they do to other workers. If this bill is passed, workplace health and safety guidelines will apply to sex workers and they will be able to report unsafe incidents to Worksafe Queensland, just like all other Queensland workers. I congratulate the workers for organising and for making us take notice of what they endure. For example, if they do not conform to the rules of an establishment then their wages can be withheld, for up to a month in some cases. One witness, Candi Forrest, said that they want to look after themselves, to empower themselves and to stop those unfair practices. I think that is quite laudable.

Secondly, and we have heard a bit about this, criminalisation or the current regulatory system is outdated and not fit for purpose. Because most sex workers work outside the legal structure, they are unprotected and forced to remain silent. A 2022 survey showed that three-quarters of sex workers would not report a crime to police. They are easily subjected to intimidation and coercion. As we have already heard, section 106C of the Anti-Discrimination Act says that an accommodation provider can discriminate against someone if they are using the accommodation for sex work. No other jurisdiction in Australia has that provision in their anti-discrimination act—only Queensland. If that sort of discrimination is allowed, as we heard, sex workers could be approached for free services or threatened with losing their accommodation. That is an example of criminalisation leaving people vulnerable to coercion. As the Attorney-General said, the rules around a hotel proprietor prohibiting people from conducting a commercial activity on their premises also apply to, for example, hairdressers or physiotherapists.

The committee discovered that, outside the licensed sector, health practices remain almost unknown as sex workers will not engage with their peers if they are working in an illegal establishment. What we did find is that the health practices of sex workers are very effective and they do not need extra regulation. The research, and there is a lot of it, shows that there is a lesser rate of infection amongst sex workers than the general public. Research presented to the committee, including by Professor Basil Donovan AO, showed that sex workers and their organisations are well organised when it comes to managing their health and there are very low rates of infection. Rachael Brennan, from the School of Public Health at the University of Queensland, said that all the research shows that the decriminalisation of sex work is the most effective way to reduce HIV in sex workers alongside partnerships between sex worker organisations and public health.

The member for Clayfield talked about his concerns that if we get rid of the regulatory system we will open up the industry to criminalisation. I make it very clear that the committee saw no evidence of that. The Prostitution Licensing Authority stated it but presented no evidence to back up that claim. Janelle Fawkes from the industry stated that broadscale criminal backing is not a feature of sex work in Australia. It was said that the select committee in New South Wales was told that gangs were involved in sex work but we were informed that that was refuted by other members of that select committee and, once again, those claims were never substantiated. I point out that, in a criminalised industry where most people are working illegally, those people are more open to coercion and intimidation. I have heard it said that gangs are not interested in owning or running such establishments because that is too much hard work with paperwork, tax et cetera. The gangs are more interested in standing over


illegal operations to extract money. If you decriminalise the industry then you give unsavoury elements less opportunity to extort or stand over establishments. Therefore, I reject the claim that going down the path we are proposing will open up the industry to criminality. I say the opposite: it will decrease it and give much less opportunity.

Thirdly, I point out that the planning regime that will flow from this bill will include a role for local government. Local government will not be emasculated, as the member for Clayfield said. If you read the transcripts carefully, that is what you will find out. The committee stated that, in a decriminalised environment, planning regimes surrounding sex work would reflect this principle: it should be regulated no more and no less than any other business. Like other businesses, it will be regulated according to its impact, whether that is noise impact, traffic impact, parking impact or amenity impact. Professor Donovan said that the amenity impact is virtually nil in those establishments.

The issue of separation distances and proximity has come up again. The problem with that argument is that these establishments are already there. They are already operating in our local shops and I have seen them since we were referred this bill. If you ask a massage service what their HICAPS rebate is I suspect you will not get the answer that you are expecting. These businesses are in our communities now. People argue for proximity and separation distances but they need to look at different ways of saying that.

It is very clear that local governments will regulate sex worker land use according to their own planning instruments, set within the state's new legal framework. They will not be able to prohibit sex-work businesses but they will reflect the state's requirements. They can make amendments to their planning schemes to make sure everything aligns with the community's expectations, including where and how these businesses operate, what sort of uses are appropriate to the zoning of that land and what buffers are appropriate. Whether they regulate land use through instruments such as neighbourhood plans, a sub-precinct in a zone category or a home-based business code, that is up to the local government and it is applicable to all businesses. Members do not need to take my word for that; that is in the evidence from the departmental staff.

It is very apt that we have brought this bill before the House. I am disappointed that the LNP will not be supporting it for confected or contrived reasons. I appeal to members of the House to think about worker safety. The overwhelming evidence that we have from the committee inquiry is that those workers are calling out for a safer work environment and they should have it, like every other Queensland worker. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (12.58 pm): It is a privilege to rise and speak to the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I will pick up where the chair left off. I can assure him, as the shadow Attorney-General did, that the safety of all workers, including the safety of workers in the oldest profession, as it is regularly described, is very important. We want to ensure that we have a safe environment in Queensland and that workers are not exploited. Having said those few words, I associate myself with the comments of the shadow Attorney-General, Tim Nicholls, and the very thoughtful way that he has approached this bill and the sensitivities of it. I look forward to being able to go into more detail about some of the reasons I am not able to support the bill.


I want to place on record my thanks to all the witnesses who gave evidence to the committee and the witnesses who are here today. We met some very professional people who gave well-thought-out evidence to the committee. In other states such as New South Wales, these matters are not fully decriminalised.

Debate, on motion of Mr McDonald, adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 pm to 2:00 pm.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CFMEU


 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.00 pm): Every Queensland worker deserves to leave home safely, enter their workplace safely and leave work after they have had a safe day. Every Queensland worker deserves to be paid when they go to work. Unfortunately, over the last nine years of the Labor government in Queensland the CFMEU has held Queensland to ransom with bullying, intimidation, fear and violence on worksites. Last night in the media we saw videos of CFMEU thuggery, intimidation and violence where they were trying to prevent workers from going to work and doing their jobs. Yesterday and today we saw the Premier in complete denial because he knows the

minute he condemns the CFMEU he condemns his own job. He knows he can only be there with the support of the CFMEU and the minute he calls out the bullying, violence and intimidation he is gone and there is a health minister waiting in the wings. He knows it—we all know it; Queenslanders know it.

Yesterday we saw workers trying to get into a construction site denied entry and physically pushed onto a busy road in an unsafe way just because they have decided not to join the CFMEU. They want to go to work and put food on the table for their families. Every time they are blockaded and stopped from going to work they do not get paid. The Premier had an obligation to call it out. The Premier had an obligation today to say, 'Enough is enough and I am going to do something about it', but he cannot because he is owned lock, stock and barrel by the CFMEU. While the CFMEU keep donating to the Labor Party, the Premier will not take action.

How dare the Premier come into this parliament and say, 'There is nothing I can do.' He talks about things he has done in the last five months, but apparently in this instance he cannot do anything. It is like Cross River Rail is not a Queensland construction site, like it is not Queensland taxpayers' money paying for it, like he does not have a Queensland industrial relations minister. If only the industrial relations minister had power under the Industrial Relations Act to intervene and stop these bad practices from the CFMEU. Guess what? She does and the Labor government does, but they are refusing to act because Premier Steven Miles knows the minute he does he is out of a job. He owes his job to the union movement. He is beholden to the CFMEU. The violence on construction sites in Queensland has to stop. Workers' safety must come first. The LNP will prioritise workers' safety, not the CFMEU's thuggish and bullying behaviour.

Electricity Rebate; Redlands Satellite Hospital

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (2.03 pm): What a great day for all Queenslanders! The \$1,000 rebate for every Queensland household will make an incredible difference. I know the difference the \$550 rebate made to Redlanders.

Mr Hart: What will happen next year when the bill comes?

Ms RICHARDS: The only threat to rebates into the future is the LNP. The LNP have already made it clear what they will do with energy assets. The LNP have already made it quite clear what they will do when it comes to progressive coal royalties that Queenslanders deserve to be the beneficiaries of.

Mrs Frecklington: Don't mislead the House.

Ms RICHARDS: I am not misleading the House. It is pretty clear what could potentially happen under an LNP government. The \$1,000 rebate means a lot to Redlanders. I am extraordinarily proud to be part of a government that is helping take cost-of-living pressure off our communities. That is a fantastic announcement today for all Queenslanders.

When we talk about the work that we do and the things that are important, health care always comes up. I know what the opposition's position has been on satellite hospitals from the get-go and the potential risk to our satellite hospitals if the LNP is elected. I received an email from a constituent which states—

Good morning Kim Richards MP.

Re: Redlands Satellite Hospital—10 out of 10—Great staff and outstanding facility.

Anzac Day 2024, I attended the above facility for treatment for a laceration.

Firstly, I would like to wholeheartedly thank Dr Ailsa McKenzie for her professionalism and care provided.

The Redlands community is very fortunate to have her and the other staff working on a day when many other businesses were closed.

Reception staff were very pleasant and efficient. Shortly after registering I was called in for treatment.

Entire facility was spotlessly clean.

Patient drop off and car parking facilities were well planned and convenient.

I'm so full of praise for this facility but I'm unable to adequately detail it in words.

Government funding for this facility is money very well spent.

Thank you to all involved from planning to completion for providing such a first class facility.


They ask if I could please pass on my thanks to the health minister's office and all of the teams involved in delivering care for our communities.

Our Labor government delivers for Queenslanders. That is in very stark contrast to the slick, slippery slogans of the LNP. I have seen their boards: 'Revive Redland Hospital'. I have not seen one commitment nor one piece of planning or policy on how you are going to make a difference to Redlanders when it comes to health care.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Through the chair, member.

Ms RICHARDS: We are delivering an intensive care unit with 38 beds. It is well under construction with Adco. One only need look at the video footage to see that coming out of the ground right now. We have delivered the new 28-bed Lagoon Ward with Hutchinson Builders—a fantastic addition that is taking pressure off our emergency department—in addition to the satellite hospital. It is only the Labor government that will continue to support Queenslanders, whether that is through rebates or health care.


Electricity Prices

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (2.06 pm): Queenslanders are hurting. Each and every Queenslanders is struggling with the cost of living. Do the LNP support any relief for cost of living? You bet we do! After a decade of this tired old Labor government, Queenslanders are facing increases in their electricity bills three times the national average. Queenslanders are facing increases in their electricity prices by 19.9 per cent. AEMO has wholesale spot prices increasing in Queensland to an average of 118 megawatts over the first three months of the year. This is a 75 per cent increase. Queensland was the outlier. Everywhere else it averaged 76 megawatts per hour over the first quarter.

Let us look at the figures that this government decided to cherrypick today. Queenslanders are facing some of the highest increases in their electricity because of 10 years of this incompetent Labor government. Let us have a look at what Canstar said. The Premier claims that it showed that Queensland has the cheapest electricity bills on the east coast, but it only used the quarter where the last rebates were rolled out. What about the quarter before that and the quarter after that? Queenslanders are sick of being conned by this government.

Do we need to provide Queenslanders with cost-of-living relief? Absolutely we do. The reason why we are in this sorry state is because we have a government that refuses to look after the power assets that we have. For 1,070 days they have refused to bring Callide back online. They have missed seven of their own deadlines. We are still waiting on the Brady report to explain why. Do not just believe us when we give the reason why power prices are going up: the Queensland Competition Authority and the Auditor-General have said that with Callide down our power prices are going through the roof. With seven missed deadlines, Queensland power prices three times the national average, a 19.9 per cent increase last year in our power prices and Queensland's wholesale energy prices an outlier to every other state, it is time we showed Labor the door in '24.

Fire Ants; Cost of Living, Electricity Rebate

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries and Minister for Rural Communities) (2.09 pm): I recognise the professionalism, competence and work of the men and women of the National Fire Ant Eradication Program, particularly last weekend at Oakey air base where they eradicated about 80 nests and then retreated those nests as a result of their condition. I extend my condolences to the family and friends of a long-serving public servant and team member who passed away over the weekend.

The good thing about this announcement is that no more nests have been detected. Once again, like many other times when we have treated nests with DNI, direct nest injection, they have been eradicated. I also extend my appreciation to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Richard Marles, for taking my phone call during the week and to our fantastic, hardworking federal agriculture minister, Senator Murray Watt, who discussed this issue, particularly in regard to the complications of being on a defence base and dealing with a state jurisdiction.

Once again, these sorts of incursions have nothing to do with the conduct of the Queensland government or the program, but human assisted movement. In this case, I believe that it was a turf farm in the south-east corner that supplied turf to the defence base some years ago that spread the ants. That is why we have upped the ante in terms of regulations in dealing with this type of human assisted movement. One would think that that were not the case when we hear from those opposite. They should

start their contributions with 'once upon a time', because what they deliver in this chamber is fairytales, regardless of whether it is on this issue or anything else.

What gets me is that this is a national program and one would think that the members of the Nationals opposite would certainly understand what national means, but that is not the case.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FURNER: You would have to be an oxygen thief not to understand what national means. Once again, I appreciate that they are a bit behind the wheel when it comes to being Nationals, but they should understand what it stands for. No doubt, those interjecting are oxygen thieves. Members of the LNP come into this chamber and misrepresent the program—

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Burleigh!

Mr FURNER: Only those on this side of chamber represent and understand our hardworking public servants.

Mr Janetzki interjected.


Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, member for Toowoomba South!

Mr FURNER: That is why we look after those public servants. On this side of the House, we are taking \$1,000 off the power bills of hardworking Queenslanders. Unlike those opposite, we will make sure that we look after Queenslanders and the public servants of Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you used some unparliamentary language in that contribution. I ask you to withdraw.

Mr FURNER: I withdraw.

Youth Crime

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (2.13 pm): A lot has been said this week about community safety, but the most notable voices this week are the voices of victims—victims who have walked these streets to march on parliament to have their voices heard; and victims who reach out every day to the opposition to share their stories and their frustrations with a government that will not listen. Many have told their stories of not feeling supported. Many have told their stories of the frustrations of having to wait 12 to 18 months for applications for financial assistance to be considered. Many have had their lives dramatically changed by crime. The way members of this government sought to pull the wool over the eyes of victims with their deceit and their backflipping was absolutely disgraceful. This government will say and do anything to cling onto power. Members opposite will say and do anything to control the narrative. It is all about the politics when it comes to this state government.

To save their political skin, they will backflip on absolutely anything—on something for which they have held long-held values. Why? It is all about the headlines when it comes to this state government. It is all about controlling the narrative and the headline. Queenslanders have stopped believing this Labor government because they are living through the youth crime crisis that is ripping through this state. They are living through it day in and day out.

This week, the Attorney-General stood in this chamber and tried to stop us from giving a voice to the victims who marched outside parliament—the same Attorney-General who proudly introduced the laws that weakened our youth justice laws on day three of this government coming to power 10 years ago. Mr Deputy Speaker, do you know what I think? I think six months out from an election this is a government trying to control the narrative. This is a government trying to control the headlines to save its own political skin. I think Queenslanders can see straight through it.

Queenslanders have stopped believing the rhetoric. Queenslanders have given up on this stale third-term government that has stopped listening to them. The government is in a desperate bid to hold on to power. In a desperate bid, they are misleading Queenslanders. There is more concern for their electoral safety than there is to listening to the voices of victims. In contrast, the LNP has the right priorities for Queensland's future.

Mr HART: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There are constant interjections from some government members on one of our female members trying to do her job. This is disgusting.


Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The House will remain orderly while I am taking a point of order. Member, I will manage the conduct of the House, and I have been doing that. There is no point of order.

Mrs GERBER: The LNP has the right priorities for Queensland's future. We will restore consequences for action in the Youth Justice Act. We will divert young lives from crime by reforming early intervention and fixing the broken residential care system. Queenslanders need to show Labor the door in 2024.

(Time expired)

Cost of Living; Liberal National Party

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (2.16 pm): What great news the people of Pumicestone woke up to today thanks to our new Miles Labor government. Whether I am out door-knocking, making calls or at community events, people tell me over and over that inflation has hurt them and that they need help to lower their household bills. We are listening, and today we are delivering. Our huge cost-of-living rebates will take \$1,000 off the power bill of every household and \$1,372 off the power bills of concession card holders and seniors. That is great news for people in my community doing it tough. This cost-of-living support from our new Miles Labor government means that many families in Pumicestone will pay zero on their first power bill after July. I know that they welcome that. I say to them, remember, if you have solar or your usage is low, your credit can rollover to your future bills or you can even apply to have that money transferred into your bank account to help with your other expenses. It is great news.

Our record cost-of-living support is only possible because we kept our energy assets in public hands and because we are making multinational coal companies share their record profits with Queenslanders through our progressive coal royalties. Of course, we know that that is all at risk under the LNP. Labor believes that Queenslanders should benefit from our Queensland resources—not wealthy multinational coal companies. Whether it is our huge cost-of-living help or delivering more health care into the heart of our community via our Bribie satellite hospital, I will always fight for the infrastructure, the services and the support that locals need as will every member on this side of the House. But it is all at risk in October if Queensland elects an LNP government because we know that the LNP will cut cost-of-living support right when households can least afford it.

The LNP voted against public ownership of our energy assets that make all those cost-of-living supports possible. They are on the record promising their Queensland Resources Council mates that they will get rid of our progressive coal royalties. Locally in Pumicestone, they have been loud and proud about how they wanted our government to build a private hospital instead of our public Bribie satellite hospital. Taking away those royalties would blow a \$9 billion black hole in the Queensland budget. How will the LNP fill it? The way they always seek to fill any hole—by cutting, sacking and selling.


It is Queenslanders who will pay the price if the LNP are elected. They will cut health services, sell off our satellite hospitals and sack health workers, just like they did with the Wynnum hospital. The member for Lytton is on the record clearly stating what the loss of that hospital represented to her community. Nurses working at our Caboolture Hospital and satellite hospital have been very clear that they are frightened. They are right to be frightened, because those opposite marched 731 local nurses out the door in 2015.

(Time expired)

Mr POWER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member over here was constantly interjecting while the member was on her feet.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member, resume your seat. I do not appreciate that point of order, member for Logan. I will manage the chamber. I do not need any assistance.

Miles Labor Government, Budget

 **Mr JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (2.19 pm): The Queensland budget is now just over one month away. Budgets are always about choices. The choice that faces the Miles government is clear: will this year's budget be about the 137 days to the October election or will it be about Queensland's next decade, a decade that holds extraordinary promise for our great state? What will the Premier and Treasurer choose?


Queenslanders know that this decade-old government cannot be trusted. Perhaps they can be trusted about one thing, and that is that the Premier and Labor will do and say anything to hang on to

power. How do you trust a government that has taken debt from \$72 billion when it was first elected in 2015 to \$102 billion before COVID and now on a trajectory to \$188 billion, with annual interest costs north of \$4 billion per annum? How do you ever trust a government that has taxed more, spent more and borrowed more but has left every Queenslander with less to show for it?

The rivers of gold have never flowed more powerfully—\$66 billion and counting between what the Treasurer forecast in his first budget and what he has actually collected. How has that windfall improved the lives of Queenslanders? What is the lived experience of Queenslanders in the face of that extraordinary revenue gain and the spending that has subsequently followed? There are 1,521 fewer police than before the last election; victims of crime, up 17 per cent last year; stolen cars, up 15.9 per cent in 12 months; ambulance ramping, which was 15 per cent when the opposition was last in government, now sits at 43 per cent—the worst in the nation; and 1,073 days ago the Callide power plant failed, and even today the station is not back fully online, while power bills rose 19.9 per cent last year—the highest in the country. That is why the LNP supports these rebates for struggling Queenslanders. Queenslanders also deserve to know why we have the highest energy costs in the country.

How do you ever trust a decade-old government that has overseen the highest unemployment, the highest bankruptcies, flatlining capital growth and an economic performance CommSec ranks equal worst in the country amongst states? How do you ever trust a government that just makes announcements without planning, building and delivering—the Housing Investment Fund that has not delivered a house; the Health and Hospitals Plan that has not delivered a bed, ward or hospital. The choice facing the Miles government is clear: will they deliver a budget that is focused on the decade ahead or the 137 days to the election? Sadly, Queenslanders already know the answer.

Nash, Ms I; Cost of Living, Electricity Rebate

 **Hon. N BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Disaster Recovery and Minister for Corrective Services) (2.22 pm): Today, 2 May, marks the first anniversary of the death of first-class firefighter Izabella Nash. Izzy was fatally injured at a factory fire at Slacks Creek on this day a year ago. She, I understand, embodied all of the values of QFES. It is a reminder to us all of the bravery, courage and sacrifice that our firefighters make each and every day protecting our community. She was a well-respected firefighter.


This morning I had the absolute honour to join some of the QFES executive leadership team and firefighters at Kemp Place to lay a tribute in her honour. I want to place on record today our government's appreciation of her service and the ultimate sacrifice that she made keeping our community safe.

Also today Acting Commissioner Steve Smith is in Canberra with Izzy's family and loved ones. This morning he attended the Australia and New Zealand National Council for Fire and Emergency Services memorial service where Izzy's name is being put on the memorial wall and she is receiving the AFAC medallion as well. It is a lovely opportunity for her family to be part of that in Canberra today.

I also wanted to touch on happier news this morning. We woke up to the knowledge that every single household in Pine Rivers will be receiving \$1,000 off their power bill. For vulnerable people in our community it will be even more—\$1,300-plus that they will be getting back in a lump sum payment on their power bill as at 1 July. We know that for many people who are doing it really tough in our community that will mean that they will not have to pay a power bill in some instances until 2025. We are really excited to see that come through.

How do we do this, Mr Deputy Speaker, I hear you ask? I will let you know. We do this through owning our energy assets. We keep them in public hands. We know that that is something the LNP is opposed to. It is something that we absolutely support. We are doing it through our progressive coal royalties as well. We are not pandering to the big end of town. We are making sure that those dividends that Queenslanders should rightfully be getting are coming back through into household budgets, making sure that there is relief for families with inflation, interest rates, petrol and things that are not necessarily within the state's control. We are making sure that we are not adding to inflationary pressures while we are providing that cost-of-living relief to households. It is something that only a Miles Labor government can deliver.

Youth Crime


 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (2.25 pm): I am happy to start where the Minister for Agriculture suggested we should, with 'once upon a time'. Unfortunately the story I am going to tell is not a fairytale;

it is a nightmare. It started on 1 December 2015, not long after Labor won power and they tabled their first youth justice amendment bill as part of a series that overtly watered down the laws in this state. Fast-forward nearly a decade to this week and what we have are a few inescapable truths: people across Queensland are not only struggling to pay their bills but they feel unsafe; and there is proof point that the government care more about politics than people, they care more about how things look than how they are and they will do and say anything to hold on to power.

A proof point to me was on Tuesday, when the Premier came to the victims rally that I was at outside and he spoke to Russell Field. After being introduced to Russell Field by name, he did not know who he was but he pretended to. It turns out that he did not. I have no great gripe with the Premier of this state not knowing the name of every victim of crime in this state, knowing that last year alone there were almost 350,000 of them—an explosion of 130,000 from not that long ago. However, it was the Field family's tragedy that this government stood on the back of after Australia Day 2021 to make a tough-on-crime youth justice announcement which has proved to be another epic fail. It was an announcement with no teeth. It was about GPS trackers. The figures show that that trial has been an absolute failure. Youth crime across the state has continued to spiral out of control.

He made promises to victims. He made promises to victims who were at that rally and to a contingent he met afterwards, including the Field family, that he would take strong action. They have been calling for strong action for a long time. They have been demanding this government remove provisions in the Youth Justice Act that they introduced in 2015. The Premier has made promises to victims of crime. He promised them that he would take tough action and that he would rewrite the mistakes that his government made in 2015. We woke up—and victims like the Field family woke up—on Wednesday morning to another announcement, another tough-on-crime announcement, another announcement they had been demanding, only to find out a few hours later that similar to 2021 the announcement was all talk and no action. This Premier promised to remove detention as a last resort and he failed to do so. Rewording it is not removing it, and he needs to apologise to victims across Queensland today.


Cost of Living, Electricity Rebate

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (2.29 pm): My constituents have been talking to me about the cost of living. There is certainly a lot of support out there for our current \$550 per household rebate, which has been well received. It goes up to \$1,072 if you are on a full pension or full concession card. We need to do more. The announcement overnight of the \$1,000 rebate for every household in Queensland is welcome news and a relief for many Queenslanders who are struggling to make ends meet. The remnants of COVID, inflation and the cost of living are causing difficulties for people, and we need support for our community until the economy comes back to fairly ordinary and normal circumstances. We can do that because this state Labor government kept our power assets in public hands. We saved them from being sold off by the previous Newman government's Strong Choices. That is what it was called, but it was certainly anything but that. Those are two words you will never hear the LNP say in this place. We kept our power assets in public hands, so we are able to do this.

The second reason we are able to do this is because we are making multinational mining companies pay their fair share back to the people of Queensland. Those resources are Queenslanders' resources and they deserve their fair share. Our ability to take a fair share through progressive royalties to pay for cost-of-living relief is something the vast majority of Queenslanders will support because that is what we should be doing. That is what a government in touch with the community should be doing. That stands in contrast to the previous government, when power prices surged 43 per cent and they gave no relief at all—zero. Their solution was to privatise power assets, which would have sent prices up even further.

This is not the only cost-of-living relief we have here in Queensland. We also froze public transport fares this year and we also froze registration fees for 2024-25, so people are also experiencing other relief. The revenue this financial year, as outlined in the midyear economic statement, has \$9.2 billion from multinational mining companies going into cost-of-living relief because of the decisions of this Miles Labor government. It will also be funding things like the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan, transitioning to clean energy, creating jobs and bringing down our emissions, which is now legislated. This is a responsible government that is responding to the needs of the community. When I doorknock, the cost of living is the No. 1 issue. I know this \$1,000 rebate will be warmly welcomed by people right across the suburbs in my electorate. From Annerley to Graceville to Sherwood, all of my suburbs will be very happy.

Fire Ants

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (2.32 pm): Labor has lost control of managing fire ants. It is risking disaster. They have spread to New South Wales, north to Caboolture and now west of the Great Divide to Oakey. They are within reach of the Murray-Darling river system. This is a direct result of gross mismanagement and incompetence. It is concerning that yesterday the Premier proved he has no idea of the potential disaster. A *Queensland Country Life* story last week warned that Queensland is facing a worst-case scenario, with infestations spread from the exclusion zone. The Australia Institute told the *Guardian* that it will cost Australians more than \$22 billion by the 2040s if left to run rampant.

Minister Furner has completely mismanaged the eradication program. The minister sat on damning reports, accepts no responsibility, will not listen, is slow to act and refuses to implement substantial changes or put enough boots on the ground. The minister bears responsibility for systemic mismanagement. For more than five years he was warned but the minister kept saying, 'Everything's fine; there's nothing to see.'

Since 2019, three independent reports have been scathing about the government's lack of progress, mismanagement, funding shortfalls and KPI failures. The minister has never implemented and accepted recommendations from independent assessments. Last month another report found there has been little progress on transparency, governance and coordination. In the last two years the minister has falsely claimed they were surrounded; falsely claimed they had been contained; ignored warnings they rafted during the 2022 floods; and boasted 'we are winning the war'. The only signature action was to ludicrously rename the eradication program a 'suppression taskforce'. Are they surrounded? Are we winning? Which part of the strategy is working? Last month Invasive Species Council advocacy manager Reece Pianta said—

... right now we are losing the war on fire ants.

A council media release stated—

For the last 23 years the program has had multiple setbacks due to limited funding, slow decision-making and unnecessary secrecy.

It recommended an urgent review of funding and the program's structure.


In *Queensland Country Life*, Canegrowers CEO Dan Galligan called for adequate and uninterrupted funding of eradication efforts, the need for much greater transparency and accountability, a national awareness campaign on the threat of fire ants, and additional R&D to improve efficiency of control methods. He said—

These actions should have taken place 20 years ago ... there can be no more delays.

Yesterday Canegrowers called for thousands of boots on the ground every single day seeking out and destroying these nests. They said—

We don't need more reviews and broken funding promises. We need leadership and real large-scale containment and eradication action, and we need it immediately.

Cooper Electorate, Education

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (2.35 pm): If there is one thing I know from travelling across Queensland and listening to communities speak about their young people, it is that we all want our kids to flourish and have the opportunity to learn, to get a good job and to pursue their dreams. That is why I have put a solid focus on delivering for our local schools, starting with an incredible half a million dollar renovation for The Gap State High School tuckshop. As the only public high school in my electorate, I have also fought to secure a \$12 million STEM building for The Gap State High School, and in the last budget I was able to secure funding for disability access ramps because all children have the right to attend their classrooms.

I have secured funding for additional and upgraded classrooms for Ashgrove State School, Milton State School, Payne Road State School and Petrie Terrace State School. I delivered a \$12 million STEM building for Ithaca Creek State School and renovated the pool bathrooms so that students there and those training with the Ithaca Sharx can get changed and shower in modern facilities that are no longer 'gross'.


We have announced the amalgamation of the Red Hill Special School onto the Fulcher Road campus. It is such a great announcement and something that I have been fighting for since I was elected three years ago. The Fulcher Road site will undergo a major transformation with a purpose-built school to accommodate up to 210 students with disabilities and high needs. The students and their families

have been great advocates, routinely expressing to me their desire to see their children in fit-for-purpose learning environments. I want to work with them to make sure we deliver the right outcomes. I thank all staff at the Red Hill Special School, including the educators, support team, admin and cleaners who are so incredibly professional, loving and dedicated to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to develop.

I will speak on two issues I have raised with the minister on behalf of constituents. I would love to see us looking at extending the age for students attending special school. There is clear evidence that neural plasticity is strongest from birth until the age of 25. There are great models where special schools have remained available for students into their 20s, and I would really love to see us explore that.

I would also add my voice to the member for Capalaba's sentiments earlier this week. There is such a need for greater support for children with autism, both in mainstream classrooms and a greater range of specialist schools. There are private schools around, but there are not enough. We need to think about some publicly funded options for these students. I would love to see our Waterworks Road campus, which will now be freed up, considered for a dedicated school for children living with autism. All Queensland children deserve the right support to get to school, to stay at school and to excel at school.

Miles Labor Government, Performance

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.37 pm): The state Labor government's school and education crisis has taken a dramatic turn this week. Teachers have overwhelmingly provided their support for industrial action, including the implementation of work bans. I table relevant media releases.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 29 April 2024, from the Queensland Teachers' Union titled 'Queensland Teachers' Union members demand action'.

This extraordinary development is a damning vote of no confidence in the Miles state Labor government. Labor's current education report card indicates a failure to develop a comprehensive teacher workforce plan, chronic under-resourcing, declining literacy and numeracy outcomes, rising violence in our schools and skyrocketing school WorkCover claims. Labor is simply not listening

Turning to health, under this Labor government our hospital and ambulance system is in crisis. Our hospital, health and ambulance system is falling apart under this state Labor government, and that is what frontline clinicians are reporting each and every day. Ambulance ramping has blown out to 43 per cent, with the worst ambulance lost hours ever. Almost 162,000 hours were lost to ambulance ramping last year. The number of Queenslanders languishing in emergency departments for 24 hours or more has also skyrocketed by 375 per cent since Labor came to power. An astonishing 17,930 patients spent longer than 24 hours inside Queensland emergency departments in 2022-23. This week we have also seen Labor's latest smoke and mirrors exercise on Labor's crime crisis.


On another matter, and as we approach Labor's next state budget, the Miles state Labor government must listen to local residents of the electorate of Moggill and fund and deliver the vital additional infrastructure, government services and community resourcing that is needed. These are important matters which I have consistently been fighting for on behalf of local residents in the electorate of Moggill.

Examples of such matters include an integrated road and public transport plan with funded solutions; extending the 444 bus service to the Moggill District Sports Park and the Moggill Ferry; funding for enhanced and additional footpath and pedestrian access on Moggill and Mount Crosby roads; committing to an additional new high school to service families in the electorate of Moggill; additional funding for purpose-built learning classrooms and spaces at Kenmore State High School; funded school infrastructure plans for every state school; funding for a dedicated community and neighbourhood centre; sustained cost-of-living relief; enhanced emergency service and disaster management resources; dedicated funding for our local, hardworking environment organisations; affordable housing; and, importantly, more support for small businesses in the western suburbs of Brisbane.

What has been Labor's track record to date? We have to remember that Labor is being supported by the Greens. They have cut infrastructure funding, including for the Kenmore roundabout. Labor have refused and denied funding for another high school. They have said there is no need for a community and neighbourhood centre. Labor refuses to expand local public transport and deliver safe and timely pedestrian and cycling solutions. When we combine this with the youth crime crisis, the hospital and

ambulance crisis, skyrocketing cost of living and the housing crisis, there is no doubt that local residents will punish the Labor-Greens coalition of chaos in October.

Hersom, Mrs J


 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (2.40 pm): Josephine 'Josie' Hersom was born on 19 February 1940 and, sadly, passed away on 25 April 2024. Josie was a much loved local Bundaberg champion of the Australian Labor Party. She was a veteran of state and federal campaigns and known for her infectious enjoyment on the trail, for visiting new places and meeting new people. Life member of our branch Cheryl Dorrton notes that Josie's tenacity to hang in there when times were tough could only be rivalled by her ability to get a photograph with visiting ministers, and a gallery of these photos on display on Josie's fridge door are testament to this.

Josie was a humble hero—a truly memorable character. I was speaking only this morning with the member for Logan, Linus Power, about his time as an organiser on the ground in Bundaberg during federal elections. I have been told that Josie and her husband, Bert, had a very memorable Labour Day weekend in Barcaldine one year. Speaking to Bert before I came into the chamber to give this speech, he recalled that he and Josie thought that Linus Power was rather reserved and they spent the weekend 'unreserving' him.

In 2015, Josie was recognised with the dedicated service award for her more than 30 years of continuous loyal service to the Australian Labor Party which now amounts to 38 years. I will miss Josie no longer attending our branch meetings or coming to say hello at my mobile office on a Saturday morning in the shopping centre. Many from our branch have expressed their heavy hearts to Josie's family. To her husband, Bert, who loves her so dearly, you will always have your Labor family there for you and the door to my office will always be open when you need to come in, sit down, have a cup of tea and have a chat.

To daughters Tania and Lisa, to son-in-law Shane, to grandchildren Emily, Amy, Jesse, Macey and Chevy, we extend to you our condolences as a Labor family and share with you so many good memories that we all will have forever. Josie may be gone and being laid to rest tomorrow, but we know that she will be with us on this campaign. All the way to that last day we will make sure that we continue her spirit during the campaign. I know that the member for Logan will remember her very fondly, as so many in our great party will. Vale, Josie.

Emergency Relief Funding

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (2.43 pm): I rise to call for a substantial increase in funding for emergency relief and adding more neighbour centres online in the upcoming budget. This is a must for the Treasurer and Premier if they want to help the number of people destitute across the state. The rate of homelessness and those needing support services is at pandemic levels. This has placed enormous strain on the current neighbourhood centres, which are struggling to keep up with demand. Current budget funding makes it impossible to provide the appropriate services to existing neighbourhood centres and to bring new ones online.


The Atherton Tablelands has the highest per capita rate of homelessness in the state. I have been informed that recently six houses were advertised for rent and there were 400 applicants, showing how desperate the situation is. I know of an 85-year-old woman who has lived there all her life who is now destitute and living out of her car. Up to 90 families per month are accessing services at one neighbourhood centre in my electorate alone. This reveals how bad the problem is in my electorate and across the state.

In my electorate there are only five government community centres covering 20,000 square kilometres and two other organisations are holding on desperately for inclusion as a government community centre. There are only 128 centres funded throughout the state which is nowhere near enough. There are another 40 organisations that do not receive funding, struggling to stay afloat and desperate to come under the fold of the government and recognised as a neighbourhood centre. This would immediately offer relief to hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders who currently are suffering. I say to the Treasurer that \$250,000 per centre, or a total of \$10 million in funding, is a pittance to provide basic human rights and dignity to our fellow Queenslanders.

A shower, food vouchers, someone to talk to and access to services provided by neighbourhood centres can make a difference, reducing homelessness and mental health problems. These organisations help the elderly, the handicapped and the disadvantaged. They provide food and fuel vouchers, pantry packs, second-hand uniforms, back-to-school programs, shopping assistance for the

elderly, health and medical support, tech support and newsletters as well as printing and photocopying. They also act as important community recovery hubs when natural disasters hit the region. The list goes on and on. I again urge the Premier and the Treasurer to increase funding for neighbourhood centres and emergency relief programs in the upcoming budget.

Electricity Rebate


 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (2.46 pm): To the people of Deception Bay: congratulations, because you are each getting \$1,000 off your household electricity bill. To the residents of North Lakes: congratulations, because each household is getting \$1,000 off its electricity bill. To my neighbours in Burpengary East: congratulations, that is \$1,000 off each household electricity bill. To the residents in Rothwell: congratulations, you are getting \$1,000 off your electricity bill. To all those great people in Mango Hill: you are getting \$1,000 off your electricity bills. What a great measure.

As the Treasurer said this morning, this is the biggest rebate on electricity in Australian history by any Australian government, and only the Labor government could do it here in Queensland. That rebate will be coming in next financial year starting on 1 July, so I would suggest that everyone look at their bills after that date because they will see the rebate coming off them. For pensioners, the news is even better. Eligible pensioners will get \$1,372 off their electricity bill. That is absolutely amazing. For many of them that means that they will not be paying electricity bills next year and into 2025. How is that for an amazing achievement by a government? This rebate follows on from the \$550 which we advanced to every household this financial year. What a great track record by a government. Who could do this? Not the mob opposite.

Small businesses will see a \$325 rebate flowing through to them, and that follows the \$325 rebate we gave this financial year which was matched by the federal government for the same amount. We are also helping out small businesses with the cost of living. The question is: why are we doing this? It is not even a question. We know why we are doing it. It is an incredibly high priority for the Miles government to help out with the cost of living. We are delivering cost-of-living help for Queenslanders. It is a huge priority. We will keep on doing it—free TAFE, free kindy and now, for pensioners, free electricity. You cannot beat that record.

How are we doing it? There are two reasons. We own the electricity assets—the majority of the generation infrastructure and the transmission lines. We own it—the people of Queensland own it—so we are making sure that they get money back for that. The other reason we can do it—and I acknowledge the minister—is because of progressive coal royalties. What a great thing for a government to do. It is great to see that the people of Queensland who own those assets are getting money back for those assets rather than it going to multinational companies. Congratulations to the Treasurer for making sure that those multinational companies pay their way and help give Queenslanders rebates for electricity.

Miles Labor Government, Travel Expenses; Mooloolah River Interchange

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (2.49 pm): Labor will do or say anything to hold onto power. In the shadow of the election, what we are seeing is that they are so desperate that they will keep covering up the real cost of some of their projects while they are misleading people about what they have expended—such as we saw with that dodgy two-jet expedition by the Premier and his police minister, shadowing each other around Queensland in their own jets at taxpayer expense. The Premier has again refused to answer and be transparent and accountable to the people.

Ms PEASE: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I want to bring your attention to the fact that I think the member for Maroochydore used unparliamentary language.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): I will just take advice. Member, yes, it has—

Ms SIMPSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, could you identify what the word was?

Government members interjected.

Ms SIMPSON: No. Honestly, we need to understand for the betterment of the House specifically what we are talking about.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: My understanding is that it has been custom to not repeat the words. I am happy to talk to you after your speech has been delivered and I can correct you. Right now, I will just ask you to withdraw.

Ms SIMPSON: I withdraw. I am genuinely a little bit bewildered because I do not know what it is. The Premier has been less than honest and up-front. He has not answered the question of how much it cost. It is dodgy that it has not been revealed how much it cost—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, that is unparliamentary language.


Ms SIMPSON: Apparently 'dodgy' is out now. I withdraw. It is not honest. It is misleading. Whatever the Labor Party wants to cover up, we need to know. The people have a right to know. It is their money. The Premier once again does not want the people to know. He wants to shut down discussion about this issue. I reference the fact that he did not really tell the truth about the fact that the records that are coming out against the Premier's travel will not reveal the cost of this particular expedition with his jetsetting police minister in a second jet.

I want to refer to Q4 of the 2022-23 financial year when Premier Palaszczuk flew for nine hours not using the King Air. It did list those nine hours as using all other aircraft, and that would normally mean a charter aircraft. When that Premier's travel came out for the whole of the year, it did not show any charter cost against that period. There is a problem in the way the Queensland government are using and reporting the aircraft using taxpayer funds.

I want to talk about the Mooloolah River Interchange. I will shortly table an RTI document which was correspondence on the Mooloolah River Interchange that I sought after this project was defunded by the state and federal governments. In this letter that I requested from the government to find out their backwards and forwards behind the scene, it confirmed—except this has been deleted, but it is in this letter—that stage 1 will address safety and congestion issues that are forecast to increase due to regional population growth. This was deleted from the final letters that were released. They bulldozed 89 homes in the path of the Mooloolah River Interchange at a time of record homelessness and then they have left us with a road that is dangerous. I table this document that shows they are also gagging debate about how dangerous it is.

Tabled paper: Letter, undated, from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister of Digital Services, Hon. Bart Mellish, to the member for Maroochydore, Ms Fiona Simpson MP, regarding the Sunshine Motorway, Mooloolah River Interchange (MRI) Upgrade Project.

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (2.53 pm): As members of this place, we know that gender violence is a scourge in our community. In modern Australia there is simply no place for it. It is a cancer, and cancers have a habit of coming back to haunt us. We know that cancers are difficult to eliminate but surely we must try. We need to ask serious questions in Australia about why men hurt women and why men kill women. So many women in our community—and parliament is no different—have experienced some form of gender violence to varying extremes. In fact, I guarantee most women in this place will have at least one personal story about gender-based violence. I recall having experienced a very unpleasant touchy ex-employer at the age of 16 in my first job. My own daughter experienced harassment, including sexual harassment, at the hands of her supervisor in the AFP. I do not want my little granddaughter to grow up in a world where she is likely to suffer at the hands of a man.


Most men will never quite understand the innate sense of awareness that women constantly feel about their personal safety. Is it safe to go to the supermarket? Should I park my car here? Should I get in this Uber? How do I avoid being left alone with this man? These are questions that are simply part of everyday living for our women. Our radar is always up about our personal safety. That radar never switches off. It should not be this way, but it is. I doubt that there are any men in this room who are on guard like this.

Gender violence is a problem that women should not have to fix. It is for men to change their behaviours; it is for men to change their ways. It is men—I repeat, men—who are killing women. A 30 per cent spike in this year alone is more than just confronting; it is an indictment on our nation. I extend my deepest sympathies to the women who have been killed at the hands of men and to the victim-survivors, their children, their extended families and their loved ones. Those violent killings are just the tip of the iceberg. How many tens of thousands of women are in a controlling, abusive and potentially homicidal relationship?

As part of Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, I will be hosting a candlelight vigil next Thursday at the Wynnum foreshore at 5.30 pm in conjunction with a number of our local community groups, like Zonta, Wynnum and Manly Rotary and SCOPE. It is all to raise local awareness of this issue. We will hear from victims of violence with some stories that are very hard to hear. I encourage all members of the community to attend. I would also ask for people to make donations of old phones.

I have a DV Safe Phone box in my office. I encourage everyone to stand up and stop this terrible scourge on our society.

LNP Candidate for Hervey Bay

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (2.56 pm): I spent time up at Hervey Bay with the shadow cabinet last week and I took the opportunity to spend time with our wonderful LNP candidate for Hervey Bay, David Lee. One of the pet projects of the candidate is the Maryborough Hervey Bay Road and Pialba Burrum Heads Road intersection. This is something that I have had a keen eye on for the last couple of years. Every visit to Hervey Bay, we go and have a look to get a status update. When I was there, I did a TV interview with David Lee, our fabulous LNP candidate for Hervey Bay, and the only thing we knew that had progressed was the actual height of the grass. However, there is a really good update I need to share with the House. About 24 hours after I was last there, the grass was mowed. That is a great thing for Hervey Bay.

What a disgrace that we have a key bit of infrastructure which is stuck in the slow lane. In fact it was embarrassing. When we were there to do the TV interview at about 9.15 in the morning during peak hour, the cars were so backed up that they were forced to go around the road. It was recorded on the TV cameras, and even the cameramen could not believe what was going on.

The reality is that the current member has been completely MIA—missing in action. If it were not for the efforts of David Lee to keep this project visible—with the lack of progress that is occurring—there would be nothing happening. The simple reality is this. About three years ago, the current member and the adjoining member for Maryborough, to much fanfare on Facebook posts, announced the fact that this was going to be an absolute game changer for Hervey Bay. Between the current two members, there has been no progress whatsoever—with the exception of the Rover or the Victa getting a good work-out to cut the grass.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Order! Member for Maryborough!


Mr MINNIKIN: It is a complete disgrace. Is it any wonder that the people of Hervey Bay—

Mr Saunders interjected.

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

Mr MINNIKIN: The member for Maryborough and the current member for Hervey Bay have been completely missing in action. All they like to do is stand up in front of the media with great fanfare and say, 'Here's what's going to happen.' Absolutely nothing has happened. That is why David Lee, our LNP candidate, is absolutely powering ahead in Hervey Bay.

Liberal National Party

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.59 pm): All that from the aspiring transport minister who thinks it is okay to speed through school zones. He is on record there.

Mr MINNIKIN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence and ask that it be withdrawn. It is patently untrue.

Mr KELLY: I withdraw. I have to say that I like that fantastic show, *Seinfeld*. I could watch it all day long. It is a great show. I know there are many in this chamber who like—

Mr Harper: 'Now we're getting somewhere.'

Mr KELLY: The member for Thuringowa is forever quoting it. It is a show that prides itself as being a show about absolutely nothing. As I listened to the dreary motion put forward yesterday by a listless and rudderless opposition and as I sat there and listened to more ridiculous efforts during question time, it seemed to me that the LNP are just like *Seinfeld*: they are a show that is all about nothing—no policies, no plans, no private members' bills. Even when they do something, it becomes nothing. Remember, they voted for the Path to Treaty. They went into the chamber in Cairns and into this sacred chamber and said, 'We support the Path to Treaty. We think it is the right thing to do for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.' Then not very long afterwards they backflipped and said, 'No, we are going to get in bed with One Nation and we are going to backflip on this.' So, even when they are trying to do something, it inevitably becomes about nothing.

I will tell members something that is not nothing. In fact, I think it is something quite good, and that is the fact that every household in Greenslopes is waking up to find out today that they have a \$1,000 energy rebate. Now, that is something!

Mr de Brenni interjected.

Mr KELLY: Yes, hold that bill up. Be very proud. No, do not hold up a prop; I should not encourage that. I can tell members: that is something. The people in my community have been telling me for over 18 months now that the cost of living is the No. 1 issue. They are really going to welcome these rebates. When you throw that on top of the free kindy, the free TAFE, the freeze in car rego and all the senior discounts that I heard about when I went out to the pop-up shops in Carindale and Garden City, those are things that people in my community want. When I go to my community networking nights when we have 50 or 60 small businesses and community groups coming together, I am sure those small businesses will be absolutely thrilled that these rebates are being extended there as well.

How are we doing that? We have done it because we have kept the assets in public ownership, we are taxing multinational miners and we are backing in progressive coal royalties. That is something else that will be nothing if the LNP are elected because they will be getting rid of those progressive coal royalties, and all of those rebates will be gone.

COMMITTEE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Portfolio Committees, Reporting Dates



Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.03 pm): I seek to advise the House of determinations made by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly at its meeting today. The committee has resolved that, pursuant to standing order 136, the Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee report on the Queensland Community Safety Bill by 14 June 2024; and that the date for the Clean Economy Jobs, Resources and Transport Committee to report on the Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 and the Resources Safety and Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 be extended from 31 May 2024 to 7 June 2024.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT



Hon. MC de BRENNI (Springwood—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.04 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 am on Tuesday, 21 May 2024.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL CODE (DECRIMINALISING SEX WORK) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed from p. 1497, on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.



Mr McDONALD (Lockyer—LNP) (3.04 pm), continuing: When I was last on my feet I was speaking about the importance of the safety of sex workers and also the concerns I have regarding the exploitation of those workers and the need to consider these changes very cautiously. I also note the government's promotion of the decriminalisation of the Criminal Code and the sex-work industry—that is, promoting it in such a way that they asked the Queensland Law Reform Commission to report on the decriminalisation of sex work, not to consider what would be the best model. As the shadow Attorney-General referred to, the Nordic model is considered to be best practice around the world and we need to know the reasons for not pursuing that pathway. Therefore, it appears that the terms of reference of the QLRC, whilst the work was very sound and good based on the terms of reference, were very narrow.

I turn to the aspects of the bill about which we heard concerns from witnesses during the committee hearings, particularly a big concern for local government where it was felt that there was a

loss of autonomy. When the staged approach to criminalisation occurred in Victoria, the term 'bad actors at play' was raised when they started going through the decriminalisation process. We found out more about that. What happened when they announced the decriminalisation of sex work was that a couple of the local governments down there jumped in and put in place some controls that were not appropriate in that regard. I can see why the government is trying up-front to stop local government from doing those things here in Queensland, but that is undermining the autonomy of local government and the controls that they have. In particular, the Local Government Association articulated the need to see regulation and to understand what those regulations are and the controls that will be in place so that they can have confidence for their 77-member councils that the planning opportunities will cover those issues.


We also heard from licensed brothels which currently have a very regulated approach in Queensland and pay a significant licencing fee. They feel that, in terms of that property right, current licensed brothels should see some compensation. I think that that is a fair request. They have invested so much in regulatory processes and regulatory systems to meet those controls and to have legal businesses. With regard to the complete shift in this policy by the government in terms of decriminalisation and removing those controls for that legal industry, there could be some fair compensation made to them. Some of the private operators suggested that maybe the last five years of licence fees could be refunded to them to make some different changes.

For me this bill was more about protections for sex workers themselves. Being a former police officer, I understand the prostitution legislation quite well and I know that in Queensland a sole operator—a private operator—can legally conduct their business. I did make the point at the hearing that I was concerned that having a sole trader operating with another worker—a co-worker—in the sex industry is considered illegal or even having a security guard for that lone worker is considered illegal. I would suggest that there should be some amendments to that to ensure that workers can work together for safety reasons or have security. A very simple amendment could be put in place to ensure those safety issues.

Whilst the government talks about decriminalisation in other sectors and areas like New South Wales it is important for the House to understand that it is not just about a complete decriminalisation in New South Wales, as some witnesses promoted. Decriminalisation has occurred in New South Wales from as far back as 1995, but in New South Wales they still have three areas of regulatory control under the Restricted Premises Act 1943 which allows declarations to the district and supreme courts in respect to premises that could be controlled by criminals. We have heard of evidence in New South Wales of the involvement of criminal and Asian gangs in illegal and prostitution activities, so that is one area of control that New South Wales does still have. The other, importantly, is that local government can, under section 17 of their powers, in certain circumstances ask that premises not be used as a brothel. Under the Summary Offences Act, there are a number of offences that restrict some prostitution activities. So to say that it is completely decriminalised in other states, particularly in New South Wales, is factually incorrect. There could be some sensible consideration towards still seeing some regulatory control and offences here in Queensland to stop bad actors in this space so that police and other agencies, particularly local government, can have controls where there may be inappropriate actions taking place.

I have concerns that criminal gangs, particularly outlaw motorcycle gangs and Asian gangs, could become more involved in the sex-work industry here in Queensland. I am not so naive as to think that they are not going to be involved with the industry because that will be too much hard work, but what they will do and can do—and have done in other jurisdictions like New South Wales and Victoria—is use standover tactics to threaten and take payments for illegal protection. I will end where I started: we want to see safety for the sex workers. We want to see sensible controls here in Queensland. I do not believe the government has this bill right in terms of the element of complete decriminalisation. We would like to see sensible regulations in place so that workers and the community are protected in a fair way.

As I said, it might be the oldest profession but within it some of the vulnerable people of our community have been subject to exploitation and corruption. Many of the witnesses we spoke to were very professional people who conduct good businesses. Often these businesses go on very discreetly in our suburban neighbourhoods in a legal fashion, and that is fine, but we want to make sure that our community is protected from anybody who is not doing the right thing or who puts in places activities that threaten others or amenities.

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Health, Mental Health and Ambulance Services and Minister for Women) (3.13 pm): I am proud to rise in support of the Criminal Code

(Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill because no Queenslanders should have to choose between working legally and working safely, including our sex workers. Under the current framework the vast majority of sex work in Queensland happens illegally but under these laws it will be treated like any other industry because sex workers should be able to access the same rights and protections as any other worker in this state.

In August 2021, when I was then attorney-general, I asked the Law Reform Commission to review and investigate decriminalising the sex work industry in Queensland. In April last year I announced the government's commitment to implementing these historic reforms. But, of course, these reforms did not come about in the last two years and they did not come from just one law reform review. Sex workers and their allies have been campaigning for these changes for many years. I acknowledge Lulu and Janelle, the team at Respect and DecrimQLD for their tireless advocacy.


During my time as attorney-general I met with many sex workers to hear about why these reforms are so important. What they told me time and again was that these reforms are fundamentally about safety. The current laws around sex work criminalise common safety measures like texting someone to say where they are going, having someone drop them off, or hiring a receptionist to help screen clients. This legal environment makes sex work less safe and it makes it less likely that sex workers will report any violence to police when they experience it. As the Queensland Law Reform Commission noted in its report—

The offences isolate sex workers and drive them underground in efforts to avoid the attention of authorities. This can be detrimental to their safety and it increases the risks of violence and exploitation.

The Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce found that sex workers are consistently forced to choose between working legally and working safely. By removing these barriers to safety, sex workers will be able to go to the police without the fear of being prosecuted themselves. Of course we acknowledge this bill alone will not be able to address the systematic and cultural tensions that have historically existed between sex workers and police. The Law Reform Commission noted in its report that police will need to work collaboratively with sex worker organisations to build positive relationships and, importantly, to build trust. We have seen this happen in other jurisdictions which have decriminalised sex work, such as New Zealand, and I am very hopeful that we will see the same here. This important work will build on the changes we have already made to make it clear that non-payment of a sex worker counts as rape and to remove police powers to entrap sex workers.

These laws will not only improve safety for sex workers but also improve public and sexual health. The current laws mandate the use of protection and regular testing and prohibit working with an STI. This punitive approach contributes to the marginalisation and stigmatisation of sex workers. It treats them as vectors of disease and leads to worse public health outcomes. We know that generally sex workers have higher rates of voluntary sexual health testing and high levels of knowledge about safe sex practices which they share with their clients and peers. In fact, research shows that sex workers in Australia have amongst the lowest rates of STIs in the world. By removing sexual health offences, our framework will improve human rights, increase access to health services and boost public health outcomes. In line with international evidence-based best practice, these reforms make it clear that sexual health is a health issue, not a criminal issue. I am committed to continuing to work with our sex workers and their allies to ensure all Queenslanders can reliably access testing and high-quality information and support.

These reforms have been a long time coming and they are the result of the tireless advocacy of many of the sex workers who are present in the gallery. Today, finally, this House will recognise that sex work is real work. Decriminalisation is about making sure that no worker in Queensland has to choose between working legally and working safely. These laws will mean that sex workers, many of whom are women, are treated like any other worker with access to the same workplace health and safety protections as everybody else. Decriminalisation does not mean deregulation but it does mean safety, health and fairness. I am so proud to be part of the government that is delivering this reform. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (3.18 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I would like to thank the members of the committee for their examination of the bill. I would particularly like to thank the committee secretariat for their work in managing the hearings and the production of the committee report.

While the LNP believes that sex workers should have safe access to services and to police, in this instance and in the absence of any regulation regarding the ownership of brothels, the ability of

accommodation providers to make their own decisions and the amenity issues that are not satisfactorily resolved with local governments, the LNP will be opposing this bill. While we want to see sex workers treated with respect, we cannot support the bill as it stands. Queensland's sex-work industry is currently regulated by the Prostitution Act 1999, the Prostitution Regulation 2014 and chapter 22A of the Criminal Code. Sex-work-specific provisions in the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 have already been repealed.

The parliamentary committee heard from the Hon. Colin Forrest SC, who is the current chair of the Prostitution Licensing Authority. The authority was established in the wake of the Fitzgerald report and the further specific report from the Crime and Corruption Commission. The Prostitution Licensing Authority and the regulatory system that it oversees were established around the twin pillars of public interest. One of those was to keep criminal elements out of the sex-work industry and the other was to reasonably address the health and safety concerns arising around the sex-work industry.

There are two legal forms of sex work in Queensland. The first form of lawful sex work is that which is provided in a licensed brothel. The second form of lawful sex work is that which is provided by a sole operator. In this instance, the sex worker works alone from a premise providing either in-house or outcall services or both. Sex work in any other form is illegal presently in Queensland.

The bill establishes a decriminalised framework for the sex-work industry based on the recommendations of the Queensland Law Reform Commission report titled *A decriminalised sex-work industry for Queensland* referred to as the QLRC report, but there are concerns in relation to the infiltration of the commercial sex-work industry by criminal elements. Presently, under the regulation, brothel licences must pass probity tests to acquire and maintain their licences. With the removal of this regulatory system, this may enable outlaw motorcycle gangs, crime syndicates and other criminal elements to become involved in the ownership and management of brothels. There are further concerns in relation to the mandatory health checks. Once licensing is disbanded, there will also be no regulation requiring sex workers to undertake mandatory three-monthly health checks for sexually transmitted infections. This is a concern for both the sex workers and the broader community.

I now turn to the concerns raised by Queensland local governments. Under the current legislation, the committee heard that in Queensland only 12 of the 77 Queensland local governments have approved a brothel. The bill enacts recommendation 23 of the QLRC report. The intent of the legislation is to take the power away from the local government to prohibit sex-work businesses or regulate sex work or sex-work businesses in a way different to other businesses. To facilitate this, the government is also developing a planning regulation. Concerningly, the detail of that Planning Regulation has not been released and the evidence before the committee about this was vague and inconclusive.


There is a lack of clarity about this new regulatory system that will be in place at a state level. It is not good enough to say that it is underway. These issues should have been resolved prior to the introduction of the bill and there was ample time to do so. There is a serious lack of transparency from the Labor government when it comes to the community, and local governments cannot see what is contained in this planning regulation. The full impacts and operation cannot be assessed by local government in the absence of this regulation.

The Queensland Local Government Association raised concerns about a regulatory regime without regulatory certainty. The LGAQ stated their concerns that the bill removes the ability of local governments to make local laws that regulate sex-work businesses as local governments do with other businesses. As currently drafted, these provisions of the bill remove the ability of local governments to make those local laws that regulate any aspect of sex-work businesses including, for example, the size of advertising signage associated with sex-work businesses. This is very concerning from a local government and community perspective. It is treating sex-work businesses different to other businesses, which the LGAQ understands is inconsistent with the state government's policy intent to ensure that sex-work businesses are treated the same as other businesses. The LGAQ are concerned about local governments not being able to regulate the need for separation distances in certain circumstances; the amenity considerations such as traffic, car parking, size, scale, hours of operation and noise; as well as the importance of achieving performance outcomes such as active street frontages in certain zones. The LGAQ were very clear in their opposition to any attempt to remove the discretion and autonomy from local governments in favour of a blanket statewide approach.

Under this bill, the public health considerations will fall to the state government. However, the LGAQ at the public hearing stated there would be a potential cost shift onto councils if their interpretation of the bill was to proceed without the community interest/public amenity test that councils

would typically apply to all other businesses. Cost shifting has been a focus of the LGAQ and their members. They have done research showing that cost shifting from other spheres of government and the private sector onto councils has increased by around 360 per cent in the last two decades.

Again, I want to reiterate that the LNP believes all Queenslanders should feel safe in their homes, communities and workplaces and we will continue to work to that priority. Our opposition to this legislation is based on the lack of regulatory certainty, the removal of planning powers from council as well as the potential for criminals to get involved in the sex-work industry to the detriment of sex workers and the wider community.

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works) (3.25 pm): Today I rise to support the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The recommendations from the Queensland Law Reform Commission and this bill pave the way for decriminalising Queensland's sex-work industry, enhancing the safety and rights of sex workers in this state. This is about ensuring sex workers do not have to choose between working legally or safely. Out of the 47 recommendations put forward by the Queensland Law Reform Commission, 10 pertain to planning with the clear intent of these recommendations aiming for the equitable treatment of sex-work businesses alongside other businesses within the planning framework. Currently, Queensland recognises two legal forms of sex work within licensed brothels and by private individuals working alone. The decriminalisation of sex work does not imply a lack of regulation.

The Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee, like the QLRC, emphasised the importance of fair and consistent regulation, proposing that sex work should be regulated no more and no less than other lawful businesses. To give effect to this bill, changes are necessary in the Planning Act 2016 and the Planning Regulation 2017 to ensure that sex-work businesses are treated comparably to other businesses including home-based operations under the Queensland planning framework. My department has prepared amendments to the Planning Regulation to support the implementation of the bill and the recommendations of the QLRC and the committee. These amendments are focused on protecting the safety of sex workers to operate as a home-based business while still allowing local governments the autonomy to regulate other important and locally relevant aspects of amenity for their communities.


These amendments will: remove provisions which relate to the ability of a local government to prohibit brothels and the existing assessment requirements for any lawful brothel application; remove the definition of 'brothel' as a land use term and amend the land use definition of home-based business and shop to include a sex-work business as an example; include a new administrative definition of 'sex-work business' to clarify it is either a home-based business or a shop under the planning framework; include new requirements capping the category of assessment for all home-based businesses to a maximum code assessment; and ensure a sole operator as a home-based business cannot be made an accessible development where there is only one worker and one visitor. My department will prepare supporting guidance material for local governments to support the amendments to the Planning Regulation in consultation with relevant stakeholders to assist in reviewing their planning schemes and to ensure they are consistent with the intent of the Planning Regulation.

The Queensland Law Reform Commission recommended amendments to the City of Brisbane Act 2010 and the Local Government Act 2009 to ensure that local laws about sex work should be restricted to make sure the aims and benefits of decriminalisation filter down to local government areas throughout Queensland. The bill inserts new sections into the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Act to prohibit local governments from making a local law that prohibits or regulates sex work or the conduct of sex-work businesses. Recommendation 15 from the Queensland Law Reform Commission report was to eliminate the classification of brothel as a specific land use within the planning framework. It is important to clarify that any adjustments made to the planning framework will not affect brothels that are lawfully operating.

Similar to any lawful land use, a brothel that has already obtained approval from the local government will retain its rights to operate even if the brothel related provisions are removed from the planning regulation and local government planning schemes. However, changes are necessary to the Planning Act 2016 provisions to ensure that an unlawful sex-work business will have a 12-month period following the commencement of the bill to pursue appropriate development approvals without facing enforcement or compliance actions. These provisions are temporary and will cease to apply after the 12th month of the transition period. The goal is to incentivise existing unlawful businesses to obtain the necessary approvals within the planning framework to become lawful. These amendments directly address the committee's report and the feedback received during the inquiry on the bill.

Queensland's journey towards decriminalising sex work aligns with similar steps taken by other Australian jurisdictions and New Zealand. In New South Wales, the Northern Territory, Victoria and New Zealand, sex work has been decriminalised, with each region following a slightly different path. However, the overarching principle remains consistent: recognising and regulating sex work as legitimate work rather than a criminal activity.

These reforms are a long time coming. I extend my sincere appreciation to Respect Inc, DecrimQld and Scarlet Alliance for their dedicated advocacy over many years, and to the Queensland Council of Unions, the LGAQ and the Planning Institute of Australia for their ongoing input into the necessary planning amendments. This bill is a vital step towards a more equitable and safer environment for Queensland workers. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (3.31 pm): I, too, rise to make a brief contribution on the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I associate myself with the comments of other LNP speakers and, in particular, the shadow Attorney-General, Tim Nicholls, who spoke earlier in the debate. There are two particular things I would like to address. The first is the apparent absence of regulation that we would see if the government has its way with this particular bill. Our concern is based on the propensity for prostitution businesses to be in and around a criminal element imposed on the operators. I can regale the House with a case from my electorate. Unlawful prostitution was going on in a flat in a residential area. There were comings and goings of people some of whom appeared, in my opinion, to have been coercing the sex worker involved. It was a very frightening thing. To see an absence of regulation in this space would be a backward step for the safety of sex workers and the community generally.

I bring the attention of the House to Fitzgerald who had something to say about this. We are talking about comment made in an era when there was no regulation. Prostitution was banned but it was everywhere. Great spoils were being made by corrupt police and criminals who were working together at the expense and to the disadvantage of the sex workers involved.

What springs to mind is that people who live in the community may have an expectation that they have some say over whether or not a prostitution business operates near their home or their business. In its submission, the Queensland Hotels Association was very clear about this. I think this goes to the matter of property rights in that individual business operators should be able to decide what activities they allow to operate in their premises.


In his 1989 report, Commissioner Fitzgerald said—

Brothel customers include drunk and unruly people, who come and go at all hours, disrupting the neighbourhood of the brothel and posing a nuisance and a hazard to residents.

Prostitution is often associated with other crime. Competitors resort to violence for territorial or financial gain, whereas "clients" in positions of influence are ripe targets for blackmail and extortion.


I think it would be remiss of the House to disregard the words of Commissioner Fitzgerald. He certainly had a very thorough exposure to the disadvantages of the completely unregulated environment that persisted up until the end of the eighties.

I will be joining with my LNP opposition colleagues in opposing this bill, not because we have any objection to the sex workers themselves. We do want them to have safety at work. However, we feel that those who own properties have a right to have a say in how they are used and who they live next to. In addition, we fear that an absence of regulation may result in the re-emergence of crime—extortion, coercion, drugs and so on—that would be to the detriment of society broadly and to the sex workers themselves.

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (3.35 pm): I rise to make a short contribution in support of the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The passage of this bill will be an historic moment for Queensland and for this parliament. Almost 35 years after the Fitzgerald inquiry exposed systemic corruption in relation to sex work, when brothel owners routinely paid for protection from criminal liability, this parliament has an opportunity to finish the work of Fitzgerald by putting in place laws that are effective and promote the equal protection of all participants in the sex-work industry. The reality is that the current regulatory framework that is in place in Queensland excludes the majority of participants in the sex-work industry. The evidence is clear that decriminalisation is the best model of sex-work industry regulation. No Queenslanders should have to make the difficult choice between working safely or legally. This bill treats sex work as work. It enables sex workers to report criminal behaviour to police without fear of criminal prosecution. It enhances public health and safety.

I want to acknowledge, in particular, the work and dedicated advocacy of Janelle Fawkes on this important reform. Since I became the Minister for Police, Janelle has been a consistent advocate for the decriminalisation of sex work in Queensland to myself and my office. I also want to acknowledge the advocacy over many years of Respect Inc, DecrimQld and Scarlet Alliance in support of these important reforms. I acknowledge the work of the dedicated public servants in the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Queensland Police Service and the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel for their work on the bill and for the amendments that this House passed last year to remove sex-work-specific police powers from the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act.

This is an historic moment for Queensland and the parliament. I commend the bill to the House. I encourage all members to support it.

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (3.37 pm): Sex work is work and the Greens are proud to stand with sex workers and their right to be safe, respected and valued for their work. As we celebrate May Day and the contribution of workers across the world, we are reminded that no worker can be left behind and that the collective struggle for workers' rights continues. My sincere thanks go to the many sex workers and advocates who have been pushing for decriminalisation for decades. The Greens are proud to have long supported their advocacy for the decriminalisation of sex work, pushing for the wellbeing and safety of workers.

While it is disappointing that it has taken the government so many years to get to this point, we are pleased to support the bill before the House today. As the Scarlet Alliance pointed out in their submission, the bill will improve rights for sex workers by replacing Queensland's failed licensing system and enacting a better model for sex industry regulation. We urge the government to implement the bill as soon as possible and to support and listen to sex workers when they tell us what they need to be safe, respected and valued in their work.

Queensland has a long and dark history of not just leaving sex workers behind but also abusing them. In the sixties and seventies, corrupt Queensland police officers presided over a system where sex work was illegal but was happening everywhere under a police-run racket. Under Police Commissioner Terry Lewis, each week police extorted thousands of dollars from sex workers in bribes. Inside the Queensland police the system was known by its nickname, the Joke. In 1989, 35 years ago, the Fitzgerald inquiry recommended that sex work should be recognised as work and legalised or decriminalised, but that did not happen. Ten years later, in 1999, the Prostitution Act created a licensing framework which added a new layer of criminal laws for brothels rather than genuine decriminalisation. Researchers Jeffreys, Fawkes and O'Brien write that—

The powers held by police in relation to sex work in Queensland are far greater today than at any time before the Fitzgerald inquiry.

Queensland's licensing system has continued to criminalise sex work and has perpetuated violence and harm against sex workers. Currently Queensland licenses less than 20 brothels and criminalises other sex-work business models. Individual sex workers can only operate legally under restricted conditions which prohibits safe strategies, disallows working with others and has forced sex workers into harmful interactions with the police and the justice system. Right now in Queensland independent sex workers are criminalised for working together in the same building or hotel as another sex worker; messaging another sex worker with their location or when a client arrives or leaves; employing a receptionist or someone to answer phones; using a driver that another sex worker uses; or describing what services they do and do not offer. The licensing framework has forced sex workers to choose between being safe and acting legally. As a result, approximately 90 per cent of sex workers choose to work outside of these rules, working privately or at unlicensed businesses, and have felt unable to report abuse or violence.

Respect Inc. and DecrimQld set out the case for decriminalisation of sex work in their submission to the inquiry. They write that the benefits of decriminalisation include better public health and social cohesion; the freeing up of resources that are currently tied up with the police, the Prostitution Licensing Authority and other bodies; and better rights and safety for sex workers, whose work will be treated as work. Their submission cites that 94 per cent of sex workers state that decriminalisation is very important to them. The UQ School of Public Health said that the decriminalisation of sex work is public health best practice. They write that this approach overcomes the human rights and public health harms associated with the policing and licensing of sex work. Sisters Inside Inc. wrote that decriminalisation will reduce the number of women in Queensland affected by policing, imprisonment and state violence

and will improve women's safety across Queensland by allowing sex workers to self-organise and work safely together.

As the Scarlet Alliance said, this bill presents a long overdue alternative to Queensland's licensing system and enacts an evidence-based model of sex industry regulation that enables better health, safety and access to justice outcomes for all sex workers in Queensland. The Scarlet Alliance and others have urged for this legislation to commence on 1 July 2024 given its urgency. They have recommended that support organisations be resourced to provide culturally appropriate and translated resources to the sex-work community, education to government agencies tasked with applying new protections and efforts to build relationships between sex workers and responsible government agencies.


We are pleased that Queensland did not go down the path of adopting the so-called Nordic model of sex work. The Nordic model criminalises clients rather than sex workers, but at its core this model criminalises sex work through alternative means. It perpetuates the tired and harmful myth that all sex workers are victims lacking agency. This model was debated in the South Australian parliament this week but thankfully this morning was voted down.

I support the suggestions from a number of submitters that we need to review sections of the Criminal Code which criminalise sex with someone of impaired mind. As it stands currently, this offence is broad enough to include many people with neurological impairments that affect the power to communicate—such as someone with cerebral palsy—despite that person having the capacity and the ability to consent. This particularly affects sex workers who provide services to people with disability and represents a potential barrier to full decriminalisation of their work. Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion, Queenslanders with Disability Network and WWILD made a joint submission calling for an approach more consistent with other jurisdictions that treat consent as context specific and ongoing, assuming that every person is able to consent if they understand the nature and effect of the decision, can decide freely and can communicate the decision in a way that is feasible to them. This approach is also supported by other submitters, including Respect Inc. and the Queensland Law Society.

We are also disappointed that strippers have been overlooked in this bill. As submitters have pointed out, strippers will continue to work under a punitive licensing framework. Women's Health and Equality Queensland recommends that police are removed from a regulatory role and a review of the Liquor Act and the adult entertainment code is undertaken in order to ensure strippers are included in decriminalisation.

This bill needs to be backed up with real-world funding, including funding for sex worker advocacy organisations, funding for training, monitoring and broader support services. As we have seen with the government's moves to expand abortion access in Queensland, legislation can be largely just words if no resources are allocated to implementation. The government also needs to move to expunge previous convictions for sex work. This will be crucial to ensure that people with criminal records related to sex work do not continue to be discriminated against and is crucial to building trust between sex workers and the justice system.

This bill is a vital step towards supporting sex workers and allowing them to work safely and freely. It has been a long road, and we are only here thanks to the advocacy of sex workers and advocates. Decisions made here in the Queensland parliament over the past 164 years have had a grave impact on the lives of sex workers across Queensland and it is time to pass this bill. We then need to get on with the work of implementing it as soon as possible and continuing to listen to sex workers when they tell us what they need to be safe at work.

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (3.45 pm): I rise to support the bill. In doing so, I acknowledge those sex workers who have contributed to the bill in any way and the agencies supporting them. No worker should have to choose between working safely and working legally, yet the current regulatory environment in Queensland has resulted in just that for sex workers. This bill was informed through the recent work of the Queensland Law Reform Commission which undertook a review into the decriminalisation of sex work in Queensland. Under the current framework there are just two legal forms of sex work in Queensland: sex work that occurs in a licensed brothel and sex work performed by a private sex worker who works alone. In Queensland all other forms of sex work are illegal. Every worker has the right to attend their workplace free from the fear they will be raped, assaulted, entrapped or enslaved. However, the commission identified that the current regulatory framework stigmatises sex workers and increases a sex worker's vulnerability to exploitation and violence. As one submitter to the parliamentary committee remarked, it is quite common in the sex industry to work alongside a trusted peer so that you are not alone with a client. They stated—

Another common strategy is to let a peer know our current location, and to check in with them to let them know when the client has arrived and left. In Queensland it is currently illegal for me to employ these very basic and common safety strategies.

Another reflected on how the current regulatory framework that restricts advertising for sex workers decreases workplace safety, stating—

It's really important for me from a consent perspective that I am able to describe exactly what services I offer, and what services I don't. It is unacceptable that I am expected to wait until I am alone in a room with a client to explain to them what my sexual boundaries are.

Decriminalisation does not mean that this will be an unregulated industry. In fact, it provides a clearer statutory framework requiring workers to adhere to the same general laws as other work, including laws that govern work health and safety, anti-discrimination, public health, advertising and planning. Sex work is not inherently less safe than any other work. However, any workplace that is unregulated or that operates in a way that increases stigma, shame or abuse is an unsafe workplace.

The committee was presented with compelling evidence from sex workers working in brothels under the existing statutory framework that some licensed brothels were subjecting them to unfair and unsafe working conditions. As one submitter outlined—

Brothels have an unfair pay split 60/40, 40% going to the worker...and you are told by management to stay on shift for the full 8 hours otherwise you might not get anymore shifts.


The committee heard how some brothels under the current regime require sex workers to remain on shift regardless of whether there are bookings, which means they are rostered on without pay. The committee heard how some brothels under the current regime were refusing reasonable requests from sex workers to decline bookings including because they did not feel they could physically or emotionally complete the service. The committee was told that instead some brothel owners and operators were insisting they take the booking or their wages would be withheld or their rosters cut. The committee heard how some sex workers were working on fly-in fly-out arrangements and that some brothels under the current regime would withhold their payments unless they complied with all management requests, effectively rendering the sex worker stranded in a remote location without financial or emotional support. This bill will end these practices.

I again acknowledge all of the voices who have informed this reform—many individuals and many advocates, many of whom have been mentioned already in this debate, who have persisted with this work in showing dignity and grace in a debate that has, at times, had ugly moments. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Ms Bush, adjourned.

MOTION

Suspension of Standing and Sessional Orders

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.49 pm), by leave, without notice: I move—

That notwithstanding anything contained in standing and sessional orders, the nominated maximum time allocated for the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill be extended until 5.55 pm today with the minister being called in reply at 5.00 pm.

Question put—That the motion be agreed to.


Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL CODE (DECRIMINALISING SEX WORK) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Resumed on motion of Mrs D'Ath—

That the bill be now read a second time.

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (3.50 pm): I am very pleased finally to be standing here speaking in support of a bill to decriminalise sex work in Queensland. The Queensland Greens have long supported the full decriminalisation of sex work. It is the only regulatory model that ensures full industrial rights and safe working conditions. I strongly support the provisions of this bill that remove offences

relating to the provision of sex work, abolish the licensing scheme and prohibit local councils from making planning regulations to treat sex work differently to any business.

It is now more than 30 years since the Fitzgerald inquiry recommended that police be removed from sex-work regulation. The licensing scheme that we got in response was purportedly designed to protect sex workers from exploitation but, in reality, it criminalised basic safety strategies and worsened relations with police. Right now there are only 17 licensed brothels in the Queensland, as I understand it, leaving around 90 per cent of the sex-work industry in Queensland operating outside the legal framework—even more in regional areas. Sex workers in that 90 per cent cannot work together, use a driver whom another sex worker recommends, text another sex worker to check in between appointments or accurately describe their services in advertising. Repeated and unreasonable raids and police entrapment are common, and many sex workers say they find the rules practically impossible to follow.

In a survey of hundreds of sex workers conducted by Respect Inc, more than three-quarters said they would not make a police report under the current laws. One worker said—

I would be worried that I have outed myself to them, that I wouldn't be taken seriously, that I would be blamed for the way I am working. I would be more likely to make a report in NSW or the NT.

Meanwhile, the irony of these so-called 'anti-pimping' laws is that a handful of third party brothel owners can more readily profit from sex work than individual sex workers wishing to work independently. This two-tiered approach is failing. Evidence from experts here and in other jurisdictions as well as firsthand accounts of sex workers show that the best way to protect sex workers' safety and rights is through full decriminalisation.

It is deeply disappointing that it has taken almost 4½ years to get here from the government's commitment to investigate models for decriminalisation. I genuinely hate to think how many sex workers have dealt with violence they could not report for fear of criminalisation, being targeted by police or slapped with a criminal record for using basic safety strategies at work, waiting for these laws. I support those submissions that have asked the government to adopt a commencement date of no later than 1 July this year. I strongly urge the government to take that on board. We have been umming and ahing on this for long enough. Commencement should happen as soon as possible.

Stakeholders have also expressed disappointment, which I share, that police will continue to be involved in enforcing the adult entertainment code which, although in theory applies to venue permits, tends to focus on the actions of strippers themselves. The government has indicated that the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation will review the regulatory scheme for adult entertainment as well as liquor licensing rules around sex-work venues but, in the meantime, strippers still have to deal with disproportionate police involvement in their workplace. If we are genuinely committed to decriminalising sex work then strippers should not have to wait another 4½ years for reforms.

If we are genuinely committed to decriminalisation, we should also be expunging previous convictions for sex work. As Respect Inc points out, even after this bill is passed not only do people with a recorded conviction for sex-work offences have to live with that record but their friends or family could be liable for consorting offences under the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act. A number of stakeholders expressed their support for a spent conviction scheme, including the Queensland Law Society. As Children by Choice said in their submission, a scheme like this recognises the systemic injustices inherent in criminalisation of sex work, fosters trust between sex workers and the criminal legal system to enhance cooperation and represents a step towards justice and recognition.

However, there is some progress in this bill for people with a previous conviction for sex work. The changes to the Anti-Discrimination Act are greatly needed to send a clear message that people engaged in sex work, whether now or in the past, deserve protection from discrimination. In the submissions to this bill, countless sex workers told about their experiences with discrimination. Auden wrote—

I have also experienced discrimination and have been evicted from hotels upon discovery that I am a sex worker. When visiting Mackay I was approached by hotel reception after midnight and asked to leave upon discovery that I am a sex worker, there was no other accommodation available at this time and I had to beg the staff to let me stay until morning as otherwise I would have had nowhere to go.

This illustrates just how important it is that this bill removes the exemption allowing accommodation providers to discriminate against sex workers.

The Queensland Human Rights Commission was particularly supportive of this change, saying the current exemption 'unreasonably limits the right to equality and the right to privacy of sex workers, including the right not to have a person's home arbitrarily interfered with, such as through eviction.' The

Anti-Discrimination Act also currently uses the euphemism 'lawful sexual activity' to refer to a person's protected status as a legally employed sex worker. The Queensland Law Reform Commission recommended that this be replaced with a protection against discrimination on the basis of sex-work activity. Unfortunately, this bill as drafted does not fully implement that recommendation. It protects 'sex-work activity' but defines this as the provision by an adult person of sexual services. That means that people under the age of 18 are excluded from this protection under the Anti-Discrimination Act. In fact, they will end up with less protection than they have under the current laws. They will lose their ability to make a complaint for discrimination. A huge number of stakeholders raised this in their submissions and it is, frankly, bewildering that the committee has not dealt with it in its report.

Respect Inc, Micah, Children by Choice, the United Workers Union, the Queensland Council for LGBTI Health, the Human Rights Commission and more all said that 'adult' should be removed from the definition in order to ensure under 18s are protected. The Human Rights Commission points out that the current definition is inconsistent with other definitions of sex work throughout this bill and introduces unequal protection of the law into the Anti-Discrimination Act based on age. The commission gives an example that someone has engaged in sex work when they were 17, is now 20 years old and working in a bookstore, where their employer finds out and fires them because they become aware of their previous sex work. As this law is drafted, they would not be protected from discrimination in that instance.

Respect Inc point out that young people who engage in sex work are often disproportionately marginalised and vulnerable people. They are more likely to be queer and in unstable housing. It is crucial that they are afforded at least the same protections under our anti-discrimination laws as adults. The government should move amendments to fix this.

While the bill does fully decriminalise sex work, on the other hand it inserts new offences into the Criminal Code regarding the procuring, enabling or otherwise benefiting from sex work by a child as well as procuring sex by coercion. While obviously I support measures to prohibit such activity, I share stakeholders' concerns that these could retain a role for police in the regulation of sex work beyond that experienced by people in other industries. I agree that the government should further clarify that these provisions are not intended to increase police surveillance of young sex workers or their friends and family.


Finally, I want to reiterate calls from a huge number of stakeholders for a properly resourced and culturally appropriate education campaign to be led by Respect Inc., as the peak body representing sex workers in Queensland, to share information about the legislative changes and address the stigma that sex workers currently face. There is little doubt that the lack of accurate information about sex work in Queensland contributes to stigma and associated harm to sex workers. The criminalisation of sex work is inextricably linked with social marginalisation, stereotyping and sensationalism. As one 29-year-old sex worker submitted to the committee, criminalisation has sent the message that—

... we are not to be trusted, we are criminals. It gives the impression we can be treated badly and there will be no reproach. It tells police they don't have to take our experiences seriously. We are vilified in the media and people have a warped idea of who we are and why we do our work.

At the end of the day, it is sex workers like those at Respect Inc. who have fought for and won this landmark reform. They have spent decades navigating complex, unfair laws that were always based on archaic, stigmatising myths about sex work. They have built networks and resources to support their peers despite facing criminal sanctions for working together.

There is much work ahead to ensure that everyone benefits from these laws, but every single person who has worked on this should be proud that soon sex work will be recognised as work, not as a crime.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. N BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Disaster Recovery and Minister for Corrective Services) (4.00 pm): How can you say, as the LNP has in their statement of reservation, 'It is right sex workers are protected and their health and safety is paramount,' and then take a position that does nothing but keep them in harm's way? The very purpose of this legislation is to create once and for all a legal framework that is not only decriminalising sex work but also making it safe work, work that has rights and legal protections.

The member for Clayfield loves to give long speeches—very, very long and detailed speeches—to the House—

An honourable member interjected.

Ms BOYD: I take that interjection—about the history of particular issues on just about everything. One of the things that he admitted in his speech was that it was the work of this House in stamping out corruption and illegal acts that created a framework long ago that put vulnerable people, mostly women, in unimaginable working arrangements. That framework is not safe. It is not fair. It is discriminatory. It is full of prejudice and it forces vulnerable people in our state to act outside of the law to do things like make a phone call to a trusted person to let them know that they are safe while they are at work.

The Miles government wants sex work to be safe work. We want them to have increased protections. We want them to have at least the minimum standards of employment that are offered to other Queensland workers. We want to uphold their human rights. We know a couple of things about the industry that are just simply alarming. The majority of sex workers are vulnerable, they are exploited and they are subjected to violence. As victim-survivors of crime, three-quarters of sex workers will not report it. They are in unsafe environments. They do not even feel safe enough or protected enough to report that. Stonewall Medical Centre identified through a committee process that ‘a real, grave danger’ currently exists under the laws as they stand.


There needs to be a clear distinction between sex work with consenting adults and sexual exploitation to address coercion and exploitation. The QLRC found that the current legal framework undermined sex workers’ autonomy and their privacy and that the laws were highly restrictive and difficult to comply with. They stated that the laws created a two-tier industry where most sex work is either criminalised or occurred outside of the licensing system and that the existing framework contributes to stigma and discrimination and creates barriers to accessing health, safety and legal protections.

With all of this known, with all of this laid out, today the LNP come into this place and, instead of being part of a process of decriminalisation, at the end of his tedious speech—in the dying seconds of it—the member for Clayfield says that the LNP will in fact oppose the bill. The LNP instead want to see this industry regulated, but they do not present a plan. They do not present a policy. They do not present amendments to this bill. Instead, the member for Clayfield and the rest of the LNP want to see these workers continue to languish. So much for their stated care and concern that sex workers’ health and safety is ‘paramount’. Sex worker businesses will be treated the same as any other business with the passing of this bill and sex workers will have the same rights as any other worker, because sex work is real work.

When it comes to the issue raised about public amenity around brothels, the committee heard from Professor Basil Donovan AO that this was a non-issue and that ‘brothels are the quietest places in town. They have no traffic, and their customers are deliberately very discreet and quiet.’ The QLRC did not hear any evidence that street-based sex work is prevalent or is an issue of concern around particular places such as schools, places of worship or hospitals in Queensland. I think that those points that the opposition raise as serious concerns around decriminalising sex work just do not stack up at all.

I acknowledge Respect and the role they have played in this journey to decriminalisation. I met with them directly a couple of years ago. It was in a conversation with them then that I truly learnt just how complex, convoluted and unfair the laws of our state currently are. I am really proud of the work they have done—and I hope that they are proud of it too—breaking down the stigma and the discrimination that they work under in Queensland at the moment. I know that this is just a step in the journey and they will continue on with that work, along with a lot of other advocacy groups and sex workers.

In my closing remarks, I want to pay tribute to those workers who are very vulnerable in our community and have been placed in even more vulnerable situations because of the laws of our state. They were laws that ended up being passed that were never designed to be passed in the way that they were. I am pleased today to have a process under this Labor government where we have gone to the Law Reform Commission and we have set out the best way forward for this industry. Sex workers in Queensland will now have a fairer workplace and a safer workplace. I am really pleased to be part of that reform.

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (4.06 pm): I will make a brief contribution to the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. At the outset, let me be clear that I will be opposing the bill. It is a flawed piece of legislation that will not work in Queensland, and MPs will be back someday in this parliament correcting this mistake.


Total decriminalisation without careful and proper regulation has not worked effectively anywhere in the western world. Decriminalisation of sex work in all aspects is a failed model of dealing with

prostitution. It leads to higher levels of prostitution and with that comes higher levels of crime, particularly crimes against vulnerable women, including sexual assault and assault; more abuse of women; coercion of women; increased drug and alcohol addiction of women; increased domestic and family violence; an increase in the scale of the sex-trafficking industry often run by organised crime; increased contraction and spread of STIs and other diseases; and an increase in unplanned pregnancy and unwanted abortion.

The committee heard research in several submissions about the severe impacts of this industry on women. In the interests of time today I will simply refer interested persons to the detail of those submissions. There is a whole lot of statistical information provided in some very good submissions.

Prostitution is not normal healthy safe work, not for those who are prostituted. For some sex workers real life is *The Handmaid's Tale* and total discrimination does not work nor help them. In contrast, as the committee heard through several submissions, many European countries are moving away from the total discrimination models that are harmful to women and children and adopting instead the Nordic model. The Nordic model, also known as the equality model, is an approach to sex work that seeks to reduce demand for sex services by criminalising the clients, or users, and third parties, not the women and girls exploited by the industry.

In European countries where the Nordic model has been adopted it has prevented the dramatic growth of the sex industry and reduced the exploitation of women compared to countries that adopted the now discredited discrimination model. The international trend is towards the Nordic, or equality, model. Just this week in South Australia the South Australia legislative chamber debated the Nordic model and on that occasion it very narrowly lost, I believe by one vote. Support for the best practice Nordic model is growing, and it is only a matter of time before more effective laws will be passed across Australia. Surely, ultimately common sense will prevail some day when the outcry from abused women is so loud—young girls, our daughters, our mothers—that even stone-deaf Labor will have to listen.

 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (4.10 pm): I am going to take my time making my contribution to this bill. From the outset I will put on the record that prior to coming into this House this was not an industry, organisation or group of people I had ever had much to do with. In the last term when a bill surrounding this workplace and industry was introduced I was glad to see it referred to the Queensland Law Reform Commission. This is a longstanding industry with a long history. I am not going to go into the member for Clayfield's speech, but since the bill was introduced I have attended forums and public information sessions. I visited Respect Inc and spoke with sex workers. I have also informed myself of the work of the Law Reform Commission.

This is a bill about workplace health and safety. I will begin with the proposition that all workers deserve a safe space to work and that historically sex work is work. It is one of the longest surviving occupations we have. Unfortunately, as things stand it is not safe work. I understand that the Prostitution Licensing Authority was created with the remit of increasing the safety of women, but we have heard that it does not. Practices which have development through regulation have meant that women working in this field, vulnerable people, are not safe. We are starting from the position that what is here at the moment is not a safe workplace, so the role of this bill is to provide safety for people working in this industry.

The idea that decriminalisation and removing those regulations will all of a sudden introduce a criminal element into this industry clearly misses the fact that there are already criminal elements that operate by using loopholes in the regulation. I am not sure about other people's workplaces, but when you involve the Workplace Health and Safety Act and various industrial relations acts there is going to be quite a lot of regulation in the industry, so it is not like all of a sudden everything has gone out the window and it is a free-for-all. We will now have workplaces and workers who have to comply with workplace health and safety laws just like every other worker.


We have spoken about the need to keep women safe in this parliament many times already this week. What I hear from those opposite is, 'We support women in this work. We want them to be safe, but.' That is what we hear from over here. 'Yes, we want women to be safe, but not this way.' For them, women's safety comes second in this bill. It comes second to planning regulations they have not yet cited. It comes second to moral high horses because they do not regard this as a legitimate occupation. That is where they are coming from at the outset.

I put on the record that I support a person's right to choose their industry. Apparently, according to the previous speaker, those who work in this industry are not normal and they are not healthy. To me, that does not come from a position of deliberate consideration; that comes from a moral perspective and deciding to put someone's moral rights over the safety of women. That is really what this is about.

It is about deciding that someone else's perspective and moral outlook is more important than a woman's right to be safe at work. You demean her work, so you demean her. That is what I reject.

What I want to know from those opposite is: how many more sex workers need to be injured? How many need to be sexually assaulted before they decide to do something? That is what we are looking at. We heard evidence about the overwhelming number of workers who do not report sexual assaults because of the stigma that is perpetrated in this industry, and it will continue to be perpetrated by those opposite. The Nordic model they propose has not increased women's safety anywhere because when a client is criminalised that behaviour is transferred to the sex worker. That is what happens.

I know we have more time to debate this bill and I know there will be issues about planning. I am more than happy that during consideration in detail we will have an opportunity to go into planning, but those considerations again are based on stigma—an idea the media perpetrates about what people who work in the sex-work industry do, what they look like and how they operate. I would ask anyone making a contribution whether they have spoken to a sex worker. Have they spoken to sex workers who operate out of homes? Have they spoken to people who operate within this model? If not, what exactly are you voting against? I ask members to give this bill due consideration, because in rejecting this bill they are rejecting women's safety. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (4.17 pm): Before proceeding with my contribution I would like to acknowledge the advocacy of Janelle Fawkes from Respect Inc, who has worked for years to bring about this change in the industry. I rise to speak to the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. In its report No. 4 of the 57th Parliament, titled *Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and other Legislation Amendment Bill*, tabled in this assembly on 12 April, the Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee recommended to the assembly that the bill be passed. The objective of the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and other Legislation Amendment Bill is to establish a legal framework that will enact a safe, decriminalised sex-work industry in Queensland while improving health, safety, rights and legal protections for sex workers. The bill establishes a decriminalised framework for the sex-work industry based on the recommendations of the Queensland Law Reform Commission report titled *A decriminalised sex-work industry for Queensland*.


The bill repeals sex-work specific offences such as those relating to working alone or with others, public solicitation and sex-work advertising as located in the Criminal Code, the Prostitution Act and the Prosecution Regulation; removing the current licensing system and specific obligations on brothel licensees relating to alarms, lighting and signs; repealing sex-work-specific health offences that are located in the Prostitution Act and the Prostitution Regulation; implementing the Queensland Law Reform Commission's recommendations to update discrimination protections in the Anti-Discrimination Act; ensuring that the power to make local laws, which resides with the local government authorities, should be restricted so that a local law must not be made which prohibits or regulates sex work or the conduct of sex-work business; repealing sex-work-specific offences in the Criminal Code and introducing a definition of 'commercial sexual services' in addition to new offences that address coercion and the exploitation of children in commercial sexual services; introducing a legislated review requirement to assess the operation and effectiveness of the new regulatory framework of the bill and the decriminalised sex-work industry in Queensland; and implementing consequential amendments to reflect the decriminalisation of the sex-work industry and removal of the brothel licensing system.

As has been stated, the committee received 176 submissions for its consideration during the examination of the bill. It also held two public hearings and two public briefings and the submissions provided represented a diverse range of views on the proposed decriminalised framework. Inquiry participants discussed the enhanced protection and safety for workers, reduced stigma and discrimination, and increased access to justice and improved industrial relations should the sex-work framework be decriminalised. Some participants held alternative views, raising concerns about the potential repercussions of decriminalisation.

In August 2021 the matter was referred to the Queensland Law Reform Commission to conduct an independent review and it recommended a framework for a decriminalised sex-work industry in Queensland, delivering its report on 31 March 2023 which made 47 recommendations. Currently in Queensland there are two legal forms of sex work—sex work that occurs in a licensed brothel and sex work performed by a private sex worker who works alone. All other forms of sex work are illegal.


The Queensland Law Reform Commission found that only a very small portion of the sex-work industry has adopted the brothel licensing system, with the majority of sex work occurring outside the

licensed sector. The Law Reform Commission determined that sex workers should not have to choose between working lawfully and working safely. To this effect, it concluded that decriminalisation would treat sex work as work rather than as a crime. It is important to note that the Law Reform Commission emphasised that decriminalisation does not mean no regulation at all. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (4.22 pm): I was a member of this committee and it was wonderful to hear witnesses who came before the committee talk about their experience, the passion for their colleagues in the industry and the safety that they want to see across the sex-work industry. I have to admit that I was taken aback by the LNP today. As I said, I was on the committee and I was in those hearings. I also read the statement of reservation, but at the last moment in the shadow minister's speech he dropped on this House that those opposite would not be supporting the bill. I believe that that was clearly disingenuous to that statement of reservation.

The member for Lockyer, to his credit, spoke in a respectful manner. I will not criticise him for speaking in a respectful manner, although I disagree with the decision that is going to make when the vote comes, but to hear the member for Oodgeroo preach on behalf of women without even going upstairs to the gallery and talking to the women who have brought this legislation to this House is absolutely disgusting. It is an absolute outrage to preach on behalf of women without going and talking to the women who are bringing this legislation into this place. This legislation was not formed in a dark corner of 1 William Street by a bunch of bureaucrats; it was formed by listening to the women in the sex work industry—the women who do not feel safe under the current laws in this state, the women who are not safe—I repeat, are not safe—in their chosen work industry because of the laws in this state.

For the member for Oodgeroo to come in here and make those comments and for the member for Southern Downs to suggest that sex work cannot exist outside of a framework and construction of organised crime, drug trafficking and human trafficking is completely ignorant to everything that we heard on the committee from those who want to make a better Queensland. It is deplorable to hear the LNP give this late notice of a change from their statement of reservation which will further stigmatise women in this industry and to suggest that to work in that industry they must all somehow be criminals. I want to thank everyone in the sex-work industry who has brought this change to Queensland because their advocacy will make a better Queensland.

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (4.25 pm): I rise to proudly support the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill before the House. These changes have been drafted following a review by the Queensland Law Reform Commission requested by this government in August 2021. As the industrial relations minister, I am particularly supportive of decriminalising sex work because that will give sex workers access to the same legal rights and protections as all workers in this state. It will give sex workers access to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland to raise issues about their workplace like any other worker.


The bill will give sex workers the right to speak up about poor working conditions and to say 'no' to unsafe work. These changes treat these workers like any other worker, not as workers undertaking work that is a crime. This bill aims to regulate sex work under the same general laws and in the same way as other work guided by the principles of safety, health and fairness, and I believe that women, in particular—and, of course, men as well—who work in this industry deserve those rights like anybody else.

Sex workers will have the right to be consulted about safety issues and to have health and safety representatives in their workplace. That is a giant leap forward. They will no longer have to choose between working legally or working safely. The new laws will allow workers in this industry to work together for safety without fear of criminal charges and to be able to report crimes against them to police without fear of charges or surveillance. They have felt that fear for far too long.

Under the current model, there are two legal forms of sex work—licensed brothels and sex work performed by a private sex worker working alone. All other forms of sex work are illegal and this bill addresses these issues. DecrimQld advocate Janelle Fawkes, a member in my own electorate of McConnel, has worked tirelessly—and I have met with many workers in this industry—and says that, when people are marginalised and vilified, their ability to report crime or to report workplace issues such as health and safety is very much reduced. This bill overturns that.


This bill means that sex workers can now use basic safety strategies that have previously been illegal such as working together. Sex workers are part of our community and deserve a safe workplace like everybody else. They deserve access to legal protections and for their industry to be treated in the

manner in which any other industry is treated rather than as a criminal activity. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr BROWN** (Capalaba—ALP) (4.29 pm): As a member of the committee that reviewed this legislation, I definitely found it to be an honour and an eye-opener. I congratulate all the sex workers who are in the gallery who have contributed to the formation of this bill. There have been decades worth of fighting to ensure, as the Minister for Industrial Relations said, that your work is treated like every other worker in Queensland. This will ensure that you have access to workplace health and safety and many other entitlements that all workers share in this state.

I want to touch on the evidence that we heard during the committee hearings. It has been portrayed by the opposition that licensed brothels are this safe haven for workers, but that is a completely different story to the evidence that I heard during the committee. We heard that, because only 10 per cent of the industry is located in licensed brothels, the employers of these licensed brothels take advantage of that situation—knowing they have a pool of 90 per cent of sex workers to call upon if sex workers within the licensed brothel industry refused a shift, refused clients or said that physically they could not go on. To me, that is rape. Licensed brothels were raping their employees and sex workers. They could afford to do so because they knew that these workers would not report this to the authorities because they had access to so many other sex workers. That changes here today.

We need to ensure that there is a complete and level playing field so that sex workers feel comfortable to be able to report crimes, feel comfortable to be able to say, 'No, my shift has ended,' or feel comfortable to say, 'No, I don't want to see that client.' These are basic rights. As I said, we have got laws in place in this state to be able to report this. This legislation and the repeal will give these workers the comfort, the security and the ability to report these crimes which they have not been doing because of the two-tiered legislation that we have. I commend this bill to the House.

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (4.31 pm), in reply: I want to thank the honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. As I noted in my explanatory speech and also in my second reading speech, the bill implements a number of the recommendations made by the Queensland Law Reform Commission in its report *A decriminalised sex-work industry for Queensland*. The recommendations of the QLRC provide an evidence-based path towards the decriminalisation of Queensland's sex work industry. That path leads to improving the safety of sex workers, while balancing the needs and expectations of the community. Decriminalisation aims to facilitate safe work practices, support health and wellbeing, help address stigma and discrimination, and improve access to protections under laws of general application and regulatory frameworks that apply to everyone, including work health and safety laws.

The Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee also identified in its report on its inquiry into this bill that the decriminalisation of the sex work industry in Queensland will afford sex workers safety and protection. I would like to once again acknowledge the work of the committee and thank the many individuals and organisations who made submissions and gave evidence before the committee, particularly those who courageously shared their lived experience and insights.

In his contribution, the member for Clayfield reminded the House about the history of sex work, noting that times have changed. I too note that times have changed. The member noted the change in attitudes that have occurred over the past 30 years since the Prostitution Act 1999 was enacted. While I agree with the sentiments of the member for Clayfield's contribution to the debate, the contribution and the position taken by the LNP on this important bill do not reflect just how far society has changed over the last 30 years, or even over the last decade. Since the passage of the Prostitution Act, marriage equality has been recognised in Australia. We passed the Criminal Law (Historical Homosexual Convictions Expungement) Act 2017. We removed or decriminalised termination of pregnancy and we brought in voluntary assisted dying. We brought in a Human Rights Act.

To continue to insist upon regulation where there is clear evidence from the Queensland Law Reform Commission that the best way to improve the safety and health of sex workers in the state of Queensland is to enact the decriminalised scheme it recommended suggests an unwillingness to let go of the past. Sex work is decriminalised in the Northern Territory, New South Wales, Victoria and New Zealand. Each jurisdiction has a slightly different approach but the common aim of each is to recognise sex work as legitimate work rather than as a crime.

The member for Clayfield raised issues in relation to the planning regulation, and the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Public Works has spoken of the activities of

the Department of Housing, Local Government, Planning and Public Works in that regard. That department has undertaken a number of consultation activities in relation to the planning regulation. The planning framework intends to support the central premise of decriminalisation, which is that a sex work business is to be treated as any other business.

As I mentioned in my second reading speech, the current regulatory framework is not working. The current framework incentivises sex workers to avoid regulators. As I have also said before, decriminalisation of the sex work industry does not mean no regulation at all. The Queensland Law Reform Commission's report No. 80 identified that regulating sex work can be achieved under the same general laws as other work, including laws that govern work health and safety, anti-discrimination, public health, advertising and planning. The general criminal law also continues to apply.

Those opposite have said that they support safety and improving safety for sex workers but that there is not sufficient regulation. I have not heard those on the other side saying what further regulation they believe should be put in place, other than referencing the Nordic model. If they do truly want to achieve safety for the workers but believed there should be more, I did not see any amendments being proposed. If they are going to say that they want to keep workers safe, then talk to those workers. Ask them what they want. Consider their views. You cannot develop good laws, policies and practices without actually talking to those people who work directly in those industries and those people with lived experience. That is what true consultation is all about. The Nordic model of regulation to sex work is a model that, as cited by the QLRC report, targets the demand for prostitution by criminalising the actions of pimps and buyers, rather than the actions of sex workers. The Queensland government is committed to the decriminalisation of sex work.

Some members raised concerns with amendments relating to local governments. New sections are proposed to be inserted by the bill into the Local Government Act 2009 and the City of Brisbane Act 2010 to prohibit local governments from making a local law that prohibits or regulates sex work or the conduct of a sex work business. As I explained in my earlier speech, the intent of these provisions is to prevent local governments from making local laws about sex work to ensure that there is a consistent, state-wide approach to sex work regulation. This meets the Queensland Law Reform Commission's recommendation 23 that a local government's power to make local laws should be restricted so that a local law may not be made which prohibits or regulates sex work.

However, it is also important to note that, under the proposed amendments, a local government would still be able to make a local law which applied universally to all business types, including sex work. For example, local governments would not be restricted from making local laws about advertising generally, as long as they are not specifically targeting sex work or the conduct of sex work businesses. That is what it means to not discriminate. To make it even clearer, amenity impacts of home-based businesses, such as hours of operation—because I heard the member for Clayfield talk about hours of operation—car parking and separation distances are regulated by local government through their normal local planning schemes through provisions in their codes which are considered when either meeting accepted requirements or being assessed as code assessable development.

During debate, some members raised concerns regarding the Queensland Hotels Association and section 106C of the Anti-Discrimination Act. In particular, I note that the member for Clayfield mentioned the Queensland Hotels Association's disappointment with the consultation process and did not support the repeal of section 106C of the Anti-Discrimination Act. The bill will repeal section 106C of the Anti-Discrimination Act. Section 106C of the Anti-Discrimination Act allows accommodation providers to discriminate against someone if they reasonably believe the person is using, or intends to use, the accommodation for sex work. An accommodation provider, under section 106C, can refuse to supply accommodation, evict a person from accommodation or treat a person unfavourably in connection with accommodation—for example, by charging a higher rate for cleaning. 'Accommodation' is defined widely. It includes business premises, a house or flat, a hotel or motel, a boarding house or hostel, a caravan or caravan site, a manufactured home, a camping site, and a building or construction site. The QLRC recommended that accommodation providers and employers should not have specific exemptions allowing them to single out sex workers for discrimination because they are sex workers.

If section 106C is repealed, accommodation providers will still control the use of their premises in the same way they can for any other person, including to comply with land use and planning laws. To provide an example of the ability of accommodation providers to still control the use of their premises, I note that a motel operator can have policies about the use of their rooms to carry on certain kinds of commercial activity that attracts clients—treating all businesses the same—since the purpose of a motel is to provide short-term accommodation to travellers or tourists.

The QLRC observed that the decriminalised framework does not include a sex-work-specific regulator for the industry. General regulatory frameworks that apply to other workers and industries apply to sex work, and are overseen by relevant regulatory agencies.

The member for Lockyer raised the issue of compensation for brothel owners. Recommendation 34 of the QLRC report was that the Queensland government should consider a compensatory mechanism, such as fee relief, for brothel licensees and approved managers, as an interim measure during the transition period before the new decriminalisation framework commences. Possible fee waivers or refunds to brothel licensees and approved managers will be further considered before commencement of the decriminalised framework.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland is responsible for work health and safety. Queensland Health is responsible for public health and health promotion. The Queensland government and local governments are responsible for land use planning. The Queensland Police Service is responsible for investigating crime.

The bill provides for new offences to guard against children being engaged in commercial sexual services. An existing offence is to be amended to guard against the use of coercion in commercial sexual services. Consistent with the QLRC report, these offences provide serious penalties for those who coerce individuals or involve children in commercial sexual services. Other existing offences available under state and Commonwealth laws, including those related to unlawful sexual activity, child protection, slavery and human trafficking will continue to apply.

For those opposite who talked about coercion where there is no regulation existing, the re-emergence of crime and increased prostitution, and organised crime, the reality is our organised crime legislation is stronger now under the Criminal Code than it ever has been. Certainly when you go back to when the Fitzgerald report first came out, we had extensive laws around coercion and exploitation. When it comes to the re-emergence of crime or increased prostitution, it is not a hypothetical because there are other jurisdictions that have already changed these laws and, as the QLRC pointed out, there is no evidence whatsoever that that has led to an expansion of the sector. Some say, 'People might not want them operating in their community,' but they already are. That is the point made by the QLRC: the majority of the sector is operating unlawfully because of the way that the legislation criminalised their safety. As we said, they should not have to choose between safety and what is lawful.

The committee considered that any criminal elements in the sex-work industry, as in any industry, are a matter for enforcement of criminal laws by law enforcement agencies, not licensing bodies. The committee also noted that, under decriminalisation, the Queensland Police Service will continue to investigate intelligence or any allegations of criminal activity relating to a commercial sex-work business as they would for any other legal business. I hope that those working in the sex-work industry now will have the confidence, when someone is offending against them, to come forward and seek the help of the Queensland Police Service because they know they will not be criminalised for being a worker. The police will be focusing on those who are committing crimes. It sounds like a similar conversation I have had this week around stopping the talk about who is being targeted and, instead, looking at who is targeting them. It is an important conversation to have.

I once again thank all honourable members for their contributions during the debate. I acknowledge the advocacy of Respect Inc, DecrimQld and Scarlet Alliance, with a special mention of Janelle, Lulu and Jacqueline from QCU and the Labor Party. To everyone who has been an ally, a worker and a former worker, those who have been lost and those who have campaigned for many years, we thank you for your advocacy. I know it has been a long journey. I feel like I have said that so many times since I became Attorney-General back in 2015. It has been a long journey for a whole lot of reforms in this state, but, boy, have we done a lot in the past 10 years. I will proudly leave this parliament and politics later this year, knowing that we have brought in real reforms that keep people safe, recognise their human rights, treat people with fairness and respect, and remove discrimination.

I would like to thank all of the stakeholders who participated in the committee processes for the bills, the committee members and the secretariat. Again, I thank my department staff who have worked tirelessly with stakeholders to get this bill before the House and my staff who have engaged in consultation for the better part of the 12 months that I have been back in the Attorney-General role and worked so closely with stakeholders, many of whom are here today. On that note, I commend the bill to the House.

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

AYES, 49:

ALP, 46—Bailey, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, D'Ath, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Kelly, A. King, S. King, Linard, Martin, McCallum, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Nightingale, O'Rourke, Pease, Power, Pugh, Richards, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Whiting.

Grn, 2—Berkman, MacMahon.

Ind, 1—Bolton.

NOES, 35:

LNP, 31—Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Frecklington, Gerber, Hart, Head, Janetzki, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Mander, McDonald, Mickelberg, Millar, Minnikin, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Powell, Purdie, Robinson, Rowan, Simpson, Watts, Weir, Zanow.

KAP, 3—Dametto, Katter, Knuth.

PHON, 1—Andrew.

Pairs: Crawford, Stevens; Hunt, Bates; Lauga, Molhoek; Lui, Lister.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Consideration in Detail

Clauses 1 to 18, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—



Mrs D'ATH (4.51 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mrs D'ATH: I move the following amendment—

1

After clause 18

Page 16, after line 25—

insert—

Part 4A Amendment of Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024

18A Act amended

This part amends the *Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024*.

18B Amendment of s 2 (Commencement)

Section 2(1)(a)—

omit, insert—

(a) parts 3 and 3A;

18C Amendment of s 8 (Code amended)

Section 8—

insert—

Note—

See also the amendment in schedule 1.

18D Insertion of new pt 3A

After part 3—

insert—

Part 3A Amendment of Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1978

25A Act amended

This part amends the *Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1978*.

25B Omission of pt 2 (Evidence)

Part 2—

omit.

25C Omission of s 5 (Exclusion of public)

Section 5—

omit.

18E Amendment of s 55 (Act amended)

Section 55—

*insert—**Note—*

See also the amendment in schedule 1.

18F Amendment of sch 1 (Other amendments)

Schedule 1—

*insert—***Division 4 Other amendments****Childrens Court Act 1992****1 Section 20(1)(f), ‘Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1978’—***omit, insert—**Evidence Act 1977, section 103ZZL***Criminal Code****1 Section 228F(2)(f), from ‘or 21AV’—***omit, insert—**, 21AV or 103ZE(2)(g); or***Evidence Act 1977****1 Section 14B, definition *essential person*, paragraph (e), from ‘or 21AV’—***omit, insert—**, 21AV or 103ZE(2)(g);***18G Amendment of long title**

Long title, after ‘the Criminal Code,’—

*insert—***the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1978,**

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

Tabled paper: Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, amendments to be moved by Hon. Yvette D’Ath

Tabled paper: Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, explanatory notes to Hon. Yvette D’Ath’s amendments

Tabled paper: Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, statement of compatibility with human rights contained in Hon. Yvette D’Ath’s amendments

In doing so, this amendment will make a minor technical amendment to facilitate the partial repeal of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 1978. In March we passed the Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024. Some of the amendments in that act modernise, update and relocate relevant provisions of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act into the Evidence Act. The amendment will omit sections 4, 4A and 5 of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act to enable the effective implementation and commencement of these relocated provisions.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 19 to 21, as read, agreed to.

Clause 22—



Mrs D’ATH (4.52 pm): I move the following amendments—

2 Clause 22 (Amendment of s 4 (Definitions))

Page 19, lines 10 to 15—

*omit.***3 Clause 22 (Amendment of s 4 (Definitions))**

Page 19, line 16, ‘Also’—

omit, insert—

However

4 Clause 22 (Amendment of s 4 (Definitions))

Page 19, line 22, ‘In addition’—

omit, insert—

Also

5 Clause 22 (Amendment of s 4 (Definitions))

Page 19, line 31, '1'—

omit, insert—

2

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 22, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 23 to 31, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

**Mrs D'ATH** (4.53 pm): I seek leave to move an amendment outside the long title of the bill.

Leave granted.

Mrs D'ATH: I move the following amendment—**6 After clause 31**

Page 23, after line 8—

*insert—***Part 8A Amendment of Planning Act 2016****31A Act amended**This part amends the *Planning Act 2016*.**31B Insertion of new ch 8, pt 10**

Chapter 8—

*insert—***Part 10 Transitional provisions for Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024****362 Application of part**

- (1) This part applies in relation to the carrying out, before the commencement, of a material change of use of premises for a use that is a sex work business (the **relevant sex work business**).
- (2) However, this part applies in relation to the material change of use only to the extent that—
 - (a) when the material change of use was carried out, it was—
 - (i) prohibited development, or assessable development, under the *Planning Regulation 2017*, schedule 10, part 2; or
 - (ii) assessable development under a planning instrument because the material change of use was for a shop, or a home-based business, as defined in the *Planning Regulation 2017*, schedule 24; and
 - (b) the carrying out of the material change of use contravened section 162 or 163(1).

363 Definitions for part

In this part—

relevant MCU means a material change of use of premises in relation to which this part applies.**relevant sex work business** see section 362(1).**sex work** means the provision by a person of the following services for payment or reward—

- (a) services involving the person participating in a sexual activity with another person;
- (b) services involving the use or display of the person's body for the sexual arousal or gratification of another person.

sex work business means a business that provides services that include sex work and includes, for example—

- (a) an escort agency providing services that include sex work; or
- (b) a home-based sex work business.

364 Proceedings for particular offences if material change of use is accepted development on commencement

- (1) This section applies if, on the commencement, a material change of use of the premises for a use that is the relevant sex work business is categorised as accepted development.
- (2) A proceeding may not be started after the commencement for—


- (a) an offence against section 162 or 163(1) in relation to the carrying out of the relevant MCU before the commencement; or
- (b) an offence against section 165(a) in relation to the use of the premises for the relevant sex work business before the commencement.
- (3) If a proceeding for an offence mentioned in subsection (2)(a) or (b) had started, but not ended, before the commencement, the proceeding may be continued as if this Act, as in force immediately before the commencement, were still in force.
- 365 Proceedings for particular offences, and restricting use of information, if material change of use is assessable development on commencement**
- (1) This section applies if, on the commencement—
- (a) a material change of use of the premises for a use that is the relevant sex work business is categorised as assessable development; and
- (b) all of the development permits necessary for the carrying out of the material change of use mentioned in paragraph (a) are not in effect.
- (2) A proceeding may not be started for a relevant offence committed by a person—
- (a) during the person's moratorium period; or
- (b) after the person's moratorium period ends if, when the moratorium period ends—
- (i) all of the development permits necessary for the carrying out of the material change of use mentioned in subsection (1)(a) are in effect; or
- (ii) the use of the premises for the relevant sex work business has been abandoned.
- (3) If a proceeding for a relevant offence has started, but not ended, before the commencement, the proceeding may be continued as if this Act, as in force immediately before the commencement, were still in force.
- (4) Subsection (5) applies if—
- (a) a person gives information in a development application for the material change of use mentioned in subsection (1)(a); and
- (b) the development application is made before the day that is 1 year after the day this section commences; and
- (c) the information relates to—
- (i) the carrying out of the relevant MCU; or
- (ii) the use of the premises for the relevant sex work business.
- (5) Evidence of the information is not admissible against the person in a proceeding for an offence committed by the person against section 162, 163(1), 165(a) or 226.
- (6) In this section—
- finally decided**, in relation to a development application, means the later of the following days—
- (a) if a development permit is given for the application—the day the development permit takes effect under chapter 3, part 5;
- (b) if the development application is refused—the day notice of the refusal is given or, if an appeal about the refusal is started, the day the appeal ends.
- moratorium period**, for a person, means the period—
- (a) starting on the commencement; and
- (b) ending on—
- (i) if a development application for each development permit necessary for the material change of use mentioned in subsection (1)(a) is made before the day that is 1 year after the day this section commences—the day the development application for the last development permit is finally decided; or
- (ii) otherwise—the day that is 1 year after the day this section commences.
- relevant offence** means—
- (a) an offence against section 162 or 163(1) in relation to the carrying out of the relevant MCU before the commencement; or
- (b) an offence against section 165(a) in relation to the use of the premises for the relevant sex work business before or after the commencement.

Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 32 to 36, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Third Reading

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (4.54 pm): I move—


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

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

Long Title

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (4.54 pm): I move the following amendments—

7 Long title

Long title, after 'Criminal Code,'—

insert—

the *Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2024,*

8 Long title

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

insert—

the *Planning Act 2016,*

Amendments agreed to.


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

Motion agreed to.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (POWERS AND PENALTIES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Resumed from 13 February (see p. 36).

Second Reading

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Innovation) (4.55 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

I would like to thank the Health, Environment and Agriculture Committee for its report on the Environmental Protection (Powers and Penalties) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I would also like to thank those who made submissions to the committee about the bill and those who appeared as witnesses as part of the committee's inquiry. I note the committee's report contained one recommendation that the bill be passed.

As I outlined in my introductory speech, this bill amends the Environmental Protection Act 1994 to ensure the powers and penalties in the act are adequate and that the tools available to prevent and respond to environmental harm are sufficiently contemporary to address current and future challenges. The amendments support improved environmental protections while also clarifying and refining processes to support users of the legislation including industry, local government and the environmental regulator.

This bill fulfils the government's commitment to implement the recommendations of the independent review of the Environmental Protection Act 1994 led by retired judge Richard Jones and barrister Susan Hedge. The independent review was initiated, in part, due to the significant odour nuisance issues that were being experienced by some residential issues such as Ipswich. However, the enhancements delivered through this bill will benefit all Queenslanders.

I would again like to acknowledge the strong and ongoing advocacy of the members for Bundamba, Jordan and Ipswich on the issue of odour nuisance on behalf of their communities. These members have listened, and continue to listen, to their communities. They bring their issues, concerns and need for solutions to the government's attention. Their strong advocacy for the people of Ipswich

is in stark contrast to the LNP who repealed the waste levy when they were in government, turning Queensland into a dumping ground for other state's waste. Not content with that, they then tried to repeal it again in 2019 via a motion moved in parliament by the member for Broadwater. We have not forgotten and the people of Ipswich have not forgotten either.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Order! Members to my left.

Ms LINARD: As you can see, they do not take the concerns and issues in Ipswich in respect to odour and nuisance seriously at all, but their local members and our members do. This bill is another way in which the Miles government is responding to the odour issues that are being experienced by residents in Swanbank, New Chum and the surrounding suburbs but it does not stop there. My department remains committed to using every tool in its regulatory toolbox to resolve the odour issues in these communities as soon as possible. I will keep working with the local members and communities and the waste industry to alleviate the concerns that are being experienced.

The bill includes amendments to clarify and refine the environmental policy principles that underpin the act. Greater prominence will be given to established environmental policy principles including polluter pays, reinforcing their explicit consideration and providing clarity and direction to government, industry and communities on the values that underpin the act and its administration. The committee noted stakeholder concerns about the polluter pays principle and specifically who is and who is not a polluter.

It is important to note that these principles are not new concepts; they are already considered in decision-making under the act. The polluter pays principle is also part of Queensland's existing commitment through the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Environment. I acknowledge the concerns from stakeholders in relation to challenges dealing with upstream wastes that are difficult to control, such as PFAS in sewage treatment plants. The general environmental duty defence still applies, and the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation will consider what steps are reasonably practicable for an operator to take in relation to managing those sources. There are also other mechanisms to deal with these issues, for example, through the End of Waste Code for biosolids. These existing mechanisms will not be affected by the polluter pays principle.

This bill includes amendments to introduce a new statutory notice, called an environmental enforcement order. This will replace existing provisions for environmental protection orders, direction notices and clean-up notices. It will allow for a single enforcement compliance notice to be used in a variety of circumstances, covering several issues. Streamlining this process will reduce regulatory complexity, enabling a more efficient and responsive compliance approach.

This bill will introduce a new duty to restore environmental harm. This duty introduces a proactive obligation, replacing the existing requirement to rehabilitate or restore in response to a compliance notice. Instead, where a person's actions cause environmental harm or contamination, they will be required, as far as reasonably practicable, to restore the environment to the condition it was in before the incident occurred. I acknowledge that some stakeholders raised concerns about the time frames for notifying landholders to come onto their land as part of the new combined environmental enforcement order. The current time frame for a clean-up notice is five business days and for an environmental protection order it is two business days. The new environmental enforcement order will require a time frame of two business days notice to enter third-party land. While this time frame is a minimum and is obviously subject to discussion with the landholder, I would expect most landholders who have had a contamination event on their property would want to ensure it is cleaned up as soon as possible by those responsible. The committee was also supportive of being able to take urgent action to respond to environmental harm incidents, noting existing safeguards in the act balanced this need with the rights of landholders.

I also acknowledge stakeholders' concerns about environmental enforcement orders being issued to environmental authority holders. The act currently does not include any limitation on issuing relevant orders or notices. The bill will simply provide clarity on existing powers to make clear that an environmental authority is not a barrier to issuing an order or notice when responding to an environmental harm incident where the harm is not clearly authorised or conditioned for under an environmental authority. The amendment maintains the status quo for most environmental authority holders, with impacts limited to operators causing unacceptable harm.

There has been concern by some stakeholders that the bill will provide the minister or the environmental regulator with an expanded ability to amend environmental authority conditions urgently. This is not the case. The power to amend environmental authority conditions has been present in the

act since it commenced and the bill does not amend these existing powers. What the bill does do is provide clarity on those existing powers under the act to make it clear that an environmental authority is not a barrier to issuing an order on notice when responding to an environmental harm incident.

This bill seeks to promote proactive action by operators by introducing an offence for not complying with the general environmental duty, complementing the new duty to restore. This duty has always been part of the act, which requires reasonable and practicable measures must be taken to prevent or minimise environmental harm. The amendment removes barriers to timely and effective regulatory responses by placing emphasis on prevention. While I acknowledge submitters' concerns about the defences available, the general environmental duty is a broad duty that has always applied to everyone, including environmental authority holders, and has been enforceable through statutory notices under the act. The bill does not propose to change the duty.

Additionally, the bill includes two exclusions from the offence to provide fairness to environmental authority holders and persons complying with a code of practice under the act. In particular, the exclusion applies when the environmental authority provides for the reasonably practicable measures as stated in the duty. This bill will refine the existing duty of a person to notify of environmental harm to include circumstances where the person 'ought reasonably to have become aware of the event' giving rise to the harm. This amendment is not intended to be onerous or require additional monitoring by those captured by the duty. The intent is that it will ensure that the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation is notified early, supporting a timely response to environmental harm incidents.

Improvements to evidentiary provisions relating to court proceedings will be made by expanding provisions currently limited to criminal proceedings to be available in civil proceedings, which will help reduce the time and cost associated with court processes in civil cases. Amendments to the definition of environmental nuisance will be made to clarify that environmental nuisance can be considered serious or material environmental harm. This enables a greater range of enforcement tools and stronger penalties for persistent issues, such as odour, that are more proportionate to the impact on the community. Strong environmental protections help to support the health, wellbeing and safety of our communities. Amendments to definitions in the act will place greater emphasis on the concepts of human health, wellbeing and safety, clarifying the act's role in protecting human health to the extent it is affected by the environment.


The amendments do not make fundamental policy changes. Rather, this bill aims to facilitate a more proactive approach to environmental risk management to prevent the community from being exposed to harm and remove barriers to timely and effective regulatory responses. This will help ensure that the environment and local communities are protected through contemporary, effective and efficient environmental regulation.

Stakeholder concerns about the readiness of updated guidance material to support the amendments in this bill are being addressed. The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation is drafting new and updated guidance material to ensure that information about amendments is available and that people and businesses understand their obligations. Priority is being given to developing guidance that will address new and modified obligations under the act. The department expects that initial guidance will be available at commencement of the legislation.

I would like to briefly address the member for Mirani's dissenting report. The member for Mirani's dissenting report stated there was a lack of consultation and no regulatory impact statement. As stated by the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation, there has been considerable public consultation undertaken. Consultation on the proposals that are reflected in the bill commenced in May 2023 with the government publishing the independent review report and its summary response. This was followed by a detailed consultation paper in September of last year on proposed amendments to be included in the bill. Consultation on the paper was open for eight weeks during which time the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation hosted six stakeholder information sessions. The department received submissions from a number of organisations, including the resources sector, environment groups, local government and other industry groups. All this feedback was considered in the finalisation of the bill with care taken through the final drafting to clarify the intent and purpose of the amendments.

My department undertook an assessment of the regulatory impacts of the proposals in the bill consistent with the Queensland government Better Regulation Policy. The regulatory proposals were assessed as either minor and machinery in nature or having no significant impacts. Consistent with the Better Regulation Policy, a summary impact analysis statement was prepared and has been published on the department's website.

The member for Mirani's dissenting report also stated that the general environmental duty offence, contained in clause 13 of the bill, would introduce an element of retrospectivity that is not in accordance with Queensland's fundamental legislative principles. I want to be clear that no part of this bill applies retrospectively. The committee considered issues of fundamental legislative principles in the bill and made no adverse findings. I commend the bill to the House.

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (5.08 pm): I rise to make to a contribution as not only the shadow environment minister but also the acting deputy chair of the committee, alongside the chair, the member for Thuringowa. I will get rolled from that position when the member for Southport comes back. I will very happily see him back in his rightful place. I am sure all members will be happy to know that he is recovering well from the stroke he suffered a couple of months ago. He was very lively at Anzac Day commemorations last week, going to two services in Southport. We wish him all the best and hopefully soon we will see him back on the committee, which he loves so much. I thank my fellow committee members, including the vast array of members who have served as substitutes to cover the member for Southport, and our hardworking committee secretariat staff as well.

From the outset, I will confirm that the Liberal National Party will not be opposing this legislation. The bill includes a lot of administrative changes to Queensland's environmental protection laws. I pay particular tribute to the people of Ipswich for their advocacy that, in great part, has led us here today. Tens of thousands of residents from across Goodna, Riverview, Raceview, Flinders View, Springfield, Ripley and other suburbs in that region shared stories about what they suffer through every day.

Ipswich is a proud city. Many of the foundations of our state were laid there. It is now home to some of Queensland's fastest growing communities. It is clear that Labor takes Ipswich for granted. The amount of time that it has taken to see these changes to our environmental laws come before the House is the greatest indicator of that. There is a better way and that better way started at the Ipswich West by-election two months ago when the newest member for Ipswich West was elected. He will do a great job. He is already doing a great job of holding Labor members to account and fighting for his city.

The stop-the-stink scandal, presided over by the government, is one of the greatest failures that the people of Ipswich have suffered through. Ipswich receives around half of Queensland's waste and around three-quarters of the waste produced by South-East Queensland. Those numbers alone mean a targeted approach with the right legislative framework is needed for the city. Overwhelmingly, the waste and recycling industry do the right thing. They are conscious of the environment and they are conscious of their neighbours in the communities that they operate next to. However, the department has long needed a better and more proactive regulatory framework to help them do their job to protect people and our environment.

One would think that that would have made it a priority for the government, that is, that it would be a priority to have the best environmental regulatory systems in place. One would think that it would have led to the most stringent possible monitoring of the operators to ensure that the community is not impacted by the waste industry. Instead, the government has taken far too long. They have left the Ipswich community to deal with the stench over many years, denying the seriousness of the issue and the experiences that people live with every day. At the introduction of the bill, five years after the issues were raised, it was almost as if the minister had finally come to realise the issue, saying, 'The odour issues being experienced by residents in Swanbank, New Chum and nearby suburbs are completely unacceptable.' It should not have taken nearly 30,000 complaints from the community for the minister to reach that conclusion. It should not have taken public meetings, rallies and countless media articles for this action to be taken.

I acknowledge the tireless work of Stop The Stink and IRATE. It has not been an easy road for everyone involved in those organisations. They often felt frustrated because of the seemingly fruitless amount of work that they were embarking on. On numerous occasions the LNP raised their issues and asked for the government to investigate the impacts on the health and welfare of the community but to no avail. Despite getting to the point of handing out canisters to schools and local residents to measure the potential pollution in the air, the government did not act quickly enough. The unsurprising result from that is fear spreading throughout the community. That is why transparency is so important. When you keep refusing to look into something, people will assume that you are hiding something. That is how it has often appeared in Ipswich. The Ipswich community deserves better. While there are some concerns with the bill, we hope that in not opposing it we will be supporting action to protect the environment and communities across our state.

The bill follows the *Independent review of the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Qld) report* by Richard Jones and Susan Hedge, which was in part initiated due to the significant odours in Ipswich.

The report was handed to the government, I believe, in September 2022. Again, it should not have taken years for the review to be launched and progress since then has been slow. The bill implements all of the outstanding recommendations from the review excluding the proposed ministerial powers, which would rightly require a RIS to be undertaken. It is a substantial piece of work.

It is worth noting that the review found the existing act does contain adequate powers and penalties to, in most instances, enforce environmental obligations and reduce the risk of environmental harm. They found two fundamental issues. They were that the concepts of human health, wellbeing and safety were only vaguely referenced in respect of fundamental concepts in the EPA, such as the definitions of 'environment' and 'environmental value', and the confining of 'material and serious environmental harm' to exclude nuisance. It is clear that those two issues restrict the department from taking the action they need to in areas such as Ipswich.

The case studies in the review found departmental enforcement was impacted by a number of factors, including indecisiveness from the current definition of 'environmental nuisance' and 'material and serious environmental harm', and whether the types of contaminants listed in the definition of 'nuisance' could ever constitute material or serious harm; situations where there may be several potential sources of airborne contaminants when it comes to both issuing notices and prosecutions; delays in achieving resolutions due to internal reviews, stays and court appeals, particularly where the operator continues to operate without the issue being resolved; difficulties in deciding an appropriate course of action to deal with emerging contaminants like PFAS, both in enforcements and prosecutions; and difficulties in identifying unlicensed operators and illegal dumpers. Again, that explains a lot of what has happened in Ipswich.

While many of the amendments to the bill are minor, we hope that they will make a substantial difference to the health and welfare of Queenslanders and our environment. The amendments to the EP Act before us will give prominence to the principles of the polluter pays, proportionality, the primacy of prevention and the precautionary principle—all of the Ps—to be applied in the administration of the EP Act. The bill clarifies that a failure to comply with a general environmental duty is an offence where the failure of the duty is likely to cause serious or material environmental harm. It ensures that, despite a matter having prescribed characteristics of environmental nuisance, it may constitute serious or material environmental harm. The bill introduces a new compliance tool, the environmental enforcement order, by combining existing powers and provisions under environmental protection orders, direction notices and clean-up notices, which will be removed and replaced by the environmental enforcement order. It clarifies that an environmental enforcement order can be issued to the holder of an environmental authority regardless of whether the environmental authority authorises or purportedly authorises the activity causing the harm. The bill clarifies that the administering authority may require a person to conduct or commission an environmental investigation about an activity or event causing harm regardless of whether that activity is authorised by the EA holder. The bill also introduces a standalone duty to restore the environment and other relatively administrative changes.

A number of concerns with the bill were raised by stakeholders that, I think, speak to the broader sentiment of mistrust with the state government and the way they engage with many holders of environmental authorities. The committee saw that across a number of provisions in the bill and in the concerns that submitters raised. Importantly, again particularly for the people of Ipswich, clauses 9 and 10 clarify that environmental harm that may constitute a nuisance at low levels may also constitute material and serious environmental harm if it meets the definitions of those terms. Environmental nuisance is currently included in the definition of environmental harm, so it is present but the issue is that it is excluded from the meaning of what constitutes material and serious environmental harm, which again has led to some of the difficulties in taking action in Ipswich.

The bill introduces environmental enforcement orders that will be used if the department believes an enforcement ground exists. The EEOs combine three existing notices. This is all about streamlining those notices into one. They are the environmental protection orders, the direction notices and the clean-up notices. The aim of this is to reduce the administrative burden and the indecisiveness that was found in some case studies. The explanatory notes clarify that an EEO may be issued to the holder of an EA in relation to activity, even if the person is a holder of the environmental authority that authorises the activity. They state—

The intent of this provision is to clarify that an environmental authority is not a barrier to issuing an EEO to address environmental harm or the risk of environmental harm where such harm is not clearly authorised or regulated by the environmental authority.

This provision raised more concerns, specifically that this would mean approved activities would be overridden. Some submitters said that this would create a sovereign risk. This was where the distrust

from stakeholders was clear. The department did clarify that where an operator is carrying out their activity lawfully in compliance with an EA, the administering authority would not issue an EEO. However, there were still clearly concerns about how this would be applied practically. The Queensland Law Society said to the committee—

I am law-abiding, I have a small business that creates dust, noise and blast overpressure—a change to these conditions could be quite traumatic and impact on my ability to operate my business.

...

If the condition is changed and I did not have a power to appeal it to the Planning and Environment Court, I am stuck with it. There are possibilities of review, but it may well be that the impacts on my business and the way I have performed in the past cannot be taken into account.

I think that is an important aspect of the bill that needs to be carefully considered, remembering that most regulatory legislation assumes there is a wrongdoer and they need to be punished. The vast majority of Queenslanders who have environmental authorities will be doing the right thing. They have a business, they set themselves up in terms of where plant and equipment is placed and where other things are put in place to ensure they comply with their environmental duty, and imagine that now this can be changed.

The benefit of this provision is to allow the department to take action where there is an activity that needs to be remedied. However, it does need to be carefully monitored to ensure EA holders are not penalised for the actions they have always been approved to do with no warning or without proper engagement and collaboration from the department.

I note as well the government has not chosen to implement recommendation 12 of the Jones and Hedge review at this stage that is proposed to give power to amend environmental authority conditions to the chief executive or to the minister to amend conditions where they consider the environmental impact of the activity is not being appropriately avoided, mitigated or managed, stating that it could have significant impacts and would rightly need to be part of a more fulsome process, including a RIS. I wholeheartedly agree with that. They would be extraordinary powers that must be properly assessed. A number of stakeholders have said the department essentially achieves this by stealth already and that it would be more appropriate for the RIS to be completed. The departmental briefing to the committee provided that following further consideration the bill includes alternative, low-impact proposals to address the intent of the recommendation in the review. Essentially there are smaller amendments made which allow for environmental investigations or an EEO to be issued in particular situations which, under existing legislation, allows for the administering authority to impose compulsory changes to existing conditions. It does mean that environmental authorities can be changed, but that is currently the case on various grounds. The Queensland Resources Council did raise concerns with this, submitting—

The way the bill achieves this is by a two-step process rather than one step as in the previous version. The first step is that at three points in the bill—clauses 23, 24 and 28—the department can impose an order or investigation notice even if the person is the holder of an environmental authority that authorises or purportedly authorises the activity. The second step is that, once the notice or order has been issued, there are already existing powers available under section 215(2)(i) of the act for the department to change conditions, just because of the fact that there has been an investigation notice. If the department wants to change the wording of a condition because it is thought it is not modern enough then, even if the company is complying with conditions and is not causing unacceptable environmental harm, all the department has to do is issue an environmental investigation notice,

In the department's response to submissions, which we received last week, they repeated the same line throughout the document that where an operator is carrying out their activity lawfully and in compliance with an EA which clearly provides for the management of the levels and type of environmental harm occurring, the administering authority would not issue a notice in response to such harm, but what they say there they would do is roughly the opposite of what the bill itself says, for example, at clause 23. Again, I would emphasise trust is clearly an issue with these stakeholders. The operations of this government in dealing with environmental authority holders has given them no faith that the state government will act fairly and in a collaborative way. The department did submit to the committee that the power to amend EA conditions has been present in the act since commencement and the bill does not amend these existing powers, but it does clarify those existing powers under the act to make it clear that an environmental authority is not a barrier to issuing an order or notice when responding to an environmental harm incident. They further clarified through the committee process, which did give me some comfort but clearly not other stakeholders, that in the last five years under these existing powers they have only amended 17 environmental authorities of the more than 9,000 currently in place, and 12 of those were by agreement with the operator. Nonetheless, the minister must give assurances that the department will work in good faith as there are clearly concerns from across various sectors.

The bill also establishes an offence for contravening the general environmental duty which is aimed at preventing harm through deterrence. The new GED offence is compared to the duty which has long existed. There was also concern this provision may have unintended consequences of retrospectively impacting the development entitlements of existing approval holders, but again the department clarified that the amendments will not be applicable retrospectively to a contravention of the duty which has already occurred, rather prospectively to a contravention that occurs after the bill's commencement.

The polluter pays principle is welcome. What will matter is how it works practically. It is actually called the principle of improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms. It is not retrospective. The general principle has been there for a long time and this is again more about clarifying how it is applied practically. The department responded to a number of stakeholders on this issue stating—

Increasing the prominence of these principles is not an introduction of new concepts considered in decision-making under the EP Act. Rather, the Bill presents a clarification, reinforcement and elevation of the proactive approach to the prevention of environmental harm which is the core objective of the department.


One of the key questions that came out of the committee process was around the definition of polluter. It was clear from the issues raised that there are ongoing concerns in industry surrounding this. Waste Recycling Industry Queensland and the Queensland Water Directorate raised issue with who the real polluter is and how the department will be able to identify that polluter when the polluted material could end up in another property or system. I have had many discussions with WRIQ about how they have no control over what is put into their system. They are already left with the difficulty of managing that polluted material. Once the waste is picked up from the kerbside or a commercial property they cannot turn it away and it is very difficult to track where a particular pollutant is coming from. Whatever is put into the system upstream leads to their system downstream and they will inevitably get the blame. That is how they feel.

I have also heard for some time now the department's unrealistic expectations on some of these operators when it comes to particular pollutants. The one that I constantly get feedback on is PFAS. Until you can remove PFAS from all products upstream it is going to find its way into waste products. There is simply no way around that for waste operators. They need support to get the best possible environmental outcomes and to be able to practically process this waste in a realistic way. It cannot be the case that they are further penalised for receiving material that they have no ability to refuse. That is the premise underlying a lot of their concerns. While it is nice to make this a principle, colloquially known as polluter pays, more clarity is needed as to what exactly this will mean on the ground and to ensure the right people are penalised for their unacceptable behaviour.

I note the concerns raised around the powers of entry that the bill provides. This mirrors section 363AF and actions over environmental protection orders. It is important to remember that this is about accessing third-party land. For example, if someone pollutes their neighbour's property, it allows access to that land to clean up the pollution. The department provided the example of truck rollovers, which often impact road and rail corridors. Often in those situations the pollution is cleaned up sooner by agreement and it makes sense that the landholder would want their land to be cleaned up. This will replace the original clean-up notices that stipulated five days notice. Environmental protection orders stipulated two days notice. Given the urgent circumstances that this change seeks to address, it makes sense to go for the lower time period of two days. I emphasise that overwhelmingly matters should be agreed to rather than through the use of these powers.

To conclude, the communication of these laws and engagement with key sectors across our state will be important to ensure people know what these changes will require of them well ahead of time. Guidance materials will be essential. I am pleased to hear that these are being put together already, particularly when it comes to the duty to restore. Our hope is that this bill will provide better tools around nuisance issues. Through the extension of environmental value to include health and wellbeing, the bill will help ensure residents are heard, which for far too long is exactly what the people of Ipswich have been calling out for. It is imperative that the government works with businesses and EA holders.

As I have said, it is telling from the submissions how little trust there is, although certainly this has not been as controversial as the previous EPOLA bill where we saw the disgraceful process from the government of basically forcing people to sign NDAs in order to provide feedback. It has not been anything like that, but it still shows how little trust there is in this government acting appropriately and collaboratively with the people who know their sectors best. That comes down to the minister. That trust has been eroding for many years now under successive ministers of this decade-old Labor government.

 **Mr HARPER** (Thuringowa—ALP) (5.32 pm): I rise to speak on the Environmental Protection (Powers and Penalties) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. In following the member for Bonney, I note that, while the opposition made no statement of reservation and will not oppose the bill, he just had to have a cheap shot at the end of his contribution. What I can say to the member for Bonney is that this bill might actually help you—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Through the chair, please.

Mr HARPER: This bill might help the Liberal National Party because it makes some changes around nuisance issues and they have a fair bit there. The bill contains better management principles that they can now apply.

Government members interjected.

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

Mr HARPER: I thank them for agreeing to pass the bill; that is great. The objectives of this bill are to ensure that powers and penalties in the Environmental Protection Act 1994 are contemporary and fit for purpose while facilitating a more proactive approach to environmental risk management with enhanced regulatory responses to manage and restore environmental harm that has occurred. The bill aims to achieve this by clarifying and refining environmental policy principles; rationalising statutory notices to ensure compliance with authorities, duties and obligations; and to respond to environmental harm events. It also aims to establish a new duty to restore the environment and associated existing duties or obligations and offences, and to improve evidentiary provisions related to court proceedings.

Submitter support of various provisions in the bill was mixed. Some submitters were concerned about the practical implications of the proposed inclusion of principles of environmental protection that would be applied to the general administration of the act, particularly with respect to defining 'polluter'. Hopefully, I will get to that a little later in relation to the polluter pays principle.

Issues were raised in regard to the combined environmental enforcement orders, EEOs, that the bill introduces to replace the existing environmental protection orders, direction notices and clean-up notices, and the potential for this new notice to be issued to environmental authority holders complying with conditions of an environmental authority or to require changes to environmental authority conditions. Submitters were also concerned about the time frame to notify landholders of entry to their land as part of the new EEO, but I believe the department gave a very good response. If there is a spill on a landholder's property, action needs to be taken urgently to clean that up as quickly as possible, so I think the two days is completely appropriate.

The bill introduces a proactive duty to restore the environment, which was supported by the majority of submitters. However, submitters were concerned about amendments to the duty to notify of an event causing environmental harm, particularly with the insertion of the words 'ought reasonably to have become aware of the event'.

I will touch on a couple of things that the committee picked up on during its examination of the bill. An interesting one is in regards to upstream pollution, particularly around PFAS. I did not know, but we were informed by the department that a lot of that comes from everyday—

Mr Perrett: Make-up.

Mr HARPER: Yes, it was make-up; the member is right. Make-up, clothing and all of those things affect pollution. I note that councils are responsible for cleaning up deliberate spills and that can come at a significant cost. I commend them because often they act very quickly to do that and the department gives them the supports that they need. In terms of some of the commentary of the member for Bonney, I believe the department is doing some very good work in informing and working with councils to do those clean-ups in a timely manner.

The committee received a number of submissions. Amendments to the Environmental Protection Act proposed by the bill include the three Ps, as the member for Bonney said—the polluter pays principle, the principle of primacy of prevention and the precautionary principle—as the environmental policy principles to be applied to the general administration of the Environmental Protection Act. It also incorporates human health, wellbeing and safety into the Environmental Protection Act definition of 'environment' and 'environmental value'. The bill provides that environmental nuisance—for example, unreasonable interference from the release of aerosols, fumes, light, noise, odour, particles or smoke—will no longer be precluded from being material or serious environmental harm.

The bill proposes amendments to introduce a new compliance tool to deal with environmental harm events by replacing environmental protection orders, direction notices and clean-up notices with

a new single environmental enforcement order, or EEO, which combines the existing powers and scope available under the current notices. I think that truncates or reduces a lot of the concerns around regulatory issues raised by some submitters. The bill also introduces a standalone duty to restore the environment. It requires that, if a person permits or causes contamination that results in environmental harm, they must as far as reasonably practical restore the environment to the condition it was in before the harm occurred.

We acknowledge submitter suggestions for further clarity in the bill about who is and who is not a polluter for the purposes of the polluter pays principle. We also perceived this to be an intractable definitional issue from our review of environmental legislation in other Australian jurisdictions, which revealed no definition of polluter that could provide a comparative reference. We will leave it to finer legal minds than ours to settle that definitional issue. In the meantime, to allay submitter concerns, we urge the department to ensure sufficient guidance exists for how the polluter pays. Environmental principles will continue to be applied in the general administration of the Environmental Protection Act.

The last thing I wanted to note was the local government clean-up. The committee made a comment that I wanted to get on the record. The report states—

The costs reported by local government of responding to and cleaning up pollution incidents, particularly where immediate action is needed to reduce harm to the environment and the polluter cannot or will not do the necessary work, are significant.

Examples were provided by some councils on some spills. The report continues—

While we note the department's advice that increasing the tools available to local governments was out of scope of the Review and that the Bill does not change the existing powers granted to local governments, the committee urges future work with co-regulators on the issue of cost recovery and consideration of whether to legislate expanded grounds for local government to issue notices is worthwhile.

That was something that came up from local government towards the end of the committee's work. I wanted to explore that a little further.

In closing, I thank my fellow committee members and the secretariat for producing the report. We made one recommendation to pass the bill. These are sensible changes. I commend the bill to the House.



Ms BOLTON (Noosa—Ind) (5.40 pm): The Environmental Protection (Powers and Penalties) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 amends several acts to implement the government's response to the 2022 independent review of environmental protection enforcement and compliance undertaken by retired judge Richard Jones and barrister Susan Hedge.

As you know, my community respect, and are passionate about, the environment. That is reflected in its Biosphere Reserve status and the efforts over decades to protect its unique assets. Yet over the last three to four years we have seen a catastrophic increase in dust, noise, damage to infrastructure and wildlife, and danger to road users and residents through an inappropriate volume of heavy haulage through our Noosa villages with no action through our environmental protection system to mitigate this. This is an example of where an environmental authority, or EA, is issued for small development that allows for an unacceptable expansion if it is the same type of development without triggering a review of the EA in any form. This is not the way to manage developments and permits or the environment and needs to change.

An EA should deal with all impacts, not just those inside the permit area, and include wildlife carnage, social and economic impacts on residents, and the mental and physical health of communities. We have been advocating for improved environmental regulation including for an independent environment protection authority since 2021, and we welcomed the independent review and its recommendations. I have to say that we were thrilled. We thought we can see a way forward. We now have this bill—I acknowledge there have been many good things in the bill—which implements the recommendations. It had general support from stakeholders, although few environmental agencies made submissions which is disappointing given the significance of this bill.

I want to touch on three areas of relevance to mitigate the environmental catastrophe being experienced in the Noosa electorate through not only a flawed environmental authority but also a quarry management plan. The first was the recommendation to include the concept of 'human health, safety and wellbeing' in the definitions of 'environment' and 'environmental value' that are core to the act. The bill fully implements this and we welcome that.

The second recommendation was that consideration should be given to creating an offence for breaching the general environmental duty, or GED. The GED provides a catch-all power to address adverse environmental impacts for when all else fails. In its current form there are no penalties attached

to the GED, making it toothless. Creating an offence for the GED will give it credibility and make it much more effective. However, the bill potentially waters down the GED as a catch-all provision by limiting the offence associated with it, meaning that it does not apply in certain situations. An example is when actions are authorised by an environmental authority—remember, we already have a flawed one—that contains reasonably practical measures.


By exempting specific instruments, the universality of the GED is broken and opens it up for endless litigation of what is authorised in a court system that is already horrendously slow at making determinations, as is being experienced by my community. The department responded that the GED is not changing, so it is not watered down. However, this is missing the point. If it is not enforceable because there are no penalties, it does not really matter that there was a GED beforehand. It is the existence of the new penalties and how they work that gives it the ability to right some serious wrongs.

The third recommendation was to give the chief executive the power to amend environmental authorities when otherwise environmental impacts are not being addressed. That this has not been adopted in full is deeply concerning. With historical EAs granted decades earlier, the size, scale, nature and impact of the activity can change dramatically over time which can devastate communities. Hence, it is vital that a mechanism be available to amend that authority when that occurs.

Even though the bill contains two small technical amendments to make amendments to the EAs in certain circumstances, neither represents an implementation of the review's recommendation or even the principle of the recommendation. The department simply responded that it was seeking to balance environmental protections with impacts on stakeholders. Given the experience of my own community, and no doubt many others across the state, the so-called 'balance' is tilted enormously away from Queenslanders who must ensure the trauma of being exploited by environmental, emotional and economic destruction with no power to do anything about it. This is unacceptable in all ways.

The Environment and Social Governance Research Group at QUT submitted there remains a significant need for compliance mechanisms including a dedicated independent body to monitor and enforce the enforcement mechanisms within the act. Having advocated for an independent environmental protection authority ever since the disaster hit Noosa, I continue to ask when this will be realised, as consultation was completed in July 2022. Every other state in Australia has an EPA, and it is time Queensland had one.

Normally I would support a bill such as this. However, I am really struggling given that the government has not adopted the vital recommendation regarding the chief executive power to amend those historical authorities in dire situations. I ask the minister to please reconsider this serious failing to protect our environment and our people.

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.47 pm): I rise to support the Environmental Protection (Powers and Penalties) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 introduced into the Queensland parliament on 13 February 2024 and referred to the former Health and Environment Committee. The committee made just one recommendation that the bill be passed.

The objective of this bill is to ensure that powers and penalties in the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the EP Act, are contemporary and fit for purpose. It demonstrates our government's commitment to protect the community as well as Queensland's natural environment. It achieves this by ensuring the powers and penalties available to regulators are contemporary, effective and responsive and by removing impediments to their efficient use.


The bill will support regulators to be responsive and proactive to changes in industry practices and community expectations. The amendments in this bill will facilitate a different approach to environmental risk management to prevent the community from being exposed to harm. This bill removes existing barriers to timely and effective regulatory responses to manage and restore environmental harm that has occurred. It recognises that the goal of environmental protection is linked to safeguarding the health and wellbeing of our communities in Queensland.

The changing residential landscape is creating complexities for industries in seeking that balance between the co-existence of housing and industrial areas. Effective regulation is critical to minimise and prevent harm to the community and environment from the increased risks posed by dust, odour and noise. This bill will implement the government's response to the 2022 independent review undertaken by retired judge Richard Jones and barrister Susan Hedge.

The review, which looked into powers and penalties under the Environmental Protection Act, was initiated in part due to significant odour nuisance issues that have arisen in some Queensland communities, some of which are located very close to my electorate of Mount Ommaney. The review

considered whether the tools available under the Environmental Protection Act—in particular, when there is an environmental nuisance complaint or event—are sufficient considering current and future demands. The review found that the EP Act is generally adequate in terms of the powers and penalties available to enforce environmental obligations and reduce the risk of environmental harm. However, the reviewers did identify opportunities where these powers could be enhanced.

This bill will improve existing tools and regulatory processes, allowing for firmer and faster action against polluters to ensure that we are better protecting both the environment and the community's health and wellbeing. This bill will promote proactive action to prevent environmental harm. It will introduce an offence for contravening the existing general environmental duty. The bill also introduces a new duty to restore where a person's actions can cause harm or environmental contamination. I have heard it said by previous speakers that this bill is largely somewhat administrative in nature; nonetheless, it is a great bill and I commend it to the House.

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (5.50 pm): I rise to speak on the Environmental Protection (Powers and Penalties) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The primary objective of this bill is to enact recommendations from the 2022 Jones and Hedge report titled *Independent review of the Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Qld) report: independent review into the adequacy of existing powers and penalties*. It will achieve this through several measures, including principles to determine who and how to pay; offences; environmental nuisances such as the release of aerosols, fumes, light, noise, odour, particles or smoke; compliance; environmental orders; environmental investigations; restoration; transitional arrangements; notification responsibilities; evidence in legal proceedings; confidentiality of information; and language changes to ensure clarity regarding the term 'reasonableness' and to meet cultural requirements.

While this bill addresses recommendations in the Jones and Hedge report, many amendments respond to ongoing waste issues in Ipswich. Of course those who harm our environment must be brought to account. Too often the government cynically treats environmental issues as nothing more than an excuse for photo opportunities, self-congratulations and often uses them to cover bureaucratic overreach. On many fronts it fails to deliver on promises, is lacklustre in conducting any meaningful consultation, ignores concerns and dismisses public outcry when controversial issues are raised.

Across the board—it does not matter what the legislation is—the issue, the concern, the constant refrain is that this government fails to conduct meaningful consultation. This bill is no different. Yet again stakeholders raised concerns about the constant lack of consultation as well as the ability to amend existing conditions, potential retrospectively and powers of entry. The Queensland Law Society raised concerns about overreach and said that changes may have the practical effect of operating retrospectively where holders of authorities may not be able to rely on the existing authority to prove a defence in the bill.

Concerns about potential overreach, negative and harsh treatment, the inability or lack of interest to look to any new approaches and the resultant fear of interactions have all led to negative relations with the government. The feedback from stakeholders was a demonstration of the lack of trust in this government. It is not surprising given the way this government has interacted with the industry and landholders.

Pork producers, canegrowers and lot feeders all raised concerns. Primary producers and farmers are true environmentalists and responsible custodians of the land. It always makes good sense for them to sustainably manage their land. It is in their interests because the best managers and custodians are the profitable ones. Wherever I travel in the state, it is clear that farmers and primary producers take seriously their responsibility as custodians of the land, ecosystems, biodiversity and animal welfare. They know they must care for their land and livestock now and for future generations. Land is one of their primary assets.

Australian Pork is the peak body for Australian pork producers. During the committee hearing I asked about the potential impact of this bill on agriculture and farming and important food production areas. Margo Andrae, CEO of APL, said—

... we often find that we are already doing a lot of things on-farm that are going above and beyond some of the regulations, guidelines and science-based research that we have been doing for decades.

Sometimes we find that the regulations (and) legislation can halt us doing things, particularly around manure and supply chains and the work that has (already) been done.

In view of this, it makes sense that in their submission APL said—

... in order to support long-term investment in on-farm innovations, farmers need confidence they are working within clear and consistent parameters.

Investment in innovations such as biogas are capital intensive, and the cost benefit analysis can easily be skewed if the regulatory environment is inconsistent.

It is crucial that the guidelines developed to provide advice on the new duties and powers support consistent implementation of the requirements across agriculture.

Pork producers have significant concerns about the lack of national coordination across the environmental regulatory environment. APL submitted that this is another factor in creating considerable challenges for the pork industry and creates inequity and disincentives for investment.

The Australian Lot Feeders' Association also raised this with both organisations, saying the harmonisation of Australia's environmental laws and regulatory frameworks should be considered a priority. They requested that consideration be given as to how the proposed law aligns with those in other states.

Queensland Cane, Agriculture & Renewables also raised several concerns about this bill. QCAR represents sugarcane farmers primarily in the Herbert, Burdekin and Central Queensland regions of Proserpine, Mackay and Sarina. It represents a large collective of approximately 20 per cent of Queensland's sugarcane farmers and 15 per cent of Australia's total sugarcane production. QCAR raised issues, including potential overlaps and regulatory duplication with other legislation; changes could restrict the use of sound deterrent measures enforced by Biosecurity Queensland; the practicalities of determining how to quantify nuisances in financial terms; lack of specificity; wideranging duty and restoration powers; the potential for overreporting; confusion about when reporting should occur; and increased burdens on canefarmers. Chief executive officer Panikos Spyrou told the committee that QCAR is concerned about subjective, unclear and ambiguous wording. He said that the bill has not—

... reflected a full and proper assessment of adequacy of penalties, that supporting documentation was insufficient and inadequate, to enable a proper assessment about potential impacts and to identify any inadvertent or unintended consequences.

The government loves to praise itself about its environmental credentials. Those credentials are often based on granting excessive powers to bureaucracy; lack practicality; often have little scientific basis; are rushed; impose exorbitant fines; impinge on freehold property rights; and devalue and demonise landholders and agricultural industries.


Most people want to protect the environment. Caring and legislating for the environment cannot be in silos. Farmers, landholders and producers have to both grow food and produce as well as look after the environment. New regulations, legislation, obligations and changes in the sector must be given honest, open, transparent and meaningful consultation. They should be workable and practical. They should not be an excuse for overreach. Continually failing to consult and dismissing practical solutions will significantly undermine the growth of our agricultural sector and reduce the economic viability of those industries. Queensland cannot afford this.

I thank the committee. I was one of the substitute members for a short period and obviously the deputy. More importantly, I acknowledge Rob Molhoek's involvement with that committee over time. Obviously he is recovering. He missed this opportunity, but it gave me the chance to participate during that bill and ask relevant questions. I do not oppose the bill.

Debate, on motion of Mr Perrett, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Mount Crosby Bridge, Flood Immunity

 **Mr ZANOW** (Ipswich West—LNP) (6.00 pm): I rise today to shine a spotlight on the new Mount Crosby bridge spanning the Brisbane River at Mount Crosby. This bridge was originally slated to open in 2018; however, it opened in 2024—six years late. Members on this side of the House believe that projects should be delivered on time and on budget.

The new Mount Crosby vehicle bridge has been built to a flood immunity level of about 3,000 cubic metres per second, representing a one-in-20 year flood immunity. At the start of the 2022 flood event, the Wivenhoe Dam level was well below the operational full storage level and quickly rose to a peak lake level of RL 74.61. This level is very close to the RL 75 level which triggers the requirement for emergency releases—we got very, very close to a 2011 event.


To return the lake level back to an operational full storage level, a total of 1,970,000 megalitres was released from Wivenhoe. The aggregate flows at Mount Crosby exceeded 3,000 cubic metres per second from 26 February to 4 March—around six days of inundation. This is similar to the 2011 event, where it would have been inundated for a period of seven days.

We all know that, once a bridge is inundated, it needs to be inspected post-flood event, further increasing the time the bridge is not used. Residents rely on the critical connectivity that this bridge gives during flood events between Ipswich West and Moggill. There are thousands of passes across this bridge during flood times, but it has been built at only a one-in-20 year flood level instead of a one-in-100 year flood level. This is a good example of building infrastructure which is not fit for purpose. Furthermore, the bridge's immunity level should have been built to the one-in-100 year flood level.

At this point, I must compliment Seqwater Flood Operations engineers for doing an exceptional job managing the 2022 event. I also must compliment the recently retired chairman of the Mid Brisbane Irrigators association, Mr Tom Wilkinson, who, for many years, led a small team and liaised with Seqwater on many issues, including revising the manual from version 7 right through to the current version 17.

The careful management of Wivenhoe and Somerset Dam infrastructure is critical to our communities. Whilst I welcome the investment in new infrastructure within the Ipswich West electorate right over to the Moggill electorate, we need to ensure that the new infrastructure is fit for purpose. I request the minister consult with the community before building important infrastructure like this in the future.

Logan Electorate, Road Upgrades

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.03 pm): I want to let Jimboomba residents know that the second stage of the Jimboomba to South Street project is now under tender and that construction will soon be underway. The project includes upgrading the Johanna Street intersection, including a left turn at Tamborine Street; widening the highway to four lanes, including the new southbound-only bridge over the old railway culvert; and, improving the South Street intersection. It is a big project and we are continuing to back it. The minister is here and he is a big backer of the project. We are backing it despite the fact that there have been big increases in the cost of steel, concrete and bitumen.

Strangely, earlier this week, an LNP member of the House, who really should know better, seemed to forget that construction started on the first part of this project to build the pedestrian underpass in 2022. It includes the concrete disability accessible paths and the improved safer pedestrian crossing at Cusack Lane. It seems like the member for Scenic Rim—because he asked who that was—had no idea that that project was completed. That is how out of touch he is with the first stage of the project, which actually happened in 2022. The member for Scenic Rim was also silent when the LNP cut over \$160 million in funding from the Mount Lindesay Highway over seven years. In fact, there was nothing done by the LNP during their time in government between Brisbane and Jimboomba. There was absolutely nothing.

In fact, when looking at the 2012 cuts, I actually found a new cut—and the member for Scenic Rim should listen. In 2015, the four lanes between Green Road and Granger Road ended with a collection of signs and posts strewn across the road, forcing drivers to merge. Now I am able to table a press release that shows that this project was actually cut because the LNP was supposed to take it through to Granger Road.

Tabled paper: Media release, dated 11 April 2007, from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Hon. Paul Lucas, titled 'Bids to double My Lindesay Highway'.

The member for Scenic Rim was absolutely silent. When I was elected in 2015, I was horrified by the abrupt merge and we had to start a new project to complete it called the Rosia Road to Granger Road project. We continued the upgrade from Granger Road all the way through to Chambers Flat Road.

Mr Krause interjected.


Mr POWER: The member for Scenic Rim says that that is only in Logan, but so many of his residents go through it. There is more to do and I am always speaking to the main roads minister about the future projects on the Mount Lindesay, Camp Cable and Waterford Tamborine roads.

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr POWER: I note the member for Scenic Rim is again saying that, if there are any increases, he will cut these projects, just like they cut the project through to Granger Road back in 2012, and he

is silent. The contrast is very clear—this government has a strong commitment to investing in the Mount Lindesay Highway and other Logan main roads but the LNP has a record of over \$160 million in cuts, including abruptly shutting down projects like Rosia Road, and building nothing on the Mount Lindesay between Brisbane and Jimboomba.

Arundel Hills Redevelopment


 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (6.06 pm): Tonight, I urge the planning minister to not going ahead with the proposed call-in of the Arundel Hills redevelopment. My community fought for over a year to see the Gold Coast council comprehensively and unanimously reject the proposal in January. Almost 1,200 locals, which is pretty much every person who lives next to this green space, and many from further afield wrote in to object to this proposal. Only around 100 were in favour, almost all of which were in template or bulk submission format. Every single councillor voted against it because it was a bad proposal which set a bad precedent for a city which does not have enough sport and recreation land.

People have been devastated to find out a far greater threat is now before us through the extraordinary powers of a ministerial call-in. This site is 67 hectares of freehold sport and recreation zoned land. Over the decades since Arundel was built as a central Gold Coast suburb, it has become a vital environmental corridor amongst the dense housing of my area. The electorate I represent is geographically small—just 29 square kilometres. We are already punching well above our weight in terms of housing density. If the minister wants to see more infrastructure put in, here are some examples of what is happening.

Already we have a major development planned for Harbour Shores across from Harbour Town, with over 2,000 dwellings that will house around 5,000 people. That is just the first stage. Southport Sharks are looking at putting in residential towers on their car park as well as another multi-storey car park as part of their master plan. There is a state owned block of land in the Health and Knowledge Precinct, which is zoned residential. Twelve months ago, I called for that to be fast-tracked for health worker housing but we are still waiting to see a proposal be locked in. Up the road at the other golf course in my electorate, we have towers being built at Parkwood, with 200 units and even a surf park. Locals were broadly supportive of that because it kept the overwhelming majority of the site for sport and recreation.

Labor have also failed to live up to their direct housing obligation to build social housing. In 2018, there were 4,974 social housing properties on the Gold Coast. The most recent data—last year—showed there were just 5,138. That is an increase of just 191 properties in half a decade in our state's second largest city, which is experiencing some of the fastest population growth in the nation. My message is: leave Arundel alone. This is the move of a desperate, decade-old government trying to do anything they can to look like they are fixing a housing crisis they created. I urge everyone in my community to put in a submission so the state Labor government know that we do not want this bad development to be called in.

Caboolture PCYC


 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Community Safety) (6.09 pm): With the Miles government's Community Safety Plan for Queensland, we are continuing to invest in the front line but also in intervention and prevention services. I want to talk about a couple of intervention and prevention investments that are being made in the Caboolture region. I am very proud and pleased to see another milestone in the redevelopment of the Caboolture PCYC. This is a significant investment in community safety and is also an opportunity for young people in the Morayfield state electorate.

It has been a long march though. It has taken a number of years to get to this point. We first had to secure funding from three levels of government to secure the land. I want to particularly acknowledge the Albanese Labor government which has contributed \$10 million towards this project. One reason it has taken so long to get this project underway is the previous coalition government did not put any money into this project. They made big noises about it but they did not actually pay any money towards the project. It took an Albanese Labor federal government to get the money delivered for this project.

In total it is a \$17.5 million new PCYC for Caboolture. It is built on land next to the Caboolture Police Station right in the middle of town, providing great connections for young people and great partnership opportunities for the Queensland Police Service. The project will be a massive facility with space for community activities, events, group fitness and gym classes, gymnastic events, boxing and basketball, with accessible and inclusive access and activities for all members of the community.

The first sod has been turned. I was very pleased to join the mayor and the federal minister alongside the CEO of PCYC Queensland, Phil Schultz, last month to turn the sod on this brand new facility for the Caboolture region. Construction will probably take about 12 months and it will support 103 jobs. That puts into context the significance and the scale of this project. It also follows the investment that we are supporting with PCYC Queensland's transition to their back-to-basics PCYC model, which is seeing more and more after-hours activities available for young people in the community. After-hours boxing is back. After-hours basketball is back. There is midnight basketball and activities in the community. I am very pleased to see that the Caboolture PCYC supports after-hours drop-ins at Dickson Park, Morayfield, on Thursday nights, which is tonight. They have also opened up opportunities on Wednesday nights at the PCYC itself. They are bringing in boxing every second Saturday.

Toowoomba Hospital


 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (6.12 pm): I want to talk about health services in Toowoomba. Toowoomba's biggest employer is the health sector. We have a great program running at USQ in conjunction with UQ that will keep doctors in Toowoomba. They will do all of their work in hospitals as they go through their education, and then they will be placed in our region in Toowoomba and the Western Downs. It is a great program. I have also visited the TAFE where we have some great training programs for nursing to make sure we have a good workforce there.

The crown jewel in all of this should be the Toowoomba university hospital. There will be a sod turning shortly, and it is good that we are upgrading the facilities there because they are sadly needed. It is a little overdue. It is a smaller budget than we had originally hoped for. I am concerned to ensure that, as we go forward in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs, we have services that meet the standards that are required. These are level 5 services, particularly in coronary heart disease, dementia including Alzheimer's, stroke, lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. These are the biggest killers for us in our community. We need to make sure we have the facilities to treat these things at the highest standard, particularly stroke and neuro injuries.

Transporting people down to Brisbane does two things. Firstly, it means they say, 'We need more facilities in Brisbane because we have all these people coming in.' Secondly, it means the people in Toowoomba who have serious incidents, whether they be natural or caused through an accident, do not get the care they need quick enough. We need to make sure that the hospital we are building is a university hospital. There are opportunities there for research facilities to be built. We need to make sure we have the number of beds that are required. Most importantly, we need to make sure we have services to the appropriate standard so we do not have to transfer country people to Brisbane all the time. They would rather be looked after closer to their community. Not only will that save lives when someone needs critical care, but patients will be more comfortable and their families will be able to visit.

This is a great opportunity. It is a massive campus, with 180 acres. There are ongoing opportunities not just with the new hospital but with the facility and the site to be expanded in the future. Any government must look at those opportunities and provide the services and standards to meet the health needs for the people of Toowoomba, the Darling Downs and Western Queensland.

Cost of Living, Hervey Bay


 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (6.15 pm): I rise to talk about the very exciting news that was announced earlier today for the people of Hervey Bay. In my adjournment debate speech I was going to speak about something else, but I just cannot go past today's announcement. It was the most brilliant announcement for the people of Hervey Bay and for Queensland generally.

Today's power announcement will have an immediate impact from 1 July. Every Hervey Bay household will be receiving a \$1,000 rebate off their bills. If you are a concession card holder in Hervey Bay, you will not only receive the \$1,000 rebate; you will still receive the state government subsidy of \$372 as well. Concession holders in Hervey Bay, as of 1 July, will get a total rebate of \$1,372 off their power bills, and that is for every household. This is great news for people struggling with the cost of living and everyday expenses. They will receive at least another \$1,000 rebate off their power next year. For the average household, this \$1,000 power rebate, or \$1,372 for concession holders, will mean they will not pay a cent on their next quarterly energy bill after 1 July. This has only come about because the Miles government backs our progressive coal royalties which gives back to each and every household in Hervey Bay their just deserts because we own the coal that big mining companies dig out of the ground.

This comes with a warning. Make no mistake: if the people of Hervey Bay elect an LNP government at the next state election, none of these cost-of-living measures will be coming back to them in the future under an LNP government. The LNP have already indicated through the Leader of the Opposition's silence that progressive coal royalties will be axed and the money that belongs to every Hervey Bay household will be returned to the big coal companies, because that is what the LNP does. The LNP are only here to profit their big business mates over the mums and dads of Hervey Bay. When every cent counts, it is only Labor and the Miles government that will deliver cheap power and real cost-of-living relief to all Queenslanders. Do not trust the LNP. They will do everything in their power to return coal royalties back to their big business donors.

Putting this into context, when you include this financial year and next financial year, households in Hervey Bay will have received a combined total of \$1,700 off their power bills. For concession holders and pensioners—the most vulnerable in our community—this will come to a grand total of \$2,444 off their power bills over the last financial year and the coming financial year. This is what Labor governments do, whereas an LNP government will do nothing more than return your power back to big business and make you pay more for your power. What we do in Labor is free TAFE and free kindy; what we know they do over there is cut, sell and sack.

Indooroopilly State High School

 **Mr BERKMAN** (Maiwar—Grn) (6.18 pm): I have a pretty simple request here tonight. I am asking the state government to commit to funding new buildings at Indooroopilly State High School in the budget this June. A little over a year ago, I stood up right here and warned about the overcrowding at Indro High. I urged the government to commit to more funding in the state budget. I told them that strictly enforcing the catchment would not be enough and that we needed more buildings to meet the current demand, let alone the future enrolments.


I was asking them to tackle the problem before it reached true crisis levels, but they did not act quickly enough and the predictable crisis arrived. At the end of last year, we heard that Indro students would lose their library, instrumental music rooms, storage sheds and more just to accommodate 2024 enrolments. We were all, frankly, gobsmacked because by that time other spaces at the school, including staffrooms, student support areas and the like, had already been repurposed as classrooms to cope with overcrowding.

I had to stand up in front of cameras with P&C representatives to literally beg the education minister to intervene so that our kids' school would have a library. Thankfully she did step in. Just over a week later, we saw demountables being installed on the oval. That was a win, but a bittersweet one to be honest. We have needed new buildings at Indro for years and demountables simply are not the solution.

Next year the government's own figures project that more than 3,000 students will be enrolled at Indro, which is almost 900 over the maximum student enrolment capacity. The state government has finally said that they will develop a master plan for new buildings and, from what I have seen, the draft plan looks really promising, but that plan is useless without funding. We simply cannot wait years and years for this to be funded. In fact, we cannot wait any longer than this year, because there is a real chance, as horrifying as the thought might be, that we will have an LNP government after the next election and, frankly, we have zero idea what their plans are to address overcrowding at Indooroopilly State High School. We know it was the LNP that closed the Taringa State School back in 1997, which is why local primary schools are now so overcrowded and we are desperately seeking a new site for a primary school.

This is what happens when you fail to plan ahead. The way enrolments are going at both Indooroopilly State High and Kelvin Grove Secondary College, we will probably need a new high school in the inner west very soon. The government needs to learn from its past mistakes and start planning for that now. In the meantime, my community and I are waiting with bated breath for a funding commitment for the new buildings at Indro and for the ministerial infrastructure designation to get a wriggle on. You cannot kick this can down the road until after the election. We cannot have kids choosing between learning in storage sheds and learning on their ovals anymore. Please, put it in this year's budget and let's start planning ahead rather than playing catch-up.

Labour Day

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (6.21 pm): This coming Monday is the Queensland Labour Day holiday. It has been a long-held Ipswich tradition to hold a Labour Day march on the Saturday

beforehand. I want to take this opportunity to recognise and acknowledge the work of the incredible QCU Labour Day Committee in Ipswich that makes this important day on the Ipswich calendar such a success each and every year. As you can imagine, a lot of work goes into organising an event like that. In particular, I want to acknowledge Amy Williams who leaves no stone unturned in making sure she carries on the great tradition of those who came before her in the role—people such as Brian Hall who organised the event for decades and who sadly passed away a few years ago. I also want to acknowledge our local Police Service. We really value their cooperation in supporting the march and keeping us safe on the day.

I acknowledge the labour movement; all of the unions that represent working people across the nation; the unions that negotiate for better wages and conditions for their members; the unions that protect them against unfair treatment and provide support through a wide range of services, such as legal advice and workers' compensation, as well as arranging a huge variety of free benefits and discounts for union members. It was our union movement that fought hard for industrial manslaughter laws to hold companies to account when their workers lost their lives on the job. It was unions that advocated for banning the use of engineered stone to protect workers from silicosis.


Unions have fought long and hard to see wage theft become a crime and to fight for 'same job, same pay' rights for labour hire workers. Unions like the TWU have lobbied hard for transport gig economy workers to get the same rights and protections enjoyed by most other employees. Thanks to union-led campaigning, Queensland was the first state to pass into law 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave and natural disaster leave. Their campaigning has led to portable long service leave for community service workers.

The SDA campaigned hard for Christmas Day Eve to become a public holiday from 6 pm, and that was passed into law in Queensland in 2019. The SDA has also done great work protecting some of our youngest, lowest paid and most vulnerable workers employed in retail and hospitality, and I want to mention their successful No One Deserves A Serve campaign that is helping call out abuse and violence against those workers.

All of this is in stark contrast to the LNP, which could not wait to show their disdain for the labour movement by changing the date of Labour Day in Queensland to October, despite the fact that the celebration of Labour Day on the first Monday in May has a particular cultural and historical significance for Queenslanders. It has been in place for over 100 years.

I also want to mention the work of the unions in advocating for cost-of-living relief, as we have seen in today's fantastic announcement. The unions were behind that as well. I want to wish every member of this House a happy Labour Day. We would be a very different place without our union movement.

Road Infrastructure; Anzac Day


 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (6.24 pm): With the continued population growth on the northern Gold Coast, we are seeing more and more vehicles getting stuck at our local M1 interchanges, pushing the roads way beyond their capacity. Late last year, I asked questions of the minister about to vehicle numbers on our local state controlled roads. We are seeing an unsustainable increase in the use of those roads, especially, as I said, near our motorway interchanges.

Here are some of the numbers the minister reported: as at 2022, 12,173 vehicles used Maudsland Road near Cobb and Co Drive; 19,127 used Tamborine Oxenford Road west of the John Muntz Bridge; 32,923 vehicles used Hope Island Road near Monterey Keys Drive. All of those roads feed into the exit 57 interchange. Some 40,000 vehicles per day use Foxwell Road. That road feeds into exit 54. Both interchanges are struggling with huge vehicle volumes. We need an alternative east-west link that traverses the M1 Motorway, taking vehicles away from those contested interchanges and connecting Upper Coomera and Coomera. This will also help the vehicles on the western side of the motorway to access the Coomera Connector, therefore reducing traffic numbers on the M1 Motorway.

I would like to thank the northern Gold Coast sub branch, the Coomera Valley Rotary, Geoff Benson and the Helensvale Lions for each hosting Anzac Day events across the electorate of Theodore. Your tireless work is greatly appreciated. Many of our community are saddened by the news that this year could be the last Anzac Day service held at Maudsland. Geoff Benson and the Helensvale Lions have proudly hosted that service for 17 years. The community would be very disappointed if a path forward cannot be found to allow the event to continue. Anzac Day is a sacred day in our community calendar. As a community, we should do all we can to respect this important day and allow

that service to continue. There is a dispute over the legal liabilities in the event of an accident on the land, which is the reason this has come about. I do hope, for the good of the community, that we can find a path forward to ensure that wonderful service can continue and the people of the Coomera Valley can enjoy their own Dawn Service.

Cost of Living

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (6.27 pm): I have said before in this House that I am laser focused on cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders, especially those living in my electorate of Mount Ommaney. Of course, members can imagine how excited I was to wake up this morning, just like every other Mount Ommaney local and every Queenslander, to hear the exciting news that every household will be getting \$1,000 off their power bills from 1 July this year. That is fantastic news for households that are battling the rising cost of living and I know it will be a huge relief to every Queensland household. There is more on the table for seniors card holders, and small businesses as well, who will receive a different rebate.

The Miles government will not be stopping there. I am proud to sit on the Supermarket Pricing Select Committee. Last week the committee travelled to Bundaberg and Cairns for regional hearings. We heard from one farmer, Judy, who gave really illuminating evidence on the huge volumes of waste that the supermarkets are currently creating. Judy spoke about the impossible beauty standards of the supermarkets. She showed us examples of fresh produce that are wasted and rejected by the supermarkets, such as capsicums that have too many folds or bananas that are too small or not curved enough.

The Bundaberg mayor mentioned the small amounts of ‘ugly’ produce—I say ‘ugly’ because there is nothing wrong with it—sold by the major supermarkets, which is just virtue signalling. It is not a genuine attempt to sell the large volumes of less aesthetically pleasing stock, which taste just as good and are just as nutritious. At a time when almost every family I know is cutting back—they are changing their shopping behaviours and are even changing where they shop in order to lower their bills—it seems to me that selling more ‘ugly’ stuff would be just one way supermarkets could make a real difference to Queenslanders doing it tough. We heard about the issue of wastage through over-ordering. I was absolutely shocked and devastated to hear one of our witnesses, Judy, say that some growers are forced to throw out 30 per cent to 40 per cent of their produce because it is not up to supermarket specs.

On a side note, I wish to comment on the excellent collegiate relationship the committee has developed. I know all members of the committee are driven to try to strive for real outcomes for Queenslanders dealing with rising grocery prices.

It is my opinion that the reason the supermarkets are able to get away with this behaviour is because there is a duopoly. In Queensland, the big two control 65 per cent of the market and Aldi, while a welcome addition, controls just 10 per cent. I believe that, until there is more diversity in the grocery market, there is no reason for the supermarkets to change their tactics, and that does not help anyone. Our next hearing is tomorrow. I look forward to hearing from the stakeholders about how we can help Queenslanders get a fair deal.

The House adjourned at 6.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Andrew, Bailey, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Boyd, Brown, Bush, Butcher, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, D’Ath, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Frecklington, Furner, Gerber, Gilbert, Grace, Harper, Hart, Head, Healy, Hinchliffe, Howard, Janetzki, Katter, Kelly, King A, King S, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Linard, Lister, MacMahon, Mander, Martin, McCallum, McDonald, McMahon, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Millar, Minnikin, Mullen, Nicholls, Nightingale, O’Connor, O’Rourke, Pease, Perrett, Pitt, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Richards, Robinson, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Saunders, Scanlon, Simpson, Skelton, Smith, Stewart, Sullivan, Tantari, Walker, Watts, Weir, Whiting, Zanow