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FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT

Thursday, 13 March 2025

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THURSDAY, 13 MARCH 2025

The Legislative Assembly met at 2.00 pm.

Mr Speaker (Hon. Pat Weir, Condamine) read prayers and took the chair.



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I acknowledge the Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people of this state and their elders past, present and emerging. I also acknowledge the former members of this parliament who have participated in and nourished the democratic institutions of this state. Finally, I acknowledge the people of this state, whether they have been born here or have chosen to make this state their home and whom we represent to make laws and conduct other business for the peace, welfare and good government of this state.

SPEAKER'S STATEMENT

Code of Ethical Standards



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, an updated Code of Ethical Standards and associated Guide to the Code of Ethical Standards and Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members has been approved by the Committee of the Legislative Assembly of the 58th Parliament, in accordance with section 86 of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001. Section 6 of the code was amended to explicitly state that members of parliament should treat each other with respect, as per the recommendation set out in the Ethics Committee Report No. 225. I table the code and associated guidelines. The new code will be available on the parliament's website from this afternoon.

Tabled paper: Committee of the Legislative Assembly: Code of Ethical Standards together with The Guide to the Code of Ethical Standards and Rules Relating to the Conduct of Members, February 2025 [\[193\]](#).

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Remember what I just read out.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Locking in Cost of Living Support (50 Cent Fares Forever) Amendment Bill, Bill Out of Order



Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, the Locking in Cost of Living Support (50 Cent Fares Forever) Amendment Bill 2025 was introduced by the member for Murrumbidgee on 19 February 2025 and referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee. I have considered whether the bill offends section 68 of the Constitution of Queensland 2021 and standing order 174. I have taken into account submissions made by the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads on the bill. I rule that the bill does contain an appropriation and should not have been introduced without first being recommended by a message of the Governor in accordance with section 68 of the Constitution of Queensland 2021 and standing order 174. Accordingly, the bill is out of order and will need to be discharged and withdrawn by the member for Murrumbidgee, failing which I will direct the removal of the bill from the *Notice Paper*. I seek leave to incorporate the full ruling circulated in my name.

Leave granted.

SPEAKER'S RULING—ABSENCE OF MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 68 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF QUEENSLAND 2001

The Locking in Cost of Living Support (50 Cent Fares Forever) Amendment Bill 2025 was introduced by the member for Murrumbidgee on 19 February 2025 and referred to the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee.

I have considered whether the Bill offends section 68 of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001* and Standing Order 174.

On 20 February 2025, I made a statement (p184) requesting submissions on the Bill from the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to assist with making a determination on this matter. Submissions were received on 26 February 2025.

Section 68(1) of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001* provides that the Legislative Assembly must not originate or pass a vote, resolution or Bill for the appropriation of—

- (a) an amount from the consolidated fund; or
- (b) an amount required to be paid to the consolidated fund;

that has not first been recommended by a message of the Governor.

The Bill amends the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994* by inserting a new provision requiring the chief executive of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, in a service contract for a Translink service (whether the contract is entered into before or after commencement of the provision), to set the fare for a journey using the service at 50 cents or less.

The effect of the Bill is to cap public transport fares for Translink services at 50 cents per journey indefinitely. If passed, the chief executive would be prohibited from setting a fare for these services that is more than 50 cents.

In a ruling by Speaker Wellington on 14 June 2017 (pp1565-1566), a three part test was adopted based on earlier rulings and Crown Law advice, to determine whether there is an appropriation within a bill:

- Does the bill purport to confer any authority to pay an amount from consolidated revenue?
- Does the bill extend the objects and purposes of an existing appropriation?
- Does the bill alter the destination of an existing appropriation?

However, Speaker Wellington found that a bill is not an appropriation bill simply because its implementation may have some potential incidental cost implications.

In a ruling on 17 November 2021 (pp3553-3554), Speaker Pitt stated:

The system of government in Queensland and the Queensland Parliament is guided by a number of constitutional conventions. One such convention is the 'financial initiative of the Executive'. This embodies the principle that only the Government may initiate or move to increase appropriations or taxes.

Speaker Pitt quoted the Parliament of Australia's House of Representatives Practice (7th Edition pp415-416):

The principle of the financial initiative may be paraphrased as follows:

- The Executive Government is charged with the management of revenue and with payments for the public service.
- It is a long established and strictly observed rule which expresses a principle of the highest constitutional importance that no public charge can be incurred except on the initiative of the Executive Government.
- The Executive Government requests money, the Parliament grants it, but the Parliament does not vote money unless required by the Government, and does not impose taxes unless needed for the public service as declared by Ministers.

The reference to 'public charge' in this context means a charge on public funds (an appropriation).

...

The standing orders of the House in relation to financial legislation reflect the principle of the financial initiative.

Erskine May's Parliamentary Practice (24th Edition p.746) states that a charge upon public revenue (i.e. an appropriation) in practice is 'interpreted to mean a proposal for new or increased expenditure which is not already covered by legislative authorisation.'

If passed, the Bill would have significant budgetary implications for current and future Queensland state governments by requiring public transport fares to be maintained at 50 cents or less.

The costs to government of implementing this requirement would need to be met by either:

- drawing on an existing appropriation (i.e. an appropriation that has been authorised by legislation); or
- making a new appropriation (i.e. an appropriation that is not already authorised by legislation).

On the information available to me, there is no existing appropriation that would cover the cost of maintaining 50 cent fares. While the Queensland Government has recently approved a funding increase of \$1.5 billion for this purpose, the sum of money required has not yet been appropriated by an annual appropriations bill. I note this is contrary to the statement in the Bill's explanatory material that all implementation costs are expected to be met from within existing budget allocations.

It follows that the three part test for an appropriation is satisfied. The Bill does not expressly state that it is an appropriation bill, nor does it specify an amount to be appropriated from the consolidated fund, or that it will increase, extend the objects and purposes or alter the destination of an existing appropriation. However, the effect of the Bill is to impose a liability on public expenditure that is not already authorised by legislation. The Bill is therefore by necessary implication an appropriation bill.

In making this determination I note the cost implications associated with the Bill are not merely 'incidental'. They are substantial and central to the Bill's purpose of maintaining reduced fare levels indefinitely.

I also note the position is not altered by the fact that the Bill would not reach its second reading stage until after release of the State Budget 2025-26, when relevant expenditure is expected to have been authorised through the annual appropriations bill. Standing Orders 174(1) and 175(1) clearly provide that the message of the Governor is required to be presented to the Speaker and read to the House before the bill is introduced.

I rule that the Locking in Cost of Living Support (50 Cent Fares Forever) Amendment Bill 2025 does contain an appropriation and should not have been introduced without first being recommended by a message of the Governor in accordance with section 68 of the *Constitution of Queensland 2001* and Standing Order 174.

Accordingly, the Bill is out of order and will need to be discharged and withdrawn by the member for Murrumba, failing which I will direct the removal of the Bill from the *Notice Paper*.

TABLED PAPERS

TABLING OF DOCUMENTS (SO 32)

REPORT BY THE CLERK

The following report was tabled by the Clerk—

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

Queensland Productivity Commission Bill 2024

Amendments made to Bill

Short title and consequential references to short title—

Omit—

'Queensland Productivity Commission Bill 2024'

Insert—

'Queensland Productivity Commission Bill 2025'

MEMBERS' PAPERS

The following members' papers were tabled by the Clerk—

Member for Murrumba (Hon. Miles)—


[191](#) Public Report of Office Expenses for the Office of the Leader of the Opposition for the period 28 October 2024 to 31 December 2024

Member for Nicklin (Mr Hunt)—

[192](#) Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee: Report No. 5, 58th Parliament—Subordinate legislation tabled between 28 November 2024 and 20 December 2024

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

South-East Queensland Weather Events, Recovery

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (Premier and Minister for Veterans) (2.04 pm): Queenslanders are no strangers to natural disasters. In recent months we have seen a cyclone and significant flooding impact Queenslanders from both ends of the state. It has been six weeks since the flooding events that hit our north and Far North. We never expected an historic weather event to hit the south-east only weeks later. Our focus now is on recovery and on making sure there is no daylight between the response and that recovery. Together, we will get Queensland back on its feet. This is an incredibly challenging time for many. That is why, in the wake of both disasters, we quickly mobilised our Community Recovery Hubs. There are already 13 hubs open in South-East Queensland to provide face-to-face support to those in need. More are on the way.

Queenslanders are resilient, but that does not mean they should face this alone—we will be there every step of the way. As we turn to recovery, we are working hard to make sure that we build resilience and we build back stronger. When we rebuild stronger and smarter, we reduce the risk for future events, reduce the risk for government, for community groups and for individuals. That is why we announced the Stronger Homes Grant to build more resilience in North and Far North Queensland. Importantly, these grants help home owners stay in their homes, stay in the community and reduce the risk of future damage. Applications are now open to provide funding for raising switchboards and hot water systems, or replacing plasterboard with something more resilient and replacing flooring—from carpets to tiles. I can inform the House that over 300 expressions of interest have already been lodged with this program.

This morning I was able to visit Ingham with the member for Hinchinbrook, where I saw firsthand the value this will bring to people picking up the pieces after this event. But recovery is not just about helping people to rebuild their homes; we also want to see our community sporting clubs back on their feet. Sporting clubs are the backbone of our communities and we have financial support available to

help assess and repair damage. Recovery will require our beaches and our tourist hotspots to rebuild. We want everyone to know that Queensland is open for business. We are also focused on the resilience of our vital infrastructure like bridges and roads to keep our community safe, connected and supplied in times of crises—not doing the same thing to the same standard and expecting a different result.

At both ends of the state, the recovery phase will be led by our State Disaster Recovery Coordinators. Today I announce retired Colonel Justin O'Connor has been appointed to the role of State Disaster Recovery Coordinator to lead the recovery effort in the south-east. Justin spent several decades in the Australian Army, where he rose through the ranks to become a senior officer with several postings throughout Queensland. His experience as a former chief executive of the Queensland Hotels Association will be invaluable as we welcome tourists back to the south-east.

I can also announce former councillor Peter Matic as the Deputy State Disaster Recovery Coordinator. Engaging with local governments is a key part of recovery and Peter's 16 years as a local councillor in Brisbane through several flood events, as well as his experience with the LGAQ and the Logan City Council, will serve our state well. Together they will provide leadership, coordination and advice for the recovery efforts in impacted communities following the impact of Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

There is no doubt that recovery can be complex. It is going to take time, but we will see the job through. While disaster impacts vary from community to community, our commitment to helping every Queenslanders through recovery remains the same. We stand by all Queenslanders who are suffering the devastating impacts of these disaster events and together we will keep working every day to see the recovery through.

South-East Queensland Weather Events, Recovery



Hon. JP BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations) (2.08 pm): The Crisafulli LNP government have taken a commonsense approach while guiding the state through ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. We did not seek to dictate orders to Queenslanders and in turn, Queenslanders have demonstrated their resilience, their responsiveness to advice—

Mr Miles interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: It's a funny matter, isn't it? Yes, real funny, Leader of the Opposition—floods, victims. Giggling—not funny, mate, not funny. You keep laughing!

Mr SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier is the only one who has the call.

Mr BLEIJIE: We did not seek to dictate orders to Queenslanders and in turn, Queenslanders have demonstrated their resilience, their responsiveness to advice and their determination to rebuild. As Queenslanders impacted by floodwaters or destructive winds begin to consider what comes next, they will find a state government that is standing by their side and moving with purpose to the next stage of our response to this incident—the rebuild. Part of our rebuild, of course, involves not only examining the immediate response to the consequences of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred but also reflecting on the circumstances which preceded that response.

Prior to the 2024 state election the LNP committed to reviewing all regional plans that exist around the state. Our government has identified that regional plans for local governments need to be fit for purpose and give a clear direction about the state's priorities in key population growth pockets. We will do this in a collaborative approach with local governments every step of the way. For too long local governments in this state had to tolerate the Labor state government steamrolling over the top of them—

Ms Grace: That's not true. Rubbish.

Mr BLEIJIE: Just ask them.

Ms Grace: Complete nonsense. Completely made up.

Mr BLEIJIE: Just ask them. I take all the immature interjections from those opposite.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for McConnel, you will be warned.

Mr BLEIJIE: For too long local governments in this state had to tolerate a bad state Labor government, an incompetent state Labor government, a Labor government continually steamrolling over the top of local government and a state Labor government that actively ignored the concerns of local communities for ideological purposes.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am having trouble hearing the Deputy Premier.

Mr BLEIJIE: It is such a positive ministerial statement and the code of conduct the Speaker tabled is out the window. We have committed to resetting the relationship with local governments and ensuring that all 13 regional plans are fit for purpose. I can advise the House that the neglect of the former state Labor government runs deep. Six of the 13 regional—

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. Six of the 13 regional plans have not been reviewed since 2010 or earlier. Eleven out of the 13 are more than 10 years old and there is even a regional plan, the Gulf Regional Development Plan, which has not been reviewed since the turn of the century in 2000.

Labor's record on local governments is one of neglect. Our government is developing new regional plans which cover every corner of Queensland in conjunction—ready for this—with infrastructure plans that build betterment and resilience into future growth. That includes in flood-affected Queensland where people's circumstances were exaggerated as a result of poor Labor planning resulting in out of date—

Opposition members: Made up.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjections from all the former Labor local government ministers. I note that the former Labor local government ministers are the ones whimpering and interjecting because they are the failures and what I am saying hurts them because they know I speak the truth.

Mr SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier's comments will come through the chair, please.


Mr BLEIJIE: The Premier was in Ingham recently where essential infrastructure such as a substation went under water leaving thousands of residents without power. Our LNP government is already working positively with councils under our reset planning partnership focused on delivering more housing supply in the right locations. Through State Planning Policy guidance, the Crisafulli government will always support councils in ensuring their local planning schemes are responsive to the issues in their communities.

The Queensland government will consistently engage and seek feedback to ensure state policy is working to support the planning scheme updates and helping councils make informed local decisions. I have had some really positive meetings this week alone with all the local governments in North Queensland and Far North Queensland and they are just as excited about this new state government as we are.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the honourable Premier because we in the LNP listen to local government. The former Labor government were all about announcements and could never focus on delivery. The Crisafulli government is determined to reset this relationship with local governments, and that includes ensuring local governments are equipped with planning schemes that are fit for purpose and ensure that essential infrastructure is protected from natural disasters.

South-East Queensland Weather Events, Recovery


 **Hon. DC JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership) (2.13 pm): Tropical Cyclone Alfred is one of the most significant weather events in Australia's recent history, bringing a torrent of wind, rain and flooding over several days. While it will be months before we know the true cost and overall economic loss, it is safe to say that the communities in the path of the storm will feel its impact for some time. Preliminary analysis by Queensland Treasury indicates the damage to our economy could be on par with the South-East Queensland floods of 2022. The reconstruction bill for infrastructure alone after those floods was more than \$2½ billion and that is not counting the full social cost in addition to that. It is estimated the 2022 flood reduced gross state product by around \$1 billion, or a quarter of a percentage point.

For the tourism industry it means lost bookings and impacts on travel and hotel infrastructure. For agriculture, the cost is measured in crop losses like those reported in the Lockyer Valley, the state's salad bowl. The resources sector was impacted by transport disruptions and other sectors of the economy like retail, entertainment, hospitality, construction and manufacturing experienced upheavals in transportation and power access. According to the Insurance Council, insurers have received more than 34,000 claims from the Fraser Coast to the Clarence Valley in northern New South Wales. I would urge insurers not to use this event as an excuse to raise premiums.

As a state, we are already reeling from severe flooding in the north and it is estimated that that event will lessen national GDP by 0.1 per cent in the March quarter. It also comes at a time that Queenslanders are facing cost-of-living pressures. For businesses, days of disrupted trading are painful. For families, hours not worked can mean a struggle to pay bills. That is why we have been swift in activating assistance measures and grants available to eligible impacted residents.

We were clear from the outset that there would be no delay between response and recovery. Energex and Ergon crews got to work straightaway and, as of 1 pm this afternoon, they have restored 471,000 connections since the beginning of this event, which equates to nearly 94 per cent of all outages. This means Energex is nearly 48 hours ahead of its restoration plan. However, 28,000 homes and businesses remain without power, and Energex and Ergon will not stop working as fast as is humanly possible. The sooner the work is done, the sooner the state can fully get back to business and the human and economic costs can be eased.

Weather Events, Recovery

 **Hon. A LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers) (2.16 pm): The Crisafulli government is committed to getting Queenslanders back on their feet after ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred and the North Queensland floods. We are working with all levels of government to ensure these communities get the support they need.


This morning I joined the mayor of Ipswich to meet flood-affected residents and business in her part of the world. I am pleased to announce we have secured personal hardship assistance for eligible localities across the region. Assistance will also be extended to the entire Brisbane City Council, Somerset, Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley council areas and further localities on the Sunshine and Fraser coasts as our communities look to recover and rebuild. As we have always said, we will work with the Commonwealth government to roll out funding to more communities as councils, our eyes and ears on the ground, request it.

We know just how tough it is for small business, not-for-profits and primary producers when they are faced with these weather events. In Ipswich today I met with Terry and Bill from the local Men's Shed, who worked around the clock to get their tools and projects to higher ground, and Michael from Bailey's Brake & Clutch, who has been in business since 1982 and has witnessed every flood since. Thanks to the Queensland spirit today, it is business as usual for these people and I am very proud of them.

Today I am also able to announce disaster loans of up to \$250,000 for eligible small business and primary producers and up to \$100,000 for eligible not-for-profits to cover repairs and replacement of damaged goods and infrastructure. This assistance will benefit hardworking South-East Queensland businesses and services that are critical to our communities. While the cameras may have set up shop in the south-east, we want to make sure our North Queenslanders know that we are with them for the long run. As the member for Burdekin announced yesterday, disaster recovery packages worth more than \$50 million are now available to support North Queensland's full recovery from last month's devastating floods. I want to acknowledge the mayor of Hinchinbrook, who knows how much this will mean to the people of his region. His words about this announcement were: superb, amazing, thank you so much from our community.

We want the Hinchinbrook community and all of the impacted communities across the far north and south-east to know that the Crisafulli government will be right there with them in the recovery and for the long run.

Weather Events, Health Services

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (2.19 pm): The health, wellbeing and care of Queenslanders is the No. 1 priority of the Crisafulli government. Care through our health department and health services across Queensland continued throughout the recent natural disasters. Now during disaster recovery, wellbeing remains a core priority of the Crisafulli government. With planning, preparation and perseverance, our teams at Queensland Health and the Queensland Ambulance Service kept the vast majority of our facilities operational at the peak of the severe weather events. Our EDs remained open to provide services to Queenslanders, and now we are moving straight back into business as usual. Wherever possible during the cyclone, patient planned care continued and impacted facilities have been brought back online as soon as possible.

In the south-east over the Tropical Cyclone Alfred weekend, we estimate that 75 per cent of planned care went ahead. Think about that: in the midst of a cyclone and tropical storm when people could not get there, Queensland Health delivered 75 per cent of planned care as well as emergency care. Facilities that were impacted continued providing exceptional patient care in challenging circumstances. While the Redlands Satellite Health Centre had to close due to power and access issues at the peak of the storm, it reopened as soon as possible at 2.30 pm on Tuesday afternoon.

This morning, together with the hardworking member for Redlands, I visited the Redlands Satellite Health Centre and met with the dedicated staff who stayed there for as long as they could and continued to provide services—staff like clinical nurse Nisha, who runs the dialysis unit, who temporarily relocated to the Redland Hospital with the patients and with the dialysis machines to ensure they continued to receive service. I also met the fantastic nurse unit manager Michelle, who travelled to Stradbroke Island over the weekend to help provide care at the Marie Rose clinic to those in need. I want to give a big shout-out to Michelle and her father, Kel, who is a real red-hot LNP supporter. It is always good to have them out there. You keep that trailer going, Kel.

A government member interjected.


Mr NICHOLLS: There are plenty of them in the Redlands and there will be even more after last weekend, as there will be in Hervey Bay. The Hervey Bay Hospital continued providing services despite the heavy localised flooding. Out in Laidley, the Laidley Hospital's isolation by floodwaters continued and we provided services because, with the assistance of the QAS, a medical officer from Metro North was transferred in via a rotary wing asset—a helicopter—to provide services when no other way of getting in or out could be found. The Gold Coast University Hospital—the third largest in the state with 700 beds—temporarily operated on generator power for 48 hours and housed 81 vulnerable patients who were moved into the unit because they were not able to get the care they needed from their carers outside of the hospital. They were looked after by the team at the Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service.

Like all Queenslanders and all on this side of the House, I was pleased to see the rapid resumption of full operations of medical services on our bay islands despite the battering they copped as TC Alfred twirled around off the coast. The QAS operated throughout, putting on over 110 additional staff members and supporting a taskforce to conduct welfare checks using the clinical hub which had additional doctors, nurses and paramedics on board to maintain oversight of impacted clients.

While there has been a focus on events in the south-east, we cannot forget North Queensland. Two weeks ago I met the local renal dialysis patients who were receiving service all during the events up there. During the peak of the crisis when water supply to the Ingham Hospital was disrupted, those patients were urgently flown to Townsville University Hospital so their dialysis could continue. I also met Ingham pharmacist Brenden Seri, who is well known to the Premier, who slept overnight in his pharmacy at the peak of the floods. With the help of his nonna's generator that he stole a boat to go and get—and he stole the generator off his nonna because she still did not know about it—and managed to keep his pharmacy open and continued dispensing essential medications. For those who do not know, today is national Thank Your Pharmacist Day, so a big thankyou to all of the pharmacists who kept the medications going during the recent events, including Brenden and his team at the Ingham pharmacy.

While immediate dangers have passed, it is important to remain vigilant about health and safety. On top of that, we continue sending messages out, and I urge all residents in affected areas to make sure that they look after themselves and keep heeding the messages from Queensland Health.

Weather Events, Recovery

 **Hon. AJ CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (Minister for Families, Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Child Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (2.24 pm): The impacts of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred are far-reaching and we have seen damage to the north of Hervey Bay, out west to the south border and beyond. It has been and continues to be an incredibly challenging time for Queenslanders. The Crisafulli government has been there for them and will help see them through this difficult time. When we said there would be no daylight between response and recovery, we meant it. Even as the disaster was unfolding, we were prepared and ready to mobilise recovery hubs immediately where they were needed across the state and across the south-east to provide face-to-face support. We have hundreds of staff prepared to do what Queenslanders do best—help their mates through a tough time, and, let me tell you, we have been out there helping our mates.

As of 2 pm—only about 25 minutes ago, and I did not get the opportunity to update the Premier as he came in from Ingham—I am pleased to announce that we now have 15 recovery hubs open, with two more opening this afternoon in the Beechmont community in the Scenic Rim and also in Jimboomba in Logan. I can also reveal that, as of a few hours ago, more than \$10 million in emergency hardship assistance grants have been approved, helping more than 50,000 people across the south-east, and 96.3 per cent of applications for grants have been processed and paid within 24 hours of applying. In the north, \$6.5 million in emergency hardship assistance grants have been approved, and across both disasters more than 30,000 calls have been made to the 24/7 Community Recovery Hotline.


Community Recovery Hubs not only offer assistance with grants; they also offer a smile, mental health support and referral pathways. They provide hope and comfort for those who may not have experienced what many of us from North Queensland have experienced many times in our lifetime in terms of the fear and anxiety when you have a tropical cyclone confronting you and your family.

We continue to work in lockstep with our councils. I do want to thank them on behalf of the government, together with Minister Leahy's leadership, with regard to the engagement and consultation that we have had with councils. My department has also had deep conversations with councils over the course of the last few days.

Queenslanders are looking after Queenslanders. It was at the Nerang Community Recovery hub with the Premier, Minister Leahy and the member for Mermaid Beach that we had the opportunity to meet Greg and Judy. Greg and Judy are residents of the Gold Coast and had just returned after working with Lifeline in the Ingham floods, and there they were working with those members of our community impacted by what we have just seen. They are a retired couple and they love giving back, and it was just a privilege to hear about their service to our state. I also want to thank our partners at the Red Cross, the Queensland Disaster Chaplaincy Network, the Salvation Army, UnitingCare, Lifeline and Queensland Health along with the department of housing staff, Energex and the Insurance Council of Australia who have been out and about and part of our community hubs and pop-ups. GIVIT has also launched a TC Alfred appeal.

As Queenslanders we are strong, we are resilient and we are certainly not strangers to our fair share of disasters. The immediate dangers of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred might be over, but this is just the start of a recovery, and the Crisafulli government is there for the long haul.

Weather Events, Primary Industries

 **Hon. AJ PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (Minister for Primary Industries) (2.28 pm): Cyclone Alfred and its aftermath is being felt not just in the cities and towns; it is also being felt in regional communities which are heavily reliant on primary producers. It has been felt in sectors which service our primary industries. Just as we did with last month's North Queensland floods, my department is again working alongside industry to assess the impact on our primary industries. One of the most significant lessons we can learn from natural disasters is to make our communities and industries robust. We need to help them get back on their feet and give them the tools to do what they do best.

The Crisafulli government said that it would have the backs of farmers, and we continue to have their backs. The Crisafulli LNP government is in this for the long haul. We have responded to what I have observed on the ground. I have been in the north, both north and south of Townsville, Ingham, the Burdekin region, the Herbert region and Tully—all areas affected by heavy rainfall and devastating flooding. While visiting with the member for Hinchinbrook I saw firsthand the impacts at the Accorneros' cane farm in the Herbert. Last week I was at Stephen Lowe's banana farm just outside Tully talking to banana growers impacted by the North Queensland floods. I saw the impact firsthand, alongside the State Recovery Coordinator, Andrew Cripps. It takes many years after a natural disaster to repair, rebuild and restock.


The Queensland Rural Industry Development Authority website has all the information relating to the Exceptional Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants—North and Far North Tropical Low. It includes all the information about how to apply for the increased disaster assistance funding, including the new provision for replanting lost or damaged crops. It is available right now.

We responded quickly in the north to assess the damage; we are assessing and responding to the impact in the south. TC Alfred has caused flooding and loss of crops, power outages and an inability to get produce to market. Several processing plants and abattoirs experienced power outages. Thanks to the quick response of Energex, they are getting back to work. I thank the Treasurer and Minister for Energy for his efforts to have energy restored. The closure of the Brisbane port created issues for

perishable fruit and vegetables for export being delayed. There will be backlogs. Canegrower representatives in the Gold Coast region are reporting damage to crops. Road access issues created problems for dairy farmers, and milk dumping occurred on farms in several regions. The fishing industry experienced loss of production, and there are reports of damage and loss of gear.

Substantial impacts to horticulture are emerging in the Lockyer, Somerset, Fassifern Valley in the Scenic Rim, Logan and the Sunshine and Gold coasts. Significant areas of crop have been affected, including lettuce, salads, green beans, lucerne, soybeans, pumpkins, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower. Corn crops have been blown over across the Lockyer Valley and the Scenic Rim. Greenhouse growers in the Logan area have experienced serious inundation. To quote the member for Lockyer, there is no greater food bowl than the Lockyer Valley. This morning I visited properties in the valley. We saw the widespread devastation caused by Cyclone Alfred and its flooding aftermath. Primary industries can look forward with confidence knowing that the Crisafulli government has their back.

Weather Events, Sport and Recreation


 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (2.32 pm): As we have seen, ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred has resulted in a major clean-up operation across South-East Queensland. The devastation extends to many sport and recreation clubs, where volunteers who are helping with the clean-up are also dealing with their own hardships at home.

Our local sporting clubs are the beating heart of our communities. That is why we want to help them get back on their feet as quickly as possible. An immediate \$5,000 is available through the Sport and Recreation Disaster Recovery Program in areas declared under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. That now includes areas across South-East Queensland, extending to the Fraser Coast, hit hard by the severe weather. This program provides much needed assistance to sport and recreation clubs to support their immediate clean-up efforts.

It is barely a month now since severe flooding also hit North Queensland, and so far almost 100 sporting clubs have applied for the \$5,000 grants. Clubs such as the Ingham tennis club, Herbert River cricket and the Jubilee Bowls Club in Townsville have already had their grants assessed and approved. Recently I visited Townsville Golf Club to see the extent of the damage. I spoke to president Danny McLoughlin and general manager Mitch Bligh. I was encouraged by a couple of things. They are used to flooding and have had a betterment program which has meant they have changed the location of their clubhouse so that it was not affected, but the course itself was still very water-laden. It was great to see the volunteers out there who want to get this golf club back up and going. I know what it is like to be a golfer who cannot play at their golf course because of the devastation. We get a little shaky and itchy and it is not good for our mental health. It is great to see that they are motivated to get out there as quickly as possible. I encourage North Queensland sporting clubs to apply for these grants. Just search 'Sport and Recreation Disaster Recovery Program'.

In less than two months Queensland has endured two major weather events, but I am confident that no other state in Australia could bounce back from such devastation as quickly as Queensland does. Not matter what is thrown at us, Queenslanders in every community across this great state will always stand together. We want our sporting clubs to get back on their feet as quickly as possible so our communities can continue to lead the active lifestyle that Queenslanders all love. In the meantime, sport and recreation officers will be on the ground assessing damage. We strongly encourage all sport clubs in disaster-affected areas to reach out to them for assistance. It is vital that we get our sporting clubs up and running again, especially in time for the winter sign-on. Queenslanders know that we have their back. The Crisafulli government promised there would be no daylight between response and recovery, and that is what we are delivering.

Weather Events, Recovery

 **Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training) (2.35 pm): I rise to address the significant financial repercussions of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred and our ongoing recovery efforts. This unprecedented event has severely impacted our communities, but our resilience and collective response are paving the way to recovery. The cyclone's aftermath left over 58,000 homes and businesses without power, particularly in the Gold Coast and Redlands areas. This disruption extended to water supply, as many households rely on electric pumps for tank or bore water. Some residents are expected to remain without electricity until Saturday, underscoring the urgency of our restoration efforts.

Just this morning I was back travelling across my electorate of Mudgeeraba, visiting Numinbah Valley, Springbrook and Bonogin. I spent time talking to residents and business owners, reassuring them that we have their back as the recovery continues. The sheer scale of this damage reinforces the importance of strengthening our infrastructure and improving emergency response systems to minimise the economic burden on affected families and businesses in future disasters.

In response, both federal and state governments have activated financial assistance programs. Eligible residents in affected areas, including Brisbane, Fraser Coast, Gold Coast, and many others now, can access grants to cover emergency costs, replace damaged household goods and assist with the reconnection of essential services. However, we must ensure that these relief efforts are distributed efficiently and reach those most in need without unnecessary bureaucratic delays.

The insurance sector is also grappling with the aftermath. As of midday Wednesday, approximately 34,000 claims have been filed—predominantly from Queensland—covering damage to homes, vehicles and businesses. Insurers have already disbursed nearly \$2.4 million in emergency payments to address immediate needs such as food and temporary shelter. These payouts offer a lifeline for many, yet we must remain vigilant in ensuring that claims are processed fairly and swiftly so that families and businesses can begin rebuilding without undue stress or financial strain. The Insurance Council of Australia has declared an insurance catastrophe, with anticipated payouts exceeding \$2 billion.

To support those who have lost income due to the cyclone, the Disaster Recovery Allowance has been made available. This short-term payment assists individuals directly affected by the disaster, providing financial relief during this challenging period. However, we must also consider additional long-term economic support, such as concessional recovery loans for small businesses and primary producers, to prevent long-term economic hardship in our hardest hit communities. As we move forward, it is imperative to remain vigilant against potential exploitation.

The Insurance Council of Australia has warned about ‘disaster chasers’—unscrupulous operators offering repair services that may invalidate insurance claims. Residents are advised to engage only with reputable contractors to ensure the integrity of their insurance coverage. We must also ensure that consumer protection agencies and local authorities are empowered to crack down on fraudulent operators looking to take advantage of vulnerable residents during this crisis.

The road to recovery is challenging, but with coordinated efforts from all levels of government, the private sector and our resilient communities we will rebuild and emerge stronger from this disaster. By investing in infrastructure resilience, we can turn this moment of hardship into an opportunity to create a safer and more secure future for all Queenslanders.

Finally, I wanted to pass on my heartfelt thanks to First Officer Philip Foster of the Bonogin Rural Fire Brigade and his crew, whom I caught up with today on the side of the road, for their incredible commitment to helping people recover from the biggest weather event we have had in recent memory. I thank the Treasurer and Minister for Energy. I understand that Energex crews are finally on their way to Bonogin. There are many live wires still there. I encourage residents not to drive over or under them. Help is on its way. As the clean-up continues, please remember: if you are in the area driving around, listen to the local authorities and avoid driving near fallen powerlines.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Weather Events, Response




Hon. SJ MILES (Murrumba—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (2.39 pm): I give notice that I will move—

That this House:

1. acknowledges the devastation and impact felt by Queenslanders as a result of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.
2. expresses its deep appreciation to all responders, including volunteers who supported Queenslanders during and after the cyclone.
3. will continue to support all Queenslanders to recover from ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred and all natural disasters.
4. notes the ongoing efforts of energy crews to restore power and calls on the government to ensure all resources are made available to fast-track reconnection.
5. notes the key roles played by all agencies, including Seqwater, and the benefit to Queensland where such entities are made available to answer media questions at the daily televised press conferences.

6. notes the key role played by local government and calls on the government to ensure respectful and equal relationships with them.
7. notes the important role of parliamentarians to ask questions about the activities and priorities of government during natural disasters.
8. notes the critical nature of timely severe weather event warnings and calls on the government to ensure it issues these as soon as possible.
9. notes the Premier's endorsement of the key role played by Prime Minister Albanese in ensuring all levels of government were actively involved in handling the impacts of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.
10. acknowledges the commitment of various elected representatives to their communities as demonstrated by their focused attention and presence rather than being distracted by electioneering in the lead-up to and during the severe weather event.

TABLED PAPERS

 **Mr SPEAKER:** Before we go to question time, in relation to my ruling earlier I table the submissions that I received on that matter.


Tabled paper: Letter, dated 26 February 2025, from the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Steven Miles, and the Shadow Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Shadow Minister for Veterans, Mr Bart Mellish MP, to the Speaker, Hon. Patrick Weir, regarding the Locking in Cost of Living Support (50 Cent Fares Forever) Amendment Bill 2025 [\[194\]](#).

Tabled paper: Letter, dated 26 February 2025, from the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Hon. Brent Mickelberg, to the Speaker, Hon. Patrick Weir, regarding the Locking in Cost of Living Support (50 Cent Fares Forever) Amendment Bill 2025 [\[195\]](#).

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: Today, question time will conclude at 3.42 pm.

Olympic and Paralympic Games, Stadiums

 **Mr MILES** (2.42 pm): 9News has reported leaked details of the—
Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: We will hear the question in silence. Can we hear the question again?

Mr MILES: My question is to the Premier. 9News has reported leaked details of the LNP's hand-picked review of Olympic venues. Does the Premier stand by his election promise that under a government he leads there will not be a new Olympic stadium?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I thank the opposition leader for eventually directing the question to me and I thank him for the opportunity to speak about the Olympic and Paralympic Games because it is important that we get it right. I will tell you why it is important. If the former government had delivered a plan, right now there would be facilities being built. Right now there would be a sense of optimism and pride. Instead, Queenslanders look back at the 1,000 days and they know that it was a missed opportunity. I want Queenslanders to know that despite the obvious frustration from those opposite—I understand their frustration and Queenslanders also understand it—if I was the Leader of the Opposition and I had proposed QSAC then I would be embarrassed too.

I have seen what happens when governments do not have a plan. I have seen what happens when governments are driven by political ideology. I have seen what happens when governments are driven by factionalism. Last night, we had a glimpse of what happens when governments are owned by unions: they will not even back the Productivity Commission for fear of what might happen to the union movement and the CFMEU. I understand that Queenslanders want hope.

Mr Healy interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members for Cairns, you are now warned.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I understand that they have seen and lived through the chaos and crisis of those opposite. Queenslanders will have a world-class plan. I can tell the House what that will do. It will deliver a once-in-a-generation opportunity. I want every part of Queensland to know that this will be a great moment for all of the state. This will be a moment that unifies us. I have heard about and understand the embarrassment felt by Queenslanders. It has been embarrassing for Queenslanders from one end of the state to the other. In regional Queensland, people have wondered about a government that did not have a plan; that squandered it. Queenslanders in the south-east—

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118(b), relevance. The question was whether or not the Premier intended to keep his promise. I would like you to draw him back to that key element of the question, Mr Speaker.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We will hear points of order in silence. Premier, it was a specific question.

Mr CRISAFULLI: On 25 March, Queenslanders will see what a plan looks like. Queenslanders will see what a vision looks like. Queenslanders will see what a generational infrastructure plan looks like. It is a plan for road and rail, a plan for tourism and a plan to deliver the best world-class Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is a legacy plan. It is a plan that Queenslanders can truly be proud of after 1,000 days of misery from those opposite.

(Time expired)

Ms Boyd interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Before we go to the next question, member for Pine Rivers, you have joined the warning list.

NAPLAN

Mr MILES: My question is to the Minister for Education. In a *Courier-Mail* interview, the minister admitted that he cannot guarantee that NAPLAN results will improve, stating, 'I'm not a teacher.' Will the minister stand down for someone who can deliver better education results?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question. It gives me a chance to speak to the issues that we as a government inherited and that were very important in education. There is a long list: declining enrolments, declining attendance, teacher morale going through the floor and NAPLAN results that were very interesting.

In 2014 when I was last the Minister for Education, ACARA assessed Queensland's performance as 'significantly above' in one test area and 'above' in nine test areas, and Queensland was reported as showing the best improvement. Fast forward to 2024 when we again formed government. Based on the average scale score, Queensland was generally ranked fifth or sixth across most test areas except reading where we were generally ranked seventh. What an indictment that is. Queensland's NAPLAN performance was below that of New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory.

It is not good enough. We had teachers and principals drowning in paperwork and learning outcomes were hitting an all-time low. We have said that we are going to be completely focused on removing red tape so that our teachers can get back to teaching. We are going to make sure that we focus on behaviour. That is why we have announced \$44 million in funding that will go directly to schools. Those opposite have said that that is not enough. I point out that it is \$44 million more than they were putting in. That funding will go directly to schools so they can do the things that they need. By the way, NAPLAN began yesterday for schools unaffected by the weather events.

Those opposite, in cahoots with the unions, have been waging a war on NAPLAN for the past decade. Let's have a look at what former education ministers have said. In a 2020 media statement titled 'Expert review suggests NAPLAN be replaced', the member for McConnel said—

It is clear that the current NAPLAN testing is not world's best practice.

The member for Bulimba, the last education minister, put out 22 ministerial statements with no mention of NAPLAN. That shows that the war on NAPLAN started in conjunction with the unions—and the Queensland Teachers' Union was out there again yesterday saying that NAPLAN should be stopped because students were too stressed. When I was at Rocklea State School, the principal, Deb James, assured me that students were keen to get back, they felt reassured to put all their items in the library and they could get back to NAPLAN, which will happen next week—from Monday, the 17th—for those students who were affected.

The opposition leader thinks I should be worried about job security. As a former leader of the opposition, I am certainly aware of job security and I would say that he should be careful about his.

Weather Events, Recovery

Mr BOOTHMAN: My question is to the Premier and Minister for Veterans. Queenslanders from both ends of the state have been impacted by natural disasters in recent months. Can the Premier inform the House how the Crisafulli government is ensuring we can move quickly from disaster response to the recovery phase?

Mr CRISAFULLI: I start by thanking the member for Theodore for the question, and I want to single out how dedicated he is to his community and also how much he cares during a disaster. I saw that firsthand a little over a year ago after the Christmas Day storms which impacted both his electorate and mine, and I saw it again this time. I congratulate the member for Theodore on his compassion for his local community and how well he has worked particularly with the rural fires at this time. I thank everyone who represents an electorate that has been impacted—and there are many on both sides of this House—for how they have displayed a genuine interest in their respective communities.

The member asked me about challenges at both ends of the state, and the challenges are real. Yesterday, in my answer to the question about the disaster, I spoke about individuals because, in the end, it is always about people. Today I want to tell the story of Mark. Mark and his wife, Sharon, were impacted in the Ingham floods around six weeks ago. I still remember where I met Mark: at the Ingham fire station. Mark is a firey. He moved to Ingham a little over a decade ago, fell in love with the place and bought a house. I asked Mark while he was there, 'How are you going, mate? How do you enjoy living here?' He said, 'I love the place.' I asked, 'You're high and dry at home?' He said, 'No, no. It's the most we've ever had through the place. I haven't had a real chance to get there.'

Mark had not been able to go home. Mark was sleeping on the floor of the fire station. Today I got a chance to go and see Mark at his place. He told me the story about how he had prepared. He had had water in there once before so he lifted up all of his items. He even pulled the doors off the hinges before the floods came. He put them well above the last flood height but, unfortunately, this time it went over the windows. The level of damage inside was devastating to see. He had power points that were covered. His hot-water system went under. Fibro was gone. The impact is significant.

I wanted the chance to do a couple of things for Mark: to thank him personally and to assure him that the Stronger Homes Grant is exactly for people like him. We have already had 300 applications for that grant. It shows that people are willing to stay the course. They want to stay in their communities. They love them and they should be prepared to stay there.

I say to people at both ends of the state: I know that, as we flick the switch from response to recovery, different people will be at different points in the journey, which is why we have to work with local governments to make sure that we process applications as quickly as we can to get people on their feet. I say to every Queenslanders: we understand the impact of disasters. We understand what it means to your home, to your business, to your family and to your mental state. One way or another you matter, and one way or another we will see it through. I assure Queenslanders at both ends of the state that we will build back better.

NAPLAN

Mr DICK: My question is to the Minister for Education. The Premier boasts about ministerial accountability against KPIs. Will the minister stand down if he fails to improve NAPLAN results for young Queenslanders, as outlined in the minister's charter letter?

Mr LANGBROEK: I thank the honourable member for the question because he was the education minister in 2012. I can also refer to the results that we had back then—those from 2008. When I was talking about what happened with Queensland's performance in 2014, it was compared to the 2008 baseline results.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, there is too much noise coming from both sides of the chamber.

Mr LANGBROEK: The person who started NAPLAN was Julia Gillard and then Julie Bishop, to her credit, kept it going. That is how we ended up with a national system of testing. Queensland did not do very well in those 2008 tests.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for McConnel, you are warned.

Mr LANGBROEK: By 2014, when we were last in government, the results showed that Queensland had the fastest and best improvement amongst all the jurisdictions. Over the last decade we have had three education ministers, one of whom—the former member for Ashgrove—said that Gold Coast schools did not deserve air conditioning because they had sea breezes. We had another minister who had no interest in education, only in industrial relations, who said, as I recall, that vaping is no more of a problem in this day and age than smoking was in her era at school. That is the type of

attitude we had to one of the most significant health issues. Of course, we finished with another minister who basically said that our 570,000 state school students should be associated with youth justice. The previous government associated education with youth justice—a terrible slur on students in our schools. Many local members will go to schools and see the great results that have been achieved.

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance under standing order 118(b): the question was very specific about improvements to NAPLAN and whether the minister would stand down if results did not improve.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, the question was around NAPLAN results. I will let you finish your answer.

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes, Mr Speaker. Our commitment to NAPLAN, as stated in my charter letter, is to make sure that we get teachers focusing on literacy and numeracy, to make sure that we have a proper funding agreement and to make sure that we sort out bullying behaviour. Finally, I point out that when I inherited the portfolio after the 2012 election the member who asked the question had not been to the office for six months.

Weather Events, Recovery

Mr LEE: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier outline to the House how the Crisafulli LNP government has put the needs of Queenslanders first throughout the recovery from Cyclone Alfred, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any approaches that have not put the needs of Queenslanders first?

Mr BLEIJIE: I thank the honourable member for Hervey Bay for being a strong advocate for the people of Hervey Bay. It was fantastic to join him there this morning as we talked to the locals and the businesses affected by the recent storm event. Whether it is in Far North, North or South-East Queensland, our recovery efforts are focused on ensuring no Queenslanders is left behind—no matter which corner of the state they are in.

It was a pleasure to be in Hervey Bay with the hardworking member this morning. We were greeted by Mayor George Seymour, and I thank Mayor George for the briefing he gave us on the impacts of the recent weather event on his community. I thank the local firefighters for welcoming me to the fire station, including the local fire union rep who took me on a tour of the facility. Then we travelled to the Eli Waters Shopping Centre, where we met Leif from Farm Gate Express, Mel from the Windmill Bakery—and Emmanuel gave us great coffee—and Cass and Lisa from the Woolies team. A lot of the Pialba team were there because the store in Pialba in Hervey Bay was completely flooded so it has shut down for a while. To Cass, Lisa and all the Woolies team: thank you for your amazing efforts. The mateship that was on display in Woolies today was just fantastic. I also mention Michelle at the Pialba newsagency—her business has been stripped bare because of the floods; Moz from Bakers Delight; and Scotty from Scotty's Mad About Meats. They are real people experiencing real impacts. They want us focusing on them, not on politics.

I have to say to the honourable member, who asked about the alternative or the priorities of others, that yesterday we saw on display the priorities of the Labor Party in Queensland, and it was not good. There is time to be an opposition and it is not in a disaster. There is time in opposition to be the opposition. When there is a disaster, a recovery and people are still without power, you have to down the fight and come together and work for the community. The Labor Party do not understand that.

Yesterday, the member for Pine Rivers was not asking about electricity or firefighters, but her big focus was who she saw on TV that night. That was her priority—who was on TV that night other than those from *MAFS* and *Better Homes and Gardens*; who was the star from parliament on TV that night. The member for Waterford asked about the federal opposition leader and not about her constituents, constituents of other members in here, electricity, firefighters, first responders, swiftwater rescues—nothing. She asked about Peter Dutton. The member for Morayfield was more concerned about a teleconference that they were afforded an opportunity to attend. That is something the Labor Party never afforded anyone else in this parliament in their time in government. The Leader of the Opposition is not focused on recovery or people but on just pure politics. That is why Steven Miles, the Leader of the Opposition, is not up to the job.

(Time expired)

Schools, Bullying

Ms FARMER: My question is to the Minister for Education. In a *Courier-Mail* interview it is reported that the minister was evasive about how bullying statistics would be tracked. What is the minister's plan to reduce bullying in schools, and will the minister stand down if it does not decrease?

Mr LANGBROEK: There is a rise in bullying in Queensland, which is unacceptable anywhere. It is a worldwide issue, and we know it is happening here. We have said that we want to put more resources into this issue. We have a significant plan that we are still working on. This will be as well as the \$44 million we allocated to behaviour management because we know that behaviour and bullying are closely associated.

The last thing we want are terrible effects on young people's mental health and wellbeing. We believe it is everybody's responsibility—schools, educators, parents and carers, communities and students themselves—to work together to create positive environments. That is why we have announced new actions to strengthen our approach to addressing bullying in schools. We will implement new actions to provide school students and families with additional support. We will be standing up an expert stakeholder group. I have to acknowledge that Tropical Cyclone Alfred put a hold on those issues because government had to stop while we dealt with those issues. We will make significant announcements about this group. We are bringing university experts in to work together with community groups.

Ms Farmer interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bulimba, you asked the question. I expect you want to hear the answer.

Mr LANGBROEK: We launched a rapid response team model that will provide dedicated and intensive support in schools and for schools when high-level bullying incidents occur.

We are working with Parentline to expand its free and confidential advice and counselling service to address the increasing need for specialist parent support services, with a specific focus on bullying. We are also going to, as we announced during the election campaign, have more funding for support teachers—whether it is student wellbeing officers or chaplains. Importantly, it is a renewed approach to prevent and respond to bullying, with a focus on fostering shared community responsibility. We are also going to undertake in-depth research.

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr LANGBROEK: I take the interjection from the member for Currumbin who said that teachers welcome these types of activities. We have teachers and principals dealing with issues that take them away from their core business—issues related to red tape and issues which they are not necessarily familiar with or are dealing with on their own. Psychologist, chaplains and social workers can help with those issues. That is why we announced \$44 million to go directly to schools. I know members are very appreciative of it for their own communities.

We are going to have strong and consistent approaches to student behaviour management, partnering with parents. We need parents to be involved because we only have students for about 13 per cent of the time. We need our parents and communities to be involved. Safeguarding our communities is a shared responsibility. That is how we will address bullying.

North Queensland, Weather Events

Mrs POOLE: My question is to the Minister for Local Government and Water and Minister for Fire, Disaster Recovery and Volunteers. Will the minister inform the House on how the Crisafulli government continues to support North Queenslanders to recover from last month's devastating floods?

Ms LEAHY: The member is one of the hardest working local MPs I know. I also thank the other local MPs in Townsville because they too are hardworking. I know that the member for Mundingburra was out doorknocking people who were impacted by the severe tropical event in North Queensland.

I would like to extend my gratitude to everyone involved with the North Queensland recovery. I want to acknowledge the North Queensland members, many of whom I spent time with. They went above and beyond for their local communities and did a sterling job. I was with these members. They are only new members and to be hit with that type of event can be very challenging, but they did an outstanding job for their communities. There were other members too. I mention the member for Hinchinbrook as well. I thank him for the time he afforded me to talk to him because his electorate was especially hard hit around the northern areas of Townsville and Ingham.

When the tropical low hit Queensland earlier this year the Crisafulli government said we had Queensland's backs. In the weeks since we have worked hard to prove that. We have worked with the Commonwealth and councils to get support to those people in their times of need. Within days we have activated funding for personal hardship assistance, counterdisaster operations, reconstruction of public assets, grants and loans for primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profits, and freight subsidies for primary producers. Just yesterday, we heard the member for Burdekin announce the grants for primary producers, small businesses and not-for-profits.

I have seen some of the devastation of sporting clubs that has occurred in that area. They have been particularly hard hit. I know that there are a lot of volunteers who have worked very hard for their clubs. The devastation of some of the sporting facilities in North Queensland is incredible. My heart goes out to those volunteers. I know that our local members will work side by side with them across Townsville and in Hinchinbrook to make sure that sporting clubs get back on their feet.

Our impacted North Queensland farmers can now receive up to \$75,000 to help them get back on their feet. I know that is particularly important for the cane industry. Small businesses and not-for-profits can now receive up to \$50,000 to assist them. We are well into the recovery in North Queensland, but we are not done yet. The Crisafulli government is in it for the long haul and North Queenslanders know that. North Queenslanders know that we will back them every time we possibly can.

Education Funding

Ms FENTIMAN: My question is to the Minister for Education. Queensland is the only state that has not signed an agreement with the Commonwealth government for a 25 per cent funding contribution. Can the minister explain why this has not happened, and why is the minister dragging the chain on important funding for young Queenslanders?

Mr LANGBROEK: To speak about federal funding draws out the comparison with what we inherited, which was no funding deal at all. Basically, on 26 October—after nine years, eight months and 26 days—I came in after the privilege of being announced as the new Minister for Education and the Arts to be told that schools are desperate, and I am talking especially about non-state schools which rely on us to be the mailbox to get their money from the federal government, because there is no funding deal for 2025. That is the issue that we inherited.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Cross-chamber chatter will stop. Once again, I am having trouble hearing the minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: We were able to arrange, through negotiation, a one-year deal—an extension—which gave succour to the non-state schools, which by early January were in danger of not being able to meet their spending needs. We simply got a one-year deal and we continue to work with the federal government on making sure we get the best deal for Queensland students.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: I just gave a ruling about cross-chamber chatter. The minister has the call.

Mr LANGBROEK: The interim funding deal, the interim agreement, provided for the continuation of the existing shares of the Schooling Resource Standard, and we continue to negotiate. Other jurisdictions have signed up. Some of them have done deals with the federal government. We are determined—I have been at meetings with my federal counterpart, the Hon. Jason Clare, and I have also been in significant discussions with our Premier—to get a fair share for Queensland schools and for Queensland students.

Those opposite were unable to negotiate any sort of deal that gave any certainty to anyone. We need to make sure we have resourcing for the things we have been asked about already today—making sure that we can cut red tape; making sure that we can deal with behaviour and bullying; making sure that we can get teachers back to the literacy and numeracy issues that are important to them; and, importantly, making sure that we can use our NAPLAN test results—which those opposite have continued to oppose, yet we know that those tests give us information as to where we should be putting our money.

Our state has more school needs in terms of the Gonski needs—small, regional, remote, Indigenous, disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, English as a second language, as well as socio-economic status. They are the things that, by putting more money into our schools, will lead to better outcomes, and that way we can get on with the business of education, which is so important for the future of our kids.

Weather Events, Recovery

Mr BAILLIE: My question is to the Minister for Housing and Public Works. Can the minister advise how the Crisafulli LNP government is working with Queenslanders to build back better in the aftermath of natural disasters such as the North Queensland floods and Tropical Cyclone Alfred?

Mr O'CONNOR: Firstly, I begin by thanking the member for Townsville for giving the education minister a break from all of those Dorothy Dixers he has been receiving. He has been getting a tough line of questioning and he has been handling it well. The member for Townsville, of course, knows a thing or two about disaster resilience. The member for Townsville before coming to this place was a sparkie. I guess he is still a sparkie. Throughout Cyclone Kirrily last year he was helping to reconnect homes when supply lines were cut from trees falling over. The member for Townsville was out there on the tools helping Ergon get homes reconnected. In the 2019 floods he was helping homes to make sure that switchboards were lifted up, that air conditioners were operational again and that thermostats were working again.

The member for Townsville would know that when extreme weather strikes Queensland it leaves devastation in its wake. It shows the resilience and determination at both ends of our state. Many of these communities have been through this before and, sadly, they will go through it again. We know that people in these areas are sick of replacing the same things over and over again.

The Crisafulli government knows that if you build in resilience now in the recovery phase you will save money in the long term. That is why in response to the flooding in North and Far North Queensland we announced our Stronger Homes Grant program. This was jointly funded through the Commonwealth-State Disaster Funding Recovery Arrangements. It provides grants up to \$10,000 for eligible home owners in flood-affected areas to help them build back better. This will include raising essential services—switchboards, hot-water systems, air conditioners. It will involve using more flood resistant materials to reduce damage. Doing this work now will reduce the cost of recovery. It will ease the burden on insurance premiums. Most importantly, it will protect Queenslanders from the frustration of replacing those items again and again.

Since we announced this program on 26 February, my department has been working tirelessly to get this program open. It has done this in record time, with applications opening as of midday today. I want to thank the councils, the insurance industry and everyone who has worked to make sure that this funding can go live to deliver practical, achievable solutions for flood-affected homes.

Around 300 home owners, as the Premier outlined, have already signed up to receive updates on this grant which is a clear sign that Queenslanders want this support and they are ready to take it up. Home owners affected by the recent flooding can check their eligibility at the Stronger Homes Grant website. We have made it as easy as possible for them to apply for this grant. I will table some further information on the grant and the process that home owners can go through. While we cannot prevent natural disasters, we can make sure that Queenslanders build back better to lessen the impact in future.

Tabled paper: Document, dated March 2025, titled 'Information for Contractors: North and Far North Queensland Stronger Homes Grant' [\[196\]](#).

Minister for Education and the Arts

Ms GRACE: My question is to the Minister for Education. Diary extracts reveal that the member for Moggill has attended cabinet meetings since he was appointed an assistant minister.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Silence!

Ms GRACE: Is this evidence that the Minister for Education is out of his depth and the real education minister is the member for Moggill?

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, I honestly did not hear that question. I am going to have to ask you to read it again, member for McConnel. We will hear the question in silence.

Ms GRACE: Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Minister for Education. Diary extracts reveal that the member for Moggill has attended cabinet meetings since he was appointed an assistant minister. Is this evidence that the Minister for Education is out of his depth and the real education minister is the member for Moggill?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, I will allow the question but you do have a little bit of leeway there.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the honourable member for the question.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: On this occasion could we hear the minister? I am struggling, mostly from members on my right, to hear the minister. Minister, you have the call.

Mr LANGBROEK: The member for Moggill is my friend.

A government member: And you're ambitious for him!

Mr LANGBROEK: And I am ambitious for him.

Mr SPEAKER: That is not helping.

Mr LANGBROEK: I also want to acknowledge that the member for Moggill, in his former role as the shadow minister for education, and I work very closely together in terms of discussing issues in education, many of which we have now inherited from those opposite. I have outlined them to the House today—whether it is about NAPLAN, red tape, bullying—

Ms Fentiman interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Waterford.

Mr LANGBROEK:—declining enrolment, declining standards in our schools or spiralling WorkCover claims. They are all issues. In the member for Moggill's case we made two significant promises: a new school in Rockhampton and a business case for a new school in Moggill. They are all things that we are going to do to make sure we continue the standard of excellence expected of this side in returning education to the level that it should be in Queensland—which is not coming seventh or sixth amongst other jurisdictions. I make no apologies for having discussions and meeting—

Ms Fentiman interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Waterford, you are now warned.

Mr LANGBROEK:—which is also in my diary, with the member for Moggill about an out-of-school-hours care issue in his own electorate. He is a good local member working on behalf of his electorate—an electorate that has been ignored by those opposite for the whole time that I have been in this parliament. He is an active local member.

Decisions about cabinet are made by the Premier. Importantly, the Leader of the House and I work together—it is called teamwork. I know that that is a foreign concept to those opposite, but we work closely together. Of course, there is also the fact that he is the only doctor in the House and I am the only dentist. In that case, we have most of the health modalities covered.

Dr Rowan: Who got the higher TE score?

Mr LANGBROEK: Of course he did get a higher TE score than I did, and that is something he never lets me forget. One thing we do not do is exaggerate our academic achievements. He is a doctor and I am a dentist; the member for McConnel only went to Harvard to do a short-term course.

Weather Events, Small and Family Business

Mr FIELD: My question is to the Minister for Small and Family Business. Will the minister update the House on how the Crisafulli government will support small and family businesses to get back on their feet in the aftermath of natural disasters such as the North Queensland floods and Tropical Cyclone Alfred?

Mr MINNIKIN: First of all, I congratulate and thank the member for Capalaba for the question. We know he is a great advocate when it comes to youth crime, but as we have seen—and in fact the Premier saw in the last couple of days—he is a great advocate for small and family business as well as the sporting clubs in his area.

As we all know, in tough times Queenslanders indeed come together. As we have heard from the Premier and other ministers in their statements, as we flick the switch from response to recovery we will ensure that we are doing everything possible to help small and family businesses get back on their feet as quickly as possible. This morning I have been out visiting about four or five small businesses not just in my electorate but outside as well. The day after the winds and waters subsided we started the assessment process.

Mr Speaker, to give you an idea of the scale, almost three in four of Queensland's 495,000 small and family businesses are in ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred's impact area. That is 75 per cent. Chambers of commerce from across the region have told me of multiple examples of small and family businesses that have been heavily impacted. We are already working with the federal government on what support is needed, and I welcome the announcement by Minister Leahy this morning regarding the start of that financial support for small and family businesses. As we know, our efforts are indeed making a difference.

Ms Pease interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Lytton, if you are so interested I expect you would like to hear the answer to the question.

Mr MINNIKIN: The small businesses and chambers that I have spoken to recently have noted the pro-active efforts of the government. On that basis, the presidents of those chambers of commerce from the Gold Coast and North Stradbroke Island as well as the Southern Moreton Bay Islands have told me that I am the first small business minister they have ever heard from. The Australasian Convenience and Petroleum Marketers Association wrote to me in response to steps taken by the Deputy Premier to improve retail sector access. They said—

Our industry's immediate ability to restock service stations across South-East Queensland without restriction was crucial. A substantial number of service stations have re-opened with confidence, assured of their ability to access fuel and essential convenience items such as ice, bread and milk in the immediate aftermath of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

We are a large and diverse state. In the next couple of weeks I look forward to returning to North Queensland and working with Andrew Cripps in relation to recovery coordination teams there. With the Australian government we have opened up a range of disaster assistance for small business in the north and South-East Queensland.

CopperString

Mr KATTER: My question is to the Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership. The Powerlink chair and CEO were given a shovel-ready CopperString project two years ago. Despite a commitment from the then premier, not a single kilometre of transmission line is up, with questions raised around the independence of board chair Kathy Hirschfeld and today Harmony Gold stating that project delays relating to CopperString are risking billions of dollars worth of investment. In light of this, will the Treasurer immediately remove CEO Paul Simshauser and chair Kathy Hirschfeld from Powerlink?

Mr JANETZKI: I thank the member for the question. The member for Traeger has a longstanding interest in this project. It is an important project for North Queensland. It is a very important project for economic development right across the north to connect those western communities into the NEM and make sure they have every possibility of sharing in the wealth and advancing Queensland interests in the future. I would say to the honourable member for Traeger that when those opposite were in government this project never, ever would have happened. It never would have happened, honourable member. Let me just explain—

Ms Fentiman interjected.

Mr JANETZKI: I will take the interjection from the shadow treasurer.

Mr SPEAKER: The shadow treasurer is on a warning. I will ask you to leave the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Waterford withdrew from the chamber at 3.24 pm.

Mr JANETZKI: The shadow treasurer was there for every single CBRC meeting that decided not to reveal to Queenslanders the actual truth about CopperString. The shadow treasurer was there for every single one of the CBRC meetings where those opposite hid the truth from the Queensland people as to what it actually cost.

On this side of the House this government will find a way to deliver CopperString, whereas those opposite never, ever would have delivered it. You just need to go back through the history of CopperString. Initially in 2020 it was costed at \$1.8 billion; by 2023 it was \$5 billion; and then we discovered in August of last year it was \$6.2 billion. We found out after the election when the depth of their deceit was revealed that it was actually \$9 billion—

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Woodridge, you are now warned.

Mr JANETZKI: What had happened was it appeared—

Mr KATTER: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I do appreciate the contribution by the Treasurer, but under 118(b), relevance, I ask if we could get an answer to the question, please.

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer, there was a specific part of that question. If you would address that in the time you have remaining, please.

Mr JANETZKI: We now know those opposite knew the cost. The member for Springwood knew the cost was \$9 billion. The Treasurer knew it but did not reveal it to the people of Queensland. The former treasurer knew it. In respect of any conflicts, I expect the highest standards in respect of corporate governance. Any declarations that ought to be made, ought to be made and then managed appropriately in accordance with the highest standards of corporate governance.

Weather Events, Transport Infrastructure

Mr KRAUSE: My question is to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. Can the minister advise how the Crisafulli LNP government is working with Queenslanders at both ends of the state to ensure the resilience of our transport infrastructure as we recover from natural disasters?

Mr MICKELBERG: I thank the member for Scenic Rim for the question. I want to acknowledge the member for Scenic Rim's commitment to guiding his community through the difficult week that was Tropical Cyclone Alfred. Many of his communities have been, and still are, impacted as a consequence of Tropical Cyclone Alfred. I want to place on record my appreciation and acknowledgment of his efforts to keep the community informed and to work with them to stay safe and guide them through as we transition into recovery.

We have had a difficult month or so here with two cyclones in Queensland, one in the north and one in the south. I am not sure if it is unprecedented, but they have certainly impacted many Queenslanders. We have seen bridges washed away and major infrastructure damaged as a consequence of inundation in many parts of the state. In fact, in the north in the vicinity of Ollera Creek we got over two metres of rain in around a week, and as a consequence we saw bridges there washed away. From the cape to Coolangatta we have seen communities rise to the challenge. The government is committed to ensuring that we build back better as we recover from these natural disasters. We prepared in advance of the cyclones, we kept communities safe, and so too we will guide communities and build back better through the recovery.

While recovery needs to be about supporting communities—and we have heard from Minister Leahy and other ministers today in relation to some of the measures we have put in place to support individuals, businesses, not-for-profits and sporting clubs as they recover from these natural disaster events—so, too, does our focus need to turn to building back better public transport infrastructure both in the north and in the south. Bridges like at Ollera Creek cannot be reconstructed as they were. We did some immediate works to reopen the Bruce Highway, and I want to pay tribute to the RoadTek workers and the ADF personnel who managed to get traffic flowing in a very quick timeframe in very difficult circumstances after the damage at Ollera Creek. What we cannot do is build back the exact same thing as we had beforehand. That is the definition of insanity. This government is committed to building back better—whether it is at Ollera Creek, the Gilbert River Bridge, Plantation Creek at Ayr or Tamborine Mountain Road in the Scenic Rim electorate. In 2020 we saw the Tamborine Mountain Road closed for nearly two years—

Mr Krause: The goat track.

Mr MICKELBERG: The goat track; I take the interjection from the member for Scenic Rim. We saw it reopen in 2022 and it is closed again now. We must do better. We will work with the federal government to deliver better infrastructure for every single Queensland. These disasters have a great impact on our communities, but they are also an opportunity to build back better so we do not make the mistakes of the past over and over again.

Minister for Education and the Arts

Ms SCANLON: My question is of the Minister for Education and the Arts. Does the minister care more about being the next mayor of the Gold Coast than delivering quality education for young Queenslanders?

Dr ROWAN: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I submit to you that the question as asked by the member for Gaven does not directly relate to the minister's portfolio areas of responsibility.

Speaker's Ruling, Question Out of Order

Mr SPEAKER: Your point of order is valid. That question does not go to the minister's portfolio so I will rule that out of order and go to the member for Southport.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: We will have silence while the member for Southport asks his question.

Beaches, Preservation

Mr MOLHOEK: My question is to the Minister for the Environment. Tropical Cyclone Alfred created erosion along large stretches of the Queensland coast. Will the minister inform the House how the Crisafulli LNP government is working to increase the resilience of Queensland's pristine beaches?

Mr POWELL: I thank the member for Southport for his question. In so doing, I thank him for his continued advocacy on behalf of the members of the Gold Coast community—alongside my good colleagues the members for Currumbin, Surfers Paradise, Burleigh and Mermaid Beach, and I will even include the member for Bonney as well as the Premier in Broadwater. I also want to acknowledge the entire Gold Coast community, who have witnessed firsthand the damage that can occur when coastal erosion happens.

Queensland's pristine coastline is one of our most recognisable icons, which is why the Crisafulli government is committed to protecting it not only now but also well into the future. We have seen the damage done by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred and its immediate aftermath. We also saw what the flooding has done in North Queensland and the impacts on the coastline there. Right up and down the Queensland coast, machines are on the ground reprofiling beaches and doing the work necessary to build back better. As I mentioned yesterday, the dredges are moving into position to undertake what is called 'rainbowing', which is spraying the sand directly back onto the beaches so they can be replenished.

I want to take this time to thank all of those on the front line—the emergency response workers, our community volunteers, departmental staff and all of those hardworking people who are out there doing this work as we speak. Under the Crisafulli government, there is no daylight between our response and recovery. We have not wasted a moment in getting out on the ground, standing shoulder to shoulder with Queenslanders, doing what is needed to make sure our coast gets back on its feet.

I would like to pay tribute to the many dedicated tourism operators on the Gold Coast, like the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary in the Currumbin electorate. I understand that more than 40 per cent of the large trees on their 27-hectare property were downed during that storm. Staff went the extra mile. Not only did they care for the injured wildlife throughout the power outages and that extreme weather; they have been putting in an incredible effort over the last couple of days. Excitingly, this award-winning tourist attraction will reopen tomorrow morning. What an outstanding outcome.

Beyond the Gold Coast, I speak of Caloundra, Pumicestone and, as I said, North Queensland, where I met with Mayor Ramon Jayo from Hinchinbrook. We know there is more work required. Just because the government's response has been rapid, it does not mean the response will be short. We have launched our \$6 million funding program called QCoast2100 in partnership with the federal government and the LGAQ. It is an opportunity for councils the length and breadth of the coast to work on what they need to do to build resilience into their coastline. We look forward to their funding applications. We want to make sure it delivers on-the-ground work to make sure our coastline comes back better than ever and forever.

Weather Events, State Schools

Mr BAILEY: My question is to the Minister for Education. Can the minister release the advice provided by his department to schools on when principals could and could not reopen on Monday following the cyclone?

Mr LANGBROEK: As I understand it, there has been some debate around the state about what happened at QDMC and what the Premier has said as a general principle about what we should do not just in schools but also across our community. That was to make sure in schools, for example, that we have QBuild come in and do a rapid damage assessment, and I want to thank Minister O'Connor and his department for the efforts they have made there.

I have been advised there are just six state schools left now that are not open. That is six state schools, down from 661 at the start of the week. I think that should be a matter for congratulations. That includes my own electorate of Surfers Paradise, where my state school will reopen tomorrow. I want to thank all of the agencies for their assistance there, because there was significant damage in 12 to 16 rooms.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The question was quite simple. It asked the minister—

Mr SPEAKER: Are you rising on a specific point of order?

Mr BAILEY: I am rising on a point of order on relevance.

Mr SPEAKER: Okay. That is all you need to say. We do not need a long explanation. You are rising on relevance.

Mr BAILEY: Will he release the advice: yes or no?

Mr SPEAKER: The minister has been on his feet for one minute. He has two minutes to go.

Mr LANGBROEK: When it comes to schools, we work with QBuild and they say when it is okay to go into schools—because they do a rapid damage assessment. We then have principals who work with their regional directors and school supervisors. This has not been a matter of formal advice, can I just say; it has been about how we are going to work together, understanding people in their local communities. This applied across the state. We were not going to hide under the doona because in some areas we had a bit of rain but no damage. We are not going to close up and make everyone fearful, as those opposite did about five years ago when they made everyone scared about the future. That includes saying potentially this week that our students are too traumatised to do NAPLAN. That is not the experience I have heard from the schools I have been to—whether it is St Vincent's school in my electorate or Rocklea State School.

In answer to the member's question, no-one is asking anyone to do anything that is not safe. That is our No. 1 priority. That means working with QBuild. We had one state school where, after there had been an assessment, there needed to be another assessment. The important thing is that we are never going to put our staff, teachers, principals, associated staff, students or parents in any type of danger. That would be absolutely foolish. We have asked principals, who are leaders in their community, to take the lead and work with their school supervisors, regional directors and other government departments to make sure we can get back to normal as quickly as possible and as safely as possible. I am not sure what those opposite are suggesting, except that maybe they are in cahoots with the QTU and do not want to go back to NAPLAN.

Weather Events, Agriculture Industry

Mr McDONALD: My question is to the Minister for Primary Industries. Will the minister outline to the House the importance of working with our agricultural sector as we recover from the flooding in North Queensland and from Tropical Cyclone Alfred?

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you have two minutes.

Mr PERRETT: I thank the member for Lockyer for his interest in this particular matter. I have never seen a more passionate member in this House for not only his electorate, but as a former police officer and a former councillor who understands his region particularly well.

I was able to travel to the Lockyer Valley this morning to see firsthand the impact on primary industries and what that means not only for the immediate future but also for the longer term, and it is significant. I was able to meet with Deputy Mayor Chris Wilson and the Chair of the Lockyer Valley Growers Association, Mick Sippel. They were able to tell me that there will be an ongoing impact to that region.

I have also heard from the member for Scenic Rim on particularly the Fassifern Valley and the impact that the cyclone has had on his region. It has been significant in that region as well. There have also been impacts across the whole of the south-east—into the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast—to a myriad of primary industries, including abattoirs and processing facilities. As I said earlier, there has been a direct effect to dairy farmers. The impact is there.

The important thing is that we understand that impact and we are responding as a department. The Department of Primary Industries is assessing that impact as we speak. We are asking for industry to get that information in through the disaster survey that we have; it is important that we gather that information.

I also acknowledge, and we should not forget, the impact in North Queensland. I have been on the ground in the north as I mentioned earlier, in the Herbert region, into the Burdekin and I have also been to Tully and met with banana growers and their representatives there and have seen the impact, and understand the impact in turn it will have directly on fresh produce in this state. It is important that we all understand that. It is important as a government that we respond and that the response actually meets the need on the ground. I assure members that we will continue to work as a state government and work with the Commonwealth to make certain we deliver the assistance that is required.

Mr SPEAKER: The period for question time has expired.


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (SUPPLEMENTARY 2023-2024) BILL

APPROPRIATION (SUPPLEMENTARY 2023-2024) BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from 12 March (see p. 400), on motion of Mr Janetzki—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Hon. DC JANETZKI** (Toowoomba South—LNP) (Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership) (3.43 pm), continuing: It is wonderful to be able to finish my contribution. My rhythm after 27 minutes last night was interrupted, but I have three minutes left. I note that the shadow treasurer is that disrespecting of the appropriation bills that she managed to get herself kicked out of the House right when she needs to speak. The shadow treasurer, who is due to be speaking in 2½ minutes on the appropriation bills and apparently trying to—

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The Treasurer, I am sure, has been around this place long enough to know the convention on the mentioning of the absence of members. We had a conversation earlier about this minute and a half and I think he is well out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Treasurer, confine your contribution to the bill.


Mr JANETZKI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I look forward to those opposite trying to defend their legacy because if this bill has taught us anything, it is the last sorry chapter of the fiscal vandalism story of those opposite that they brought to and wreaked havoc on this state. We finally revealed in Labor's last budget update the \$218 billion debt and the nearly \$10 billion in interest costs at the end of the forwards. That is their legacy. I look forward to hearing them defend it. Some \$9 billion in unforeseen expenditure—11.6 per cent beyond the original appropriation. It is 11.6 per cent above the original appropriation—\$9 billion. That is how bad their management of the Queensland budget was.

Of all the numbers I mentioned last night, there was one that I forgot which tells the tale of their long-term deceit in respect of the Queensland budget. Over the first nine years of the former Labor government, expenses grew at an average of 6.6 per cent. Across the forwards in the 2023-24 budget, they would have had Queenslanders believe that, across the four years, expense growth would have been 1.4 per cent. If there is one number that shows the depth of their deceit, it is that those opposite, when they were in government, knew that expenses grew at 6.6 per cent for the first nine years, but in their last budget they pretended they were going to grow at 1.4 per cent for the next four years. That is

it in a microcosm—their lack of respect for taxpayer money and that they would say and do anything to hang onto power. Thankfully, the Queensland people saw through it. Notwithstanding everything that the former government did to try to hang onto power, the Queensland people saw through it. My only hope is that those opposite are never again trusted with the state's finances again.

Mr de BRENNI: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order in relation to the Treasurer's continued remarks and his disorderly conduct in respect of his citing the absence of a member. I think we should provide him the opportunity to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): There is no point of order.

 **Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training) (3.47 pm): I rise today to speak in relation to the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill 2024 and the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill 2024. These bills, which form an essential part of our annual financial process under the Financial Accountability Act 2009, are not merely routine instruments of fiscal administration. They also stand as a powerful statement about accountability and the stewardship of Queensland taxpayers' money.

On 10 December 2024, our Treasurer, who also serves as Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership, introduced these bills into the Legislative Assembly. They were subsequently referred to the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee for joint consideration, with the committee reporting its recommendations to pass them on 7 February 2025. This careful legislative process underscores that the decisions made today are grounded in both procedural rigour and a commitment to ensuring every dollar is spent and properly accounted for.

The bills before us are designed to formally authorise the payment of unforeseen expenditure incurred during the 2023-24 financial year. In effect, they provide supplementary appropriations for a range of departments, as well as the operations of the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Services, yet behind these technical details lies a broader narrative—a narrative of fiscal mismanagement, reckless spending and a clear disregard for the hard-earned money of Queenslanders. It is now the third time that the former government has attempted to manage the budget for that financial year.

Traditionally, unforeseen expenditure is approved in a single, timely supplementary appropriation bill introduced in the following financial year. Instead, faced with crisis and chaos, the former Labor administration resorted to repeated measures that ultimately culminated in a record overspend, a catastrophic failure that will leave a lasting mark on Queensland's fiscal history.

Queenslanders will be well aware that the record overspend incurred by the previous government reached unprecedented levels. Their actions, characterised by uncontrolled unfunded promises and a clear indifference to the provision of essential services, have not only burdened our state's future but also eroded public trust. The inefficiencies of that period are evident in every facet of our current financial discussions, with the scars of mismanagement visible in underfunded programs and neglected community needs. The bills before us are not merely about authorising payments; they symbolise a full stop on nearly a decade of fiscal vandalism. They crystallise the consequences of decisions made without due care or responsibility.

Today we are not simply endorsing expenditures; we are holding a government to account for its missteps and for a mismanagement that has left Queensland grappling with challenges in health care, education, housing and public safety. Let me be very clear: the unforeseen expenditure authorised by the former treasurer, now enshrined in these bills, was not the result of unforeseen emergencies alone but stemmed from a systemic failure to plan, control and exercise a responsible budget. Throughout that troubled financial year, decisions were made that pushed our state's fiscal limits to dangerous levels. While the precise figures of unforeseen expenditure have been cited elsewhere, what remains indisputable is the legacy of a government that lost control of the purse strings, leaving behind a trail of underfunded services and unmet promises.

It is not solely the magnitude of the spending that should alarm us but also the manner in which these decisions were reached. In the final months of the previous administration, critical infrastructure projects were launched on the back of grand promises that never materialised. The narrative from that period is replete with examples of projects whose costs ballooned unexpectedly, warnings from committees about potential rating downgrades and expert cautions that fiscal discipline was rapidly waning. They were not merely political jibes; they were clear indicators that Queensland's financial stability was at risk. The legislative process that has now led us to these bills is, in part, an endeavour to rectify that very situation.

There are tangible instances of failure that resonate with every Queenslander. In health care, for example, despite additional funds allocated to Queensland Health, issues such as ambulance ramping persist. In the realm of child safety, even significant financial inputs have not closed the funding gap that would have otherwise left vulnerable children exposed to risk. Similarly, promises made in housing have not translated into the delivery of new homes and community infrastructure. These examples, drawn from both the official bill and supplementary talking points, vividly illustrate the chasm between the promises made by the previous government and the reality experienced by Queenslanders. It is now incumbent upon us to contrast these missteps with the clear, steady vision of the Crisafulli LNP government—a government elected on a mandate to deliver a fresh start for Queenslanders.


Since coming to office, we have embarked on a path to repair the damage wrought by fiscal mismanagement. Our approach is threefold: to restore fiscal discipline; to target investments in areas that deliver tangible benefits; and to ensure every expenditure is both justified and in the best interests of Queenslanders. We have already taken decisive steps to identify and rectify the inefficiencies that characterised the previous decade. A comprehensive audit of the former government's spending has not only revealed the extent of waste but also pinpointed where funds were misallocated or lost amid bureaucratic red tape. By scrutinising every dollar, we have started to chart a course towards restoring fiscal responsibility. This painstaking process is essential for rebuilding the trust so recklessly squandered.

Our government is also acting decisively on major infrastructure projects that suffered from cost blowouts and overruns under Labor's stewardship. We have cancelled or paused projects that were not delivering value, thereby saving billions for the state's budget. For example speculative investments that offered little promise of a return have been halted and resources have been redirected towards projects that demonstrably yield economic and social benefits. This balancing of priorities stands as a testament to the fact that fiscal responsibility and effective governance are not mutually exclusive but are, in fact, mutually reinforcing.

In addition to these corrective measures, we have set in motion a series of initiatives to foster long-term accountability. Among these is the establishment of the Queensland Productivity Commission, a body dedicated to ensuring every future project undergoes rigorous cost-benefit analysis. By insisting on such scrutiny, we are ensuring future expenditure is aligned with the genuine needs of our community rather than the transient political ambitions of a mismanaged past. The legacy of the previous administration is one of cost blowouts, unfunded promises and service delivery failures. We have witnessed vital projects in transport, health, education and infrastructure being undermined by a lack of planning and utter disregard for financial prudence.

Even as we acknowledge these failures, we must also recognise that the current government is determined to forge a different path. Our actions are guided by transparency, accountability and, above all, a deep respect for the money that Queenslanders have worked so hard to earn. There is no doubt that the record overspend and fiscal mismanagement of the past will leave long-lasting scars, but let this moment also mark the beginning of a new chapter—a chapter in which Queensland's finances are managed with the care, discipline and integrity our constituents demand. The bills before us are not just financial instruments; they are a declaration that Queensland will no longer tolerate a legacy of debt, deficit and deceit. Every minister in this chamber can, and must, speak to the failures of the previous administration within their respective portfolios. It is incumbent on all of us to ensure the shortcomings of the past are not repeated.

Today we stand united, ready to embrace a future defined by responsible spending, targeted investment and an unwavering commitment to delivering respect for taxpayers' money. Let it be known that our fiscal policies are driven not by ideology but by the imperative to safeguard the prosperity and wellbeing of our state. We have learned from the past and are now taking every measure to ensure future budgets reflect not the chaos of missed opportunities but the promise of a brighter, more secure future. In doing so, we are not only rectifying past mistakes but also laying the groundwork for an economy that works for all, where every investment is a step towards a more prosperous Queensland.

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (3.57 pm): I rise to talk about the appropriation bills. Members will have to do without the shadow treasurer for a little while but they have me instead. Here is my CV.

Ms SIMPSON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. It is against the protocols of the House to refer to members not being in the House, whether it is temporary or not. This is a point of order that is accepted under the protocols. I seek your ruling, please.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): There is no point of order. The member on his feet was referring to the fact that you would have to put up with him for the moment.

Mr WHITING: I thought that was going to be her point of order, but that is okay. As I said in the last sitting week, I reckon Labor are the best economic managers in Australia—absolutely! Members heard me say during the last sitting week that across Australia inflation is down, interest rates are down and job opportunities are up. That is because Labor want the economy to work for Queenslanders—ordinary Queenslanders, not millionaire donors like the ones feted by Peter Dutton the other night. While we were filling up sandbags, he was filling up moneybags. Members have heard it said before. Labor wants the Queensland budget to work for ordinary Queensland working families—people like Wayne, the plumber who lives next door to me, and Lauren, the teacher who lives over the road from me. They are the ones who need the economy to work for them. Labor is the best economic manager for the people—not millionaires.

Government members interjected.

Mr WHITING: I know the LNP are not going to like this but these appropriation bills show the healthy position we left for this incoming government. Members will hear a lot about debt and the like, but I will point out the things that are contained in these appropriation bills. Net debt in the 2023-24 financial year was halved, from about \$12.2 billion to \$5.7 billion, and that net debt is lower than in the last year of the Newman government.

We have heard about fiscal vandalism from the other side in this debate. I would like to know if halving that net debt is included in their definition of 'economic vandalism' or 'fiscal vandalism'. Let's look at the LNP approach. The LNP started their term talking down the economy of Queensland. They juiced up the budget with \$23 billion in allowances and, after the Treasurer's update, S&P revised their outlook for Queensland's credit rating. What they are doing is making political points and looking for political leverage. They are not doing anything that gives economic leverage to help the people of Queensland and we have seen more of that again today. They are not focused on the future; they are focused on the past. They are focused on Labor, the party, not Queensland, the people. That is their focus and honourable members will hear that continually throughout this debate.

One of the points I want to make is that—and this will be a revelation for some of the new LNP members—many of their priority projects are going to be under threat because the Treasurer keeps talking down the Queensland economy. These members are going to have to explain to their electorate what will happen to their projects when they are cut or pushed back in the budget. Let me give an example. I refer to the members for Kawana, Maroochydore and Caloundra, and ask: what will happen to the Sunshine Coast rail? I think we can see what is going to happen to that promise. They promised they would deliver that. What is going to happen to that? They are going to have to front up to their constituents if that promise is broken.

What about the member for Hervey Bay? As the member for Bundaberg has said, he keeps saying he wants a new hospital in Hervey Bay where the TAFE site is located currently. How is he going to explain to his constituents when that does not get up? We have also heard about the Coomera Connector. What is the member for Coomera going to do if this project is cut or pushed back or, heaven forbid, a toll is put on it because the Treasurer keeps talking down the economy and the fiscal position of Queensland?

The member for Maryborough has promised to build a roundabout on the Bruce Highway. How is that going to be funded? Is that project going to last? What is going to happen if there are cuts to the train-building program in Maryborough? How is he going to explain that? I also point out that today the Deputy Premier talked about how no-one is going to be left behind. He left the member for Maryborough behind when he travelled to Hervey Bay this morning. He was left behind. Why did the Deputy Premier want to take up one member but not the other?

There are cuts coming in the budgetary process and the LNP members will know where they stand with the Premier when they see their pet projects or preferred projects cut or pushed back. They will know what kind of future they have or what kind of future the Premier thinks they will have in this parliament by what happens to their projects. Methinks those cuts are coming.

Mr Vorster: Methinks you protest too much.

Mr WHITING: We have a lot of Shakespearean experts on my left all of a sudden.

Mr Vorster: All of a sudden? I've been here the whole time.

Mr WHITING: By the pricking of my thumb, something wicked this way comes, I do believe.

Mr Vorster: There's something rotten in the state of Queensland under your watch.

Mr WHITING: I am devastated by one of the three witches of the Gold Coast. You can figure out who the other two are.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Member for Burleigh, there will be no quarrelling across the chamber.

Mr WHITING: I want to point out that if honourable members are looking at the LNP approach to budgeting and appropriations there will be no cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders under the LNP. That electricity rebate—\$1,000 going to each family—was a lifesaver for so many of them. That was a \$2 billion return on those assets. The electricity transmission and the major generators we own are assets that made a return to Queenslanders. What about the 20 per cent discount on rego that we brought in? Once again, that was very much welcomed by working Queenslanders. Then there are the FairPlay vouchers. We have not heard anything about them. Gary from the Redcliffe Hockey Club asked me, 'What's happening with them? We need them.' 'I don't know,' I said. 'I don't know what this mob are doing with them.' They were a real bonus. Those FairPlay vouchers that we gave last year were really helping kids get back into sport.

The big one, of course, is the 50-cent fares from the '50-cent fare' man himself. I point out that when that was announced, one LNP member, who is still in the chamber, labelled it a con job. I think the member for Mermaid Beach talked about it in his newsletter as being unsustainable or something like that. It is really interesting that their heart is not in this one measure that delivers more than anything else in cost-of-living relief for ordinary working Queenslanders.

Queenslanders are crying out to keep their cost-of-living relief measures. This government is not listening to them. They are not dedicated to that. We heard the LNP say yesterday that we squandered the money that was brought in. Was that an example of squandering the money—money going to ordinary working Queenslanders on electricity, money going to help their kids participate in sport, money to help them get 50-cent fares? Is that an example of the squandering that Labor did? When Labor spends money on ordinary working people the LNP thinks it is squandering money.

If honourable members listen to the LNP about the increased cost in this budgetary process, they will see that the LNP always think it is the result of working people being paid too much money. Construction workers are overpaid, they say. They take too much time off. There are too many costly conditions. They have too many expectations or their expectations are too high. Remember what the member for Burnett said when talking about Queensland nurses? He said that they had unrealistic expectations.

I want to conclude by saying that the budget services the ordinary working people of Queensland: the nurses, the plumbers and the teachers. The budget should deliver support for them and deliver cost-of-living relief to them as well. The Queensland budget does not serve the interests of the millionaire donors of the LNP.



Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (4.07 pm): I rise to make a short contribution—

Mr Stevens: As the chair of the committee.

Mr CRANDON:—as the chair of the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee. I want to thank all members of the committee and of course our secretariat, who do absolutely wonderful work in pulling the reports together on our behalf.


This is report No. 2 of the new committee on the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-24) Bill and the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-24) Bill. We talked about debt when we first received the briefings from Treasury. There was not a lot of conversation from those opposite as part of the discussions that we were having around the total amount of debt that was involved. They did not ask any questions in the public hearings of Treasury about what happened and how we ended up with the billions of dollars of overspend, the 11.6 per cent overspend, in 2023-24. I want to run through those numbers for honourable members.

The Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Act 2024, also known as the 'let's see if we can buy our way back into government bill', contained \$2.267 billion in supplementary appropriation and was dreamt up on the back of an envelope, I would suggest, to try to kid the people of Queensland into believing that Labor were their mates. There is nothing further from the truth because that \$2.267 billion is nothing compared to the overspend and the inappropriate manner in which Labor managed the last budget.

That \$2.267 billion was accompanied by \$6.154 billion that was brought in at the same time and then, finally, the one we are debating today, with the further \$1.128 billion, so those opposite could not even get the numbers right back then. They thought they had it all captured in the budget in June last year, but then there was another \$1.128 billion. The total number for the people of Queensland—and I will read it out in long form for them—is \$9,549,747,000. That is 11.6 per cent over. One might think that probably happens on a fairly regular basis. No, it does not. Perhaps there has been occasion for the \$1.1 billion or perhaps even \$2 billion over the last decade. The next worst in fact was in 2016-17, when there was a 4.76 per cent overspend. I cannot remember what happened in 2017. Wait a minute: was there another election? There may have been another election looming, so it was a 4.76 per cent overspend then and an 11.6 per cent overspend this time around.

We know from all of the material that the Treasurer has brought to the House and spoken about in the media that we are seeing something in the order of a \$17 billion blowout in our expenditure. That is going to make it tough for us. We are up to the task, but at the end of the day we are now going to go from something like \$72 billion in total debt to \$172 billion in total debt over the forward estimates. That is just an incredible amount of money. It is beyond most people's comprehension to understand that because, first of all, in their minds it is not coming out of their back pockets, but the reality is that it is coming out of their back pockets because the money has to come from somewhere. The money has to come from taxes. On that note, we are the first government in many years to abolish taxes for the people of Queensland, whereas those opposite brought in so many taxes over the last decade that people do not seem to understand or comprehend.

At the end of the day, we have a \$9.5 billion blowout—an 11.6 per cent blowout—in order to try to keep the lights on from 2023-24. Thank goodness we now have a responsible Treasurer who is capable of looking after the budget for Queensland and we have responsible ministers who are determined to deliver projects on time and on budget. They are also determined to make sure that all of those unfunded promises by those opposite will be delivered in amongst all of that. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Ms ASIF** (Sandgate—ALP) (4.12 pm): Today I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill 2024. Labor governments are good economic managers. Not only are we good economic managers; we actually care about people whilst being good economic managers. We have policies that help people in our communities—policies such as the cost-of-living relief that the former Labor government delivered. We do not think of these policies as handouts, as this government does; we think of them as making real change for real people. When we talk to people and they are struggling, we think how it is that a Labor government can help give them some relief.

We have seen a lot of disaster in this last fortnight and I think, 'What if Labor was in government right now?' We would have provided cost-of-living relief to families who need it at the moment. I have come to parliament today after having a community lunch in Bracken Ridge and there are families who up until yesterday were not even able to apply for relief. How is this important in terms of this appropriation bill? It is important because that is what governments are supposed to do. Government money exists to help people—to help Queenslanders and to help people in my community of Sandgate.

I have seen firsthand how the measures that this appropriation bill speaks to have made a difference. They have benefited people not only in my electorate of Sandgate but also all across Queensland, including those in the electorates of those opposite, with measures such as the \$1,000 electricity bill relief that all of their constituents received. I am sure they appreciate that. I do not think a single one of them would say, 'I don't appreciate it,' so maybe those opposite should consider that. Maybe the government should consider giving \$1,000 electricity relief now, given that we have just gone through a natural disaster and families could use that assistance.

Mr Molhoek: It's great to hear a Labor member who actually cares about the people. We haven't heard that for such a long time in this House.

Ms ASIF: I do care about people. I care about the people in Sandgate and I care about Queenslanders, and I also care about the people in the electorates of those opposite who I think have benefited from these measures.

I have spoken to many families, including some in the suburb of Brighton, many of whom have really been suffering in the last couple of days due to ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. My thoughts are with the families there at the moment who have needed assistance. I spoke to a couple in Brighton during the campaign. At the time I was not the member for Sandgate; I was the Labor candidate for Sandgate. When I was doorknocking I spoke to them about what we could do for them and they said that any relief when it came to their household budget would be appreciated because they were really struggling and doing it tough. They were thrilled when I told them about the \$1,000 electricity rebate and the \$200

FairPlay sports vouchers. The family appreciated the sports vouchers because all of the children were now able to play community sport. It meant that they did not have to pick which one of the three kids was able to play community sport because they could not afford to put all three in community sport. That is a great measure which is included in this bill.

Another measure included in this bill is with regard to Queensland Health. Health funding is important. Included in this bill is \$217 million for health funding. That is helping people who need assistance. Queensland Health—

A government member: They're blowouts.

Ms ASIF: They are not blowouts; it is funding for health that is helping people—helping real Queenslanders who need surgery and who need assistance such as from the LifeFlight emergency helicopter service. This funding is going to their new agreement. It is going towards helping emergency medical service evacuations. Ensuring they are funded properly is crucial so that people get the assistance they need, especially the medical assistance they need.

What other measures does this appropriation bill address? It has funding for increased support for out-of-home-care services to address the ongoing pressures that our child protection service is facing. That is what is included in this bill, so let us look at what that means. That means safety measures for foster families who are supporting vulnerable children. This is crucial funding that communities need. It is funding that we need to provide as governments to support the people who are looking after our vulnerable children.

What else does this bill address? Part of this bill also includes transport. Transport is very important, as members would know. It is important to all of our electorates. A significant portion of this funding is offsetting the impacts of COVID-19, which was not too long ago. We all felt the pressures that COVID-19 placed on our communities. This bill ensures there is reliable and affordable public transport, which is essential for many people in all of our communities but especially in Sandgate. I also really want to talk about 50-cent fares. Labor's 50-cent fares have had a significant impact on people in my community.

Government members interjected.

Ms ASIF: They are Labor's 50-cent fares.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Members, the member on her feet is not taking your interjections.

Ms ASIF: Many people in my community have benefited from Labor's 50-cent fares. It is saving them upwards of \$40 a week. I have spoken to students who are now able to catch the Shorncliffe line—a great line.

A government member: They're now our 50-cent fares.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, there will be no cross-chamber conversation. The next one will be warned.

Ms ASIF: This side of the House wants to make 50-cent fares permanent forever. What did we see today? We are not able to do that.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms ASIF: We think people should be able to have affordable public transport, especially if they live further out. People need to be able to catch public transport to get to work and university so I do support making sure we have affordable public transport for my people in Sandgate.

As I said in my maiden speech, education is one of the reasons I stand here today. It is the key to a good future—a future where people have the opportunity to prosper. Queensland children should have the opportunity to have the best education. This appropriation bill includes \$163 million for education. What does that mean? Sandgate has hundreds of dedicated teachers, principals and support staff in our schools. All of these people are working day in, day out to ensure that our students are getting the support that they need. This looks at the National School Reform Agreement, making sure that students with disabilities have the support that they need. I want to use this opportunity to give a big thank you to all of the support teachers in my electorate of Sandgate who do wonderful work making sure that our students and future generations have the support and education to make sure that they have a brighter future.

On this note I also want to say that many schools in my community have been impacted as a result of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. I want to thank the teachers, principals and members of our community who came around to help clean up our schools. It is incredibly important that we get our students back to school so they can get the education that they need. Brighton State School principal Steve Massey, thank you for the work you are doing. Thank you to Kurt Rose from Nashville State School; Robyne Harris from Bracken Ridge State School; Melissa Burke from Norris Road State School; Rebecca Campbell from Sandgate State School; Scott Padgett from Shorncliffe State School; Mark Fisher from Taigum State School; Sarah McDonald from Sacred Heart Primary School; Brett Kitchener from St Joseph's; Ben Grey from St Kieran's; Michelle Lyons from Bracken Ridge State High School; Andy Stergou from Sandgate District State High; Britt Gurnett from St John Fisher; Stephan le Roux from Holy Spirit College; and Mrs Amber Hauff from St Patrick's College. Amber is the first female principal of St Patrick's College. I congratulate her on her appointment. She is doing a phenomenal job. She has been in the role for three months and has been hit with a natural disaster.

Mr Crandon: Didn't you get an adjournment speech this week? This is an adjournment speech.


Ms ASIF: I am thanking principals who are working—

Mr J Kelly interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Member for Greenslopes and member for Coomera, you are both warned.

Ms ASIF: I want to thank the principals because of what we have gone through this last fortnight and highlight that there is education funding in this appropriation bill. What this funding does is support them. We want to support our principals and our teachers in the work that they do, not cut funding so they are not able to do it.

A couple of weeks ago I had a mobile office in Bald Hills. I had two teachers come up and talk to me about how they are scared that this government is going to cut their funding. All they want to do is provide support to our students and give them a good education. As I said, Labor are good economic managers, we care about our communities and we want to help them in their time of need.

 **Ms MORTON** (Caloundra—LNP) (4.23 pm): I rise today to talk about this bill and to point out how sad Queenslanders are. As a former business owner, I know how important it is when managing a large business to fully understand a profit and loss statement. I am sure all members who sit in this chamber are very invested in being there for their communities; however, this should be done in a responsible way, which is by understanding how money comes in and goes out. Today I am here to expose, in the clearest possible terms, the absolute financial destruction left behind by the previous Labor government. I would like to thank our hardworking Treasurer, who has the arduous task of undoing the mess.

These bills, which seek formal authorisation for the unforeseen expenditure incurred during the 2023-24 financial year, are nothing short of a final indictment on the economic recklessness and incompetence of the former administration. It was this exact economic recklessness that inspired many of us to be here in the first place. Queenslanders deserve to know the truth. Labor spent with reckless abandon—no accountability, no strategy and no regard for the future. They threw billions into bottomless pits of mismanagement and failure, all while patting themselves on the back for a job well done. Well, the numbers do not lie. It will be my children and grandchildren who continue to pay the price. It is a betrayal of every hardworking Queenslanders who entrusted them with responsible governance.

The numbers we are looking at today are beyond staggering: a total of over \$1 billion in unforeseen expenditure. It is just another addition to Labor's record \$9 billion overspend in 2023-24 alone. This is not a budgeting error, this is not an oversight; this is a government that simply did not care about their fiscal responsibility. Labor's approach to public finances was nothing short of vandalism. They spent money they did not have, they borrowed beyond their means and they plunged Queensland into a fiscal mess that will take years to repair. For what? Are our hospitals the best in the country? Are our roads the safest in the country? Are our communities thriving? No! Instead, we are left with crumbling infrastructure—particularly in Caloundra—broken promises and an economy weighed down by Labor's reckless spending spree.

Let us break down the scale of the disaster: over \$2 billion under the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Act 2024; over \$6 billion squandered under the Appropriation Act 2024; and now an additional billion in unforeseen expenditure that they expect this House to simply rubber stamp. This is not fiscal management; it is fiscal malpractice. The *Financial Review* rightly called Labor's final budget a 'clown show'.

Let us not just talk numbers, let us talk about the real-world consequences of this economic incompetence. What does all this waste mean for an everyday Queenslanders? It means surging debt that will cripple future generations, structural deficits that threaten essential services and a skyrocketing interest bill that will soon cost Queenslanders almost \$10 billion per year—money that should be going back into hospitals, schools and roads. If the waste was not bad enough, let us talk about the outright lies. The former treasurer stood in this chamber and promised, on 26 separate occasions, that there would be no new or increased taxes. That was a lie.

Mr McCALLUM: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe there was unparliamentary language.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): I am sorry, I did not hear anything. Can you draw our attention to what that was?

Mr McCALLUM: I believe the speaker on her feet used the word 'lie'.

Ms MORTON: I withdraw. They raked in an extra \$70 billion in revenue over four years yet still left Queensland with record debt, record deficits and a record interest bill. Meanwhile, our hospitals were packed with patients, our ambulances had to ramp, our housing crisis deepened and crime spiralled out of control. This was not just mismanagement; it was wilful neglect.

Let us remind Queenslanders of some of Labor's most disgraceful financial decisions: the infamous Wellcamp quarantine facility—\$223 million turned into an empty abandoned site; private jets for ministers—racking up a \$170,000 taxpayer bill just so they could arrive at the same event separately; and Cross River Rail, which started as a \$5.4 billion project and is now set to exceed \$17 billion—three times the original budget.

These are not isolated incidents; this is a pattern of failure. This is what happens when you have a government that treats taxpayer money like Monopoly money. The Crisafulli government refuses to allow this recklessness to continue. We have already taken swift action. We have scrapped Labor's \$36.8 billion Pioneer-Burdekin hydro fantasy; we have paused BPIC, saving the budget \$17 billion by 2030; we have stopped over \$1 billion in wasteful spending on speculative projects; and we have established the Queensland Productivity Commission to ensure this level of financial abuse never happens again. Unlike Labor, we respect taxpayers' money. We understand responsibility around future generations and we understand that every dollar wasted is a dollar that could have gone to a struggling family, a local business or a vital public service.

Labor want us to forget their failures. They want Queenslanders to believe that their decade of mismanagement was just an unfortunate series of events. We will not let that happen. Day after day, we will remind Queenslanders how this state was left in financial ruin. Every minister in this government can point to a disaster left behind by their Labor predecessor. Underfunded hospitals, stalled infrastructure projects, crime rates through the roof—it all stems from a government that spent 10 years prioritising politics over people. The truth is that Labor betrayed Queenslanders, and we will not forget it.

This appropriation bill is not just about approving spending; it is about ensuring accountability. It is about making sure that those responsible for this financial disaster are exposed for what they are: reckless and unfit to govern. Queenslanders deserve a government that is honest, responsible and focused on their future. The Crisafulli government will restore fiscal sanity. We will clean up the mess left behind and we will ensure that this state never again falls into the hands of those who treat public money as their personal slush fund. It is time to put an end to the Labor era of waste and mismanagement. Queenslanders deserve better. Queenslanders are asking: where did all the money go? Queenslanders have had enough. Under this government and under this Treasurer, whom I thank again, things will get better.



Hon. SM FENTIMAN (Waterford—ALP) (4.32 pm): The Labor opposition will always stand to deliver what the people of Queensland need. We recognise the necessity of the appropriation bills listed and will support providing supply to the government. This is the final appropriation for 2023-24.

The Report on State Finances provides the actual results for the full financial year—that is, the last full financial year under Labor. What does it show? Not that we would know if we listened to those opposite, but it shows that net debt was halved, from an estimated \$12.2 billion to just \$5.7 billion. Those outstanding figures were from the last full financial year for Queensland under a Labor government. To put it into perspective, that net debt was lower than in the last LNP budget delivered under Campbell Newman. Unfortunately for the Treasurer, there is no opportunity for him to juice up those numbers. There is no \$23 billion in hidden ‘allowances’ for agencies that he can throw into the financial year that has passed.

We have borne witness to how the Premier, the Treasurer and the new LNP government intend to approach both budgeting and governing. Over the past four months, we have seen the most reckless pursuit of cheap political pointscore in the history of this parliament—actions so reckless that they have resulted in a negative outlook for our credit rating. That is something Queenslanders will suffer from because the government was more focused on scoring political points than actually delivering a sound budget update. It is more focused on pointscore than on getting on with the job. Do not take my word for it: S&P Global director Anthony said—

... we know there is some political narrative within that document ... how much of this is actually real versus how much of this is kind of setting up the new government to be the saviour?

This has cost Queenslanders millions of dollars. What the Treasurer does not want people to know is that the second S&P announced an outlook change our state started haemorrhaging money. Queensland’s bond owners noticed that something was off with the fiscal management of our state. The price of Queensland’s bonds started dropping as a result of that outlook change, meaning that our state needs to borrow more, for example, in the wake of natural disasters, it is going to cost more, and all because the Treasurer was so invested in playing politics that he neglected his actual job and, in doing so, has left Queenslanders worse off.

There have been two previous supplementary appropriations for the 2023-24 financial year. The first was introduced with the appropriation for this financial year. This was a change made by the Labor government to provide more timely advice on supplementary appropriation and allow the scrutiny of estimates for as much of the supplementary appropriation for the previous year as practicable. The other previous supplementary appropriation introduced by the former Labor government for the 2023-24 financial year, of course, was the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Act, which delivered \$1,000 electricity rebates to every Queensland household. That \$1,000 energy rebate gave Queensland families the cost-of-living relief they desperately needed. It also provided a \$325 rebate from the state government to small businesses. The cheaper power act needed to be legislated to protect that cost-of-living relief from being cut by the LNP. As late as yesterday, we saw that power prices are predicted to rise by 5.8 per cent in South-East Queensland, which was much higher than the CPI. Have we heard a word from those opposite about energy rebates and support for families? They need that support now.

The LNP failed to deliver any cost-of-living relief in their budget update just a month ago. After the latest budget update, the only thing cheaper in Queensland is the LNP’s politics. Let us not forget that a credit rating downgrade was not on the cards for Queensland in September last year. At that time, S&P could see the clear, responsible economic plan laid out by the former treasurer—one that delivered critical cost-of-living relief while keeping the budget on a stable footing. In September, they affirmed Queensland’s AA+ credit rating, with a stable outlook.

What has changed from September last year to now? Well, who is in charge? We now have an LNP government that are more focused on political spin than on sound economic management. They are making a mess of the state’s finances and it is Queenslanders who are paying the price. They juiced up their budget update with \$23 billion in allowances to play political games and, as a result of this stunt and their inability to explain any aspect of their fiscal strategy, S&P Global have revised the credit rating outlook for Queensland to negative. The LNP has put Queensland’s credit rating in danger. S&P explicitly called out the Treasurer for this outlook downgrade when they said that the government ‘hasn’t incorporated its own fiscal strategy or all of its decisions in fiscal forecasts’. That means we were given a downgrade on the outlook because they refused to actually put any fiscal strategy in the budget update and instead just wanted to blame Labor. That will cost families.

The government's incompetence has led us to this situation. Let me be crystal clear: a government without a fiscal strategy will always face consequences from credit rating agencies, and that is exactly what has happened. Those on the opposite side of the room should be ashamed for playing politics with what will cost Queensland families. The LNP's cheap politics have now become very expensive for Queenslanders.

Mr McCALLUM (Bundamba—ALP) (4.38 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate on these appropriation bills. Of course, appropriation bills such as the ones the House is considering at the moment relate to a broad range of expenditure. It can be unforeseen expenditure and it can be expenditure that is required for emergent situations, particularly things such as responding to natural disasters. Indeed, my Bundamba community has just experienced the impacts of a natural disaster with ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

I pay tribute to the resilience and strength of my community. Unfortunately, we are no strangers, like so many other Queensland communities, to the impacts, challenges and threats of natural disasters. We always back each other up. We stand together, and our response to Tropical Cyclone Alfred was no different.

I do want to make a couple of shout-outs to some local organisations and people. A place of refuge was set up at the Shiloh Church at Goodna. Pastor Phil and all of the team there answered the call from the Ipswich City Council to help the community. I was able to go up there and talk to the team and to some of the local residents who were there.

I also pay tribute to the skill, hard work and utter commitment of our frontline workers and our emergency responders—our State Emergency Service volunteers, our fireies, our police and, of course, our frontline energy workers who are still working to restore power to homes and businesses. They worked through some of the most atrocious conditions of this weather event. Even though it was still windy and still raining, they were out there using all of their skill to reconnect power. Over 330,000 homes and businesses were disconnected and a vast majority of those have been reconnected. It truly is incredible.

I have spent time with impacted businesses and residents. Bundamba Creek burst its banks during the cyclone and, unfortunately, businesses and residents were impacted, particularly in Mining Street, Bundamba. I also popped down to the Ipswich Men's Shed to say g'day to the team, our local shedders, and residents along Bergins Hill Road in Bundamba. I spoke to Paul and Janet, who are Bundamba residents. Their house was built in 1972 by Janet's mother and, unfortunately, they are no strangers to the impacts of flooding.

Residents from Redbank Plains were impacted. Residents from Collingwood Park were impacted. I am really glad to see that after urgent lobbying from local Ipswich MPs disaster assistance grants were activated this morning for impacted residents. These personal hardship financial grants have finally been opened up for around 30 individual suburbs in Ipswich, including Bellbird Park, the suburb of Bundamba itself, Goodna, South Ripley and Ripley. There are residents in other suburbs who have been impacted but are not included and we urgently need the—

Mr STEVENS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think we have strayed away from the appropriation bills for quite a while now. I do appreciate the member is getting some issues out but we have been on it for quite a while and I think we should return to the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Debates on appropriation bills are generally given quite a wide latitude. From my hearing of the debate, that has happened on both sides. I will allow the member to continue.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek your guidance in relation to anticipating debate in relation to the motion. I do understand that a wide range of matters can be canvassed in appropriation bills but some of the contribution that I have heard may be anticipating debate in relation to the motion later on this afternoon.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I remind the member not to anticipate the motion that is coming up in 15 minutes.

Mr McCALLUM: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. I refer to the comments that I made when I started my contribution—the fact that the appropriation bill contains revenue for emergent and unforeseen circumstances such as the impacts of natural disasters. I was talking about natural disaster relief grants that people in Ipswich and constituents of mine are not entitled to when they should be entitled to them. I will not be silenced by the LNP when it comes to standing up for my community. I

will make sure that they get the support that they need, and they need it urgently. I hope to see the disaster recovery grants expanded to cover the entirety of the Ipswich local government area. I, along with the members for Ipswich, Jordan and Ipswich West, will not stop until that occurs.


The appropriation bills include funding for the Inspector-General Emergency Management. It is very concerning to see reports that this officer was not around to help respond to the disaster. The government and the police minister need to explain to the House why that person's leave was not cancelled.

Speaking of funding and appropriation, there have been a few cuts recently under the cover of Cyclone Alfred. The Attorney-General had a pretty busy fortnight. In that time, the Attorney-General cut the entire Independent Ministerial Advisory Council, which was an advocacy body for victims, and axed two years worth of work of the Queensland Law Reform Commission in relation to the approval of mining leases. There are also reports that the housing minister has been busy cancelling head leases for social housing. It is absolutely shameful.

I turn now to some of the contributions from government speakers, in particular that of the Treasurer and energy minister, who took great pride in attacking energy projects here in Queensland. The LNP love to trumpet that they have cut Pioneer-Burdekin. They use very threatening language when talking about projects like CopperString and Borumba. We know that that is LNP speak for cuts. If they go ahead with the projects at all, they will not do them properly. They will be downsized. They will be cut, just like they cut the CQ-H2 green hydrogen project in Central Queensland and just like they cut energy rebates to Queenslanders, which is an absolute shame.

We have heard news today that the Australian Energy Regulator has issued a draft determination which shows an almost six per cent hit to the hip pockets of Queensland families in the form of power price hikes. Imagine cutting an energy rebate in a cost-of-living crisis just as there is to be a six per cent, or possibly more, increase! It is so tone deaf. That is around \$120 a year. It could not get worse. It is just another broken promise from this LNP government. They said that bills would go down. We have heard today from the independent federal regulator that prices will go up. It is just one broken promise after another.

It is the same with the Olympics. The poor old Premier got himself in a bit of a bind when he promised that he would not spend more than \$7.1 billion on Olympic Games infrastructure. He has the report now but he does not know what to do with it. The report is from the board that was hand-picked by the Deputy Premier. What a stitch-up of the Premier by the Deputy Premier! He is in a spot of bother: if he spends more than \$1 over \$7.1 billion, it will be a broken promise; if he builds a new stadium, it will be a broken promise; and if he does not follow the advice of the hand-picked board, it will be a broken promise.

 **Mr BAROUNIS** (Maryborough—LNP) (4.49 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the supplementary appropriation bills for 2023-24. On 10 December 2024, the Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership introduced the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill and the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill into the Legislative Assembly. The bills were referred to the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee for joint consideration. The committee reported on 7 December 2024. The committee recommended that the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill and the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill be passed.

The objective of the bills is to seek formal authorisation for the specified amounts in each bill that the former treasurer, the member for Woodridge, paid from the Consolidated Fund for unforeseen expenditure that occurred in the 2023-24 financial year. These bills contain unforeseen expenditure of \$1,132,595,000. This includes unforeseen expenditure from the Consolidated Fund for 13 departments and \$4,207,000 for the Legislative Assembly and the Parliamentary Service. Unforeseen expenditure refers to expenditure from the Consolidated Fund in excess of the amount provided by the budget appropriation bills and is authorised by the Governor in Council to be made in advance of authorisation by the parliament. Under these bills, the Treasurer is authorised to pay \$1,132,595,000 in unforeseen expenditure.


The bills approve Labor's unforeseen expenditure from 2023-24. This is an annual process under the Financial Accountability Act 2009 to finalise the departmental appropriations at the end of each financial year. The bills relate to decisions made by the previous government, including unforeseen expenditure—the final component of their record \$9 billion overspend last financial year.

Since the election, the Crisafulli government has calmly and methodically identified Labor's capital project blowouts and overruns across all areas of government, including: Cross River Rail, up \$494 million—the promised \$5.4 billion is now expected to exceed \$17 billion; Gold Coast Light Rail, up \$330 million; the hospital capacity expansion program blowouts push \$9.7 billion to \$16 billion; CopperString, up from \$6.2 billion to \$9 billion; Pioneer-Burdekin, up from \$12 billion to \$36 billion; and Borumba pumped hydro, up from \$14 billion to \$18 billion.

There are also unfunded operating expense commitments from the former Labor government. The former Labor government left a \$461 million funding black hole in Child Safety, leaving it facing a funding cliff for the 2024-25 budget. Some \$12 billion in Queensland Health programs and services were left unfunded or underfunded by the former Labor government.

The former treasurer broke his 'no new or increased taxes' promise, given 26 times, and collected \$70 billion more revenue than he forecast in his first budget less than four years before. I think \$70 billion is a lot of money. The former Labor government managed to leave Queensland with record debt, record deficits and a record interest bill at the same time as there were record numbers of the sick waiting on ramps, the homeless sleeping in cars and victims of Queensland's crime crisis. Labor bears sole responsibility for the economic outlook downgrade and the additional costs to Queenslanders that flow from it. Labor can never be trusted to manage taxpayers' money—even though some members opposite mentioned that they are the best at it—and we on this side of the House know that.

The Crisafulli government is already taking steps to improve the budget position. We have cancelled the \$36 billion Pioneer-Burdekin hydro hoax, paused BPIC—this will save the budget \$17 billion to 2035—and opted not to provide significantly more than \$1 billion in equity and grants for speculative hydro projects. We are showing respect for taxpayers' money. We will give all Queenslanders and businesses the stability and certainty they are looking for. I will do the same for my Maryborough electorate—an electorate that I am very proud to be the member for, an electorate that gave me their trust and an electorate that gave the Crisafulli LNP government their trust. Prior to the election, the LNP committed to continue the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program in my electorate. This project is going to be delivered on time and on budget, regardless of whether some people think otherwise. I commend the bills to the House.

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (4.57 pm): I rise to speak on the supplementary appropriation bills for 2023-24. I note that the Labor opposition supports providing supply to the government. I would like to take the opportunity to note that, despite the Premier and the Treasurer assuring Queenslanders during the state election that they would restore fiscal discipline and tackle debt and spending, they have provided no plan or strategy on how they will do it. They have nothing to back up their words.

Ms Grace: No detail whatsoever.

Ms HOWARD: No detail. I will take that interjection. Once they got into government they pulled out their budget update in January and juiced it up with \$23 billion in allocated expenses that gave no details or plan on how it would be spent. There is also the cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders.

Their political pointscore put our state credit rating at risk and it resulted in S&P Global revising their outlook for Queensland's credit rating to negative. This is an expensive game for the LNP to be playing. It has increased our borrowing costs and given Queenslanders no clue what the LNP will do to relieve cost-of-living pressures or restore fiscal discipline.

The Treasurer, in introducing these appropriation bills to parliament, pulled another stunt to score cheap political points. He and the LNP used a fairly routine supply bill to play politics and to attack the Labor opposition for a supposed \$9 billion blowout. Unforeseen expenditure, which is what we are debating here today, is not a blowout. The Acting Under Treasurer advised the committee of just that—unforeseen expenditure is not a blowout. It is incurred when a department has needed more appropriation than has been provided by the original appropriation bill for a year. For example, additional appropriation may be needed to respond to emergent issues, implement government policy or reflect a change in timing of Commonwealth payments or project delivery. Some \$2 billion of the unforeseen expenditure in 2023-24 was delivering vital cost-of-living relief to Queenslanders. As we heard the member for Sandgate and others on this side of the House say, all Queenslanders benefited from that.

For the last several years Queenslanders have been reeling from high interest rates, skyrocketing rental prices and inflated prices for everyday goods and services. The \$1,000 electricity rebates our Labor government provided last year were a godsend to many of our constituents. Many of them have

been asking if they will receive a rebate again this year. They need it. The rebates were delivered as part of the cheaper power act, included as part of the supplementary appropriations for the 2023-24 financial year. Does the Treasurer consider this cost-of-living relief a blowout?

The Treasurer also remarked in his introductory speech that expenditure of \$1.85 billion from the former department of energy and climate was to cover Labor's blowouts across a string of energy products—one of which is the Swanbank Battery in Ipswich. Once finished, the Swanbank Battery will store two hours of clean energy to dispatch during times of peak demand. The Swanbank big battery, based at Swanbank's Clean Energy Hub, sits on the site of two former coal-fired power stations. It is now a site showcasing the clean energy technology revolution and is positioned in Ipswich at the forefront of renewable energy research and investment. How can this critical energy infrastructure be considered a blowout? Battery technology is essential to deliver reliable and consistent energy supply in our state.

The LNP government is politicising appropriations legislation and labelling unforeseen expenditure as 'Labor's blowout' when it is anything but that. We will likely see state government departments incur unforeseen expenditure in the wake of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. Natural disasters are becoming more frequent and intense in Queensland and they cannot be predicted at the beginning of each financial year. Queenslanders rightly expect state government departments to help them out before, during and after natural disasters to aid in their recovery.

In February 2022, appropriation bills provided for unforeseen expenditures relating to COVID in 2020 and 2021. The November 2022 appropriation bill provided for unforeseen expenditures relating to COVID and the significant rainfall and flooding event Queensland saw in February-March 2022. These were not blowouts. Similarly, we will again see unforeseen expenditure relating to Tropical Cyclone Alfred.


I want to finish by noting that the Report on State Finances shows that Queensland's net debt in the 2023-24 financial year more than halved—from an estimated \$12.2 billion to \$5.7 billion. That was the last financial year of a Labor government. That net debt was lower than in the last budget that the LNP Newman government handed down in 2014. In September last year, S&P Global affirmed Queensland's AA+ stable rating. They could see that the Labor government had a clear and responsible economic plan.

Now that the LNP are in government, our state's credit rating has been downgraded. The LNP's only plan was to play politics which has risked hurting our state's economy. When S&P downgraded our credit rating, the LNP gloated about it even though it will clearly hurt Queenslanders. Why should the LNP worry about that when the aim of the game is to score cheap political points against Labor?

The people of Queensland deserve a government that provides certainty for their future. A lot of them are now worried that LNP's gloomy spin on our economy and government finances is just a way to set the scene for cuts to come in the budget. The people in my electorate of Ipswich want certainty that there will be state government services there for them in times of need. Many of my constituents are vulnerable and rely on these services.

Ipswich is also the fastest growing LGA in Queensland and we need to deliver more infrastructure to cope with our growing population like roads, hospitals, schools and public transport. Most importantly, my constituents need to be assured that they will get the support they need from their government when they are at their most vulnerable—for instance, after natural disasters like ex-Cyclone Alfred. Finally, the LNP government needs to commit to real cost-of-living relief for my constituents and for all of Queensland.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Members, with respect to my earlier guidance about anticipation of a motion before the House, I have sought some further advice. We are currently debating an appropriations bill and the rule of anticipation does not apply to appropriations bills by virtue of standing order 231.

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (5.04 pm): I rise to talk to the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill 2024 and the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill 2024. We can call those two cognate bills the Labor debt bills in terms of their mishandling of the budget appropriation processes for 2023-24.

When we look back through history, and as I have said before, Queensland's worst treasurer was Andrew Fraser, who got the AAA credit rating downgraded to AA. I believe that the previous treasurer we had who is responsible for these appropriation bills—the ex-member for Greenslopes and

current member for Woodridge—has outdone the former treasurer Mr Andrew Fraser in terms of being the worst treasurer Queensland has ever seen. He has taken us to a debt level that has placed an incredible burden on the taxpayers of Queensland and on the businesses and investors in Queensland.

Ms GRACE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I note that the member rose to a point of order on relevance last time. I rise to a point of order on the same thing. This is a 2023-24 appropriations bill. I ask the member to come back to that appropriation bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Member, I have given you a bit of latitude. Appropriation bills do have a lot of latitude. I will let you carry on, member.

Mr STEVENS: When I am talking about appropriation bills, for the member for McConnel's information, this is about the extra unforeseen expenditure that adds to the debt levels of Queensland. Basically, they are unexpected expenditures that for some reason were not in the budgetary processes. Therefore, they have to be acquitted through the parliament. They are basically all Labor expenditures from previous years.

I will look back through history for the member for McConnel's benefit. When we were last in government, in 2012-13 our unforeseen expenditure was \$643 million; in 2013-14, it was \$447 million; and, in 2014-15, for the member for McConnel's benefit, it was \$12 million. That was responsible government. We had a very responsible treasurer at the time. The member for Clayfield is here. I congratulate him on his wonderful achievement of budgeting correctly so that the supplementary appropriations were of a minor nature—\$12 million.

I compare that with the appropriation bills under the Labor government. Guess what? In 2017, which was an election year as I recall, \$2,270 million was expended in appropriations. Again, under the Labor government in 2018-19, \$1,400 million was expended. In 2019-20, which was an election year again, \$1,400 million was expended. It is quite clear that a lot of this expenditure was for the betterment of a Labor government not caring about proper budgetary processes and incorporating expenditures in the normal budgetary processes. They just went out and spent willy-nilly.


We heard from previous Labor speakers that it is not a cost blowout when it doubles the cost you estimated in the budget. In relation to Cross River Rail, I think originally it was \$5.9 billion. Now it is somewhere up near \$9 billion and rising from those estimates in the budget. I can give members an example on the Gold Coast: light rail, through the BPIC process, was an extra \$250 million in the previous budget and last year, a month before the election, there was another \$320 million for light rail 3 and we have not even got to light rail 4 yet. These expenditures are not accounted for in the normal budgetary processes and show a complete lack of responsibility and financial sense in terms of proper budgeting processes and their capacity to willy-nilly spend at any opportunity. They could not run a kindergarten tuckshop. That is the problem with the Labor governments we have had here over the last 10 years. Now the ball will have to be picked up by our current Treasurer and Crisafulli government to make sure that responsible expenditures are incorporated in normal budgetary processes. We look forward to a much smaller supplementary appropriation bill coming forward next year, probably about September. Hopefully, it will be far more responsible in its exaggerated expenditure which comes after normal budgetary process. I assume that a fair bit of the \$4 million in the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill was in relation to expenditure for extra staffing the Parliamentary Service had to front up for coming into that particular year.

This bill highlights the inefficiency of the previous Labor government to budget properly in the interests of Queensland. We have a debt level now heading out in the four-year budgetary term of \$170-odd billion. I imagine the interest on that is somewhere between \$7 billion to \$8 billion, depending on what happens to our downgrade as a result of Labor's expenditure. When you think that the federal government has committed \$7 billion to the Bruce Highway, then you understand how unfortunate it is that this Labor government has committed to large interest payments of taxpayers' money—which will probably increase because of our downgrade because of Labor's budgeting—because we could fund the Bruce Highway's upgrade even without the federal government's commitment of \$7 billion on the interest payments alone. I know that a lot of people's eyes glaze over when you talk about financial matters and how important they are, but that is a real shame.

Unfortunately, all those taxes, cost-of-living rises and increases you will see coming through that are landing on people's doorstep—even in fines et cetera—which the previous regime put in place looking for extra money, are the result of bad financial planning by previous Labor governments. The Crisafulli government and our responsible Treasurer, the member for Toowoomba South, will have to address this in the years to come. Unfortunately, I have run out of time to highlight further—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr STEVENS: I thought I heard someone say I would be further heard. Did I hear that from the other side? No, I did not. I do thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to highlight the failings of the previous government to properly plan financially for the future of Queenslanders. The sad fact is that responsibility for the extraordinarily large supplementary appropriation bills we have had over the last couple of years lies at the feet of the Labor government. It will be quite a while before we, as a financially responsible LNP government, can correct the situation on behalf of Queenslanders so we can put ourselves back in the best economic position as the best growth state across Australia and regain our rightful position, with all of our resources, tourism and agriculture, as the No. 1 state for investment in Australia.

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (5.14 pm): The passing of these appropriation bills is crucial to keeping Queensland moving. As the shadow treasurer has stated, we will be supporting the bills. These bills finalise appropriations for the 2023-24 financial year, but I believe it is important to draw to the attention of the House the significant increase in unforeseen expenditure. This is the Crisafulli government's first demonstration of its fiscal management. They have intentionally inflated this additional \$28 billion in unforeseen expenditure.

Context matters. During the October state election the LNP campaigned on two key themes: law and order; and being the smallest political target possible. Their strategy was to avoid scrutiny, deflect debate and conceal what they would do if they were actually elected. That approach led to an unusual commitment: to adopt the Miles Labor government's budget in its entirety. It is remarkable that a party aspiring to govern would be satisfied with what is essentially submitting someone else's homework, but that is exactly what they did. That commitment has now locked the Crisafulli government into a near impossible position: they pledged not to cut Public Service jobs or sell assets to maintain the Miles Labor government's Big Build and to preserve services, all while promising to keep costs lower than under Labor.

They knew this was an impossible promise. It is becoming even more untenable as Queensland's coal exports decline and with them revenue from Labor's progressive coal royalty scheme. Every economist, every political commentator, has observed that their promise was unsustainable in the face of rising population growth, increasing construction costs and a substantial infrastructure pipeline, yet what we have seen since the election is an attempt by this government to rewrite history. Instead of being transparent about their own fiscal policy, the Treasurer has engaged in a media strategy, leaking stories about budget blowouts and deliberately inflating costs by an additional \$28 billion to shift the blame onto Labor.

Make no mistake: this is the LNP's fiscal policy at work. Their attempts to avoid accountability are political gamesmanship of the worst kind, and Queenslanders see right through it. The consequences have been immediate and serious. Queensland has maintained a AA+ stable credit rating for 15 years under successive Labor governments. This rating was reaffirmed by S&P Global in September last year, yet following the Premier and Treasurer's politically motivated budget update S&P has revised Queensland's credit outlook from stable to negative, signalling increased risk to our future economic standing. This is the legacy of the first Crisafulli Mid-Year Financial and Economic Review. Having promised to adopt Labor's budget, the LNP's first months in office have been spent fabricating a fiscal crisis to justify future cuts—a page out of the Campbell Newman playbook—and that parallel has been noticed. As economist John Quiggin noted—

You could pretty much have cut and pasted their report from 2012 ... the same warnings of disaster ... and yet, no disaster emerged then, just as it won't now.

The Premier made a series of commitments. He promised to set clear performance indicators for his ministers but instead has produced vague documents lacking measurable outcomes. He promised to continue programs, and this week we have learned that he has used the cover of Tropical Cyclone Alfred to cut the Independent Ministerial Advisory Committee, which was set up to make recommendations to government on driving down youth crime and greater supports for victims. He promised no Public Service cuts and no additional taxes, but he is now manoeuvring to break these commitments. We are already seeing the consequences: infrastructure and capital works are being cut; Queensland Health's workplace attraction incentives have been abandoned; gender clinics have been paused; and critical infrastructure upgrades have been halted. This is just the beginning. The MYFER is laying the groundwork for further service cuts, public sector job losses and broken promises. We already have Peter Dutton on record pledging to cut 36,000 Public Service jobs if elected federally, so we know it is in the LNP's DNA.

On this side of the House, we will always champion public services, public assets and the dedicated Queenslanders who deliver them. The committee report identifies increased appropriations for essential departments including Queensland Health, Education, Housing, Transport and Child Safety. These are vital agencies providing critical services, and I want to take this opportunity to thank our hardworking public servants, particularly in the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Alfred.


Ms Pugh: Hear, hear!

Ms BUSH: Thanks, Jess. I really welcome the increased funding for education under the National School Reform Agreement, particularly for students with disabilities. Inclusion only works when it is properly funded so that every student and teacher has the support they need to be safe and to succeed. Additional funding has also been allocated to Child Safety, primarily due to increased costs in out-of-home care. Rather than continuing to expand this budget line, we really should focus on reducing demand for these services through proactive investment in early intervention and family support programs. Keeping families safe and together has to be the goal.

The bill authorises additional funding for Queensland Corrective Services primarily to cover funding for recruitment of operational employees for the Lockyer Valley Correctional Centre, built infrastructure safety and security. Again, the focus here needs to be on driving down offending and exploring options that are both safer for communities and more cost effective because we know that prisons are wildly expensive and usually do not work to reduce recidivism.

This bill also funds the cheaper power act introduced by the Miles Labor government to deliver a \$1,000 electricity rebate to every Queensland household. This relief was welcomed by families in my community. Even those who were at the time managing their bills told me how it eased that financial pressure at home allowing them to afford a takeaway meal or repair their car and to support local businesses in doing so. We are deeply disappointed that the Premier has failed to continue this cost-of-living relief at a time when Queenslanders are still struggling. This was a practical, effective policy made possible by keeping our energy assets in public hands, and many in my community are angry about these future cuts.

Queenslanders deserve honesty in economic management. They deserve a government that takes responsibility, not one that manufactures crises to justify austerity. This budget has exposed the LNP's economic contradictions. The Premier and Treasurer must now decide: will they deliver the services that Queenslanders rely on or will they continue down the path of cuts, chaos and broken promises? I support the appropriation for essential services but we in opposition will continue to hold this government to account for its actions.

 **Mr HUTTON** (Keppel—LNP) (5.21 pm): I rise to speak on these appropriation bills. I am proud to stand alongside a new Crisafulli government made up of Queenslanders who understand how hard every single member of our communities work each and every day and the value of their tax dollars. These dollars raised are not earned as government money; they are collected as taxpayer money. I am proud to be part of a Crisafulli government that has respect for taxpayers' money.

This bill provides closure on the final chapter of the Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government's budget, and the numbers speak for themselves. There is unforeseen expenditure in this bill alone of \$1.128 billion for the 2024 budget and a record \$9 billion overspend last financial year. Labor's last budget update and the Mid-Year Fiscal and Economic Review from January show that over the forwards, without action, Queensland debt would total \$218 billion—up from \$172 billion in the 2023-24 financial year. That debt per capita would be the highest of any state in the nation and would be \$40,000 for every Queensland man, woman and child. Queensland's interest bill was \$3.9 billion in 2014-15 and will be \$9.9 billion at the end of financial year 2028 without change.

Economic vandalism, economic incompetence, economic mismanagement: these are not words I say lightly. I truly believe that Queensland has great potential and is the greatest place to live. However, we were let down by a former government that were desperate and that did and said anything to try to cling to power. Alas, they had no respect for our money and no plan and Queenslanders are today being asked to pay to cover the bill. We are being asked to pay for their failure.


At the 2024 election, Queenslanders were demanding change. After 10 years of fiscal mismanagement, time was up for the Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government. At the election, the Crisafulli LNP opposition stood ready to deliver for Queenslanders to get the state heading in the right direction. We went to the people of Queensland with a plan to return respect for their money. Queenslanders recognised that and they voted for a fresh start. Today, Queenslanders are being asked to sign a

cheque to ensure the budget after Labor's expensive failures across housing, crime, health and cost of living, which hit all of our hip pockets. It is vital that the work of our public servants, our services and our agencies can be funded and can continue for the financial year.

It is very much like a bad date. Queenslanders have been left with the bill because the party that ordered the lobster have been walked out by the maitre d' for their bad behaviour. Ask any Queensland and they will say that they manage their family budget with the utmost respect for how every dollar cements their financial foundation, provides opportunity for their financial future or covers the cost of living.

As Queenslanders know all too well, our families have copped some of the biggest increases in the nation over the last decade, including for child care, health care, sports participation and food. Queensland rents, electricity prices, transport and insurance costs have all skyrocketed. Queenslanders know that every dollar counts and we now have a government that respects the effort taken to earn every one of those dollars.

Our government is working every day to ensure that every taxpayer dollar is invested to deliver the maximum benefit for Queenslanders because we respect the hard work of Queenslanders and the efforts that are made by Queenslanders to generate the wealth of our state. Our state's wealth is not an accident; it is on the back of every Queensland's hard work and effort. I commend this bill to the House and the Crisafulli government for working every day to ensure that Queenslanders get the fresh start they voted for and finally have a government that has respect for their money.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (5.26 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill 2024 and the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill 2024, which are cognate bills. All payments from the Consolidated Fund must be formally authorised by an act of parliament, in accordance with the Constitution. These bills seek approval of unforeseen expenditure incurred during the 2023-24 financial year. The Labor opposition endorses the passage of these bills as they complete the appropriation for the 2023-24 financial year which marks the final full financial year of a Labor government. The *Report on state finances* shows that net debt in the 2023-24 financial year has more than halved. This year delivered a net debt that was lower than the last Newman LNP budget.

It is important to highlight that the previous supplementary appropriations for 2023-24 included funding for the cheaper power act, which provided an electricity rebate to Queensland households. The Labor government believed it was essential to legislate for these rebates as we recognised the need to protect Queenslanders from the LNP cutting this vital cost-of-living relief. Our stance was proven correct, as the LNP have failed to deliver any meaningful cost-of-living relief in their recent budget updates. It seems to me that the only thing cheaper in Queensland after that budget update is the LNP's politics.

I note that S&P Global gave Queensland a AA+ rating in September 2024, but since the Treasurer had juiced the figures, and because of the reckless pursuit of cheap political pointscoring by the Premier and the Treasurer, S&P Global have now put Queensland's credit rating on a negative outlook due to concerns about the state's financial management. This is very bad news for Queensland's future borrowing cost. It is time for the Premier and Treasurer to stop playing political games and start governing with the responsibility Queenslanders expect and deserve.

Take, for example, the Treasurer's introductory speech for this bill in which he highlighted unforeseen expenditures totalling \$2.2 billion from the Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multiculturalism, as well as temporary electricity rebates. While addressing these expenses, he went on to claim—

This bill is a stark demonstration of the poor fiscal discipline of the former Labor government and their complete failure to plan over so many years.

However, the Treasurer's own approach must be scrutinised as well. Queenslanders expect and deserve better leadership, particularly when it comes to managing our financial future. It is time to move beyond political pointscoring and focus on what truly matters: effective, forward-thinking governance that safeguards the prosperity of our state.

The bills outline unforeseen expenditure that was incurred by 13 government departments. Unforeseen expenditure is expenditure from the Consolidated Fund in excess of the amount approved by the annual appropriation.

Debate, on motion of Mr Russo, adjourned.

Mr SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Murrumba, I remind everybody that the warnings from this afternoon still stand. The members for Cairns, Pine Rivers, McConnel, Waterford, Woodridge, Greenslopes and Coomera should be aware.

MOTION

Weather Events, Response



Hon. SJ MILES (Murrumba—ALP) (Leader of the Opposition) (5.30 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. acknowledges the devastation and impact felt by Queenslanders as a result of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.
2. expresses its deep appreciation to all responders, including volunteers who supported Queenslanders during and after the cyclone.
3. will continue to support all Queenslanders to recover from ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred and all natural disasters.
4. notes the ongoing efforts of energy crews to restore power and calls on the government to ensure all resources are made available to fast-track reconnection.
5. notes the key roles played by all agencies, including Seqwater, and the benefit to Queensland where such entities are made available to answer media questions at the daily televised press conferences.
6. notes the key role played by local government and calls on the government to ensure respectful and equal relationships with them.
7. notes the important role of parliamentarians to ask questions about the activities and priorities of government during natural disasters.
8. notes the critical nature of timely severe weather event warnings and calls on the government to ensure it issues these as soon as possible.
9. notes the Premier's endorsement of the key role played by Prime Minister Albanese in ensuring all levels of government were actively involved in handling the impacts of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.
10. acknowledges the commitment of various elected representatives to their communities as demonstrated by their focused attention and presence rather than being distracted by electioneering in the lead-up to and during the severe weather event.

Over the last week, Tropical Cyclone Alfred has threatened the safety, and tested the patience, of South-East Queensland residents from the Gold Coast-New South Wales border, west to the Scenic Rim and Lockyer Valley and all the way north to Hervey Bay. As always, Queenslanders rose to the challenge. We supported each other through the days of preparation and the strain of waiting, as parents tried to calm anxious children home from school. Neighbours supported neighbours—friends over the fence.

I want to thank every person who chipped in last week. Council workers, the SES, first responders, police, fire and ambulance all heeded the call for help, often while their own homes were under threat. I thank the swiftwater rescue crews, to whom many Queenslanders owe their lives this week—especially in Hervey Bay, where the waters rose so hard and fast. I make a special acknowledgement of the ADF personnel from Gallipoli Barracks in Brisbane who were involved in a serious incident while deployed helping communities near Lismore. Thank you for your service. I know that the whole of Queensland joins me in wishing you all the best for your recovery.

As we turn our focus towards recovery, I thank the community heroes who supported vulnerable Queenslanders through the preparation and in the aftermath—people like Bert, from Meals on Wheels at Deception Bay, whom I joined to deliver extra meals ahead of the cyclone hitting Moreton Bay.


Today, hundreds of Queensland households are still waiting for their power to be restored. We are grateful to the thousands of Energex workers deployed to get Queenslanders' homes and businesses up and running as soon as possible—people like James, who headed out to restore power to others' homes while his wife and three little kids stayed with family because their own home had been blacked out for days.

Once the fallen trees and debris have been lifted off cars, roofs and roads, once all of the schools have reopened and once the mud has been cleared, Queenslanders will take a breath and count the cost, and we know that the cost will be high. Families in my electorate of Murrumba were hit hard, as were others in so many areas of the south-east. Along with other Moreton Bay MPs, I was proud to write to the Minister for Disaster Recovery on their behalf to advocate for much needed disaster funding for Moreton Bay locals. That support has now been activated.

There is still more to do. Many suburbs, including across Brisbane and Ipswich, are still waiting for support, as are small businesses. Many have been severely impacted by power outages and the weather. They had to get rid of stock and they lost income from being closed, yet support has not yet been made available to them.

I want to thank the Albanese government—the Prime Minister and Minister McAllister—who have been front and centre of this response. Queenslanders know that their federal government is behind them. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the federal opposition. Peter Dutton left his entire electorate of Dickson behind as he dashed to Sydney to dine with millionaires because bolstering the Liberal Party's coffers was his priority. That speaks volumes about the LNP and Peter Dutton and, indeed, our Premier. There are serious questions to be asked about the priorities of Peter, their puppetmaster. He said he was at the disaster management centre getting a briefing from the Premier but the Premier says that did not occur. The Premier says he was not there. Which one of them is telling the truth? Peter Dutton dined on caviar as Moreton Bay locals stocked up on cans of beans as they braced for days without power.

In contrast, so many South-East Queensland members of parliament were there, standing by their communities each and every day. I was so proud to see that firsthand when I was out and about with so many of them—the members for Greenslopes, Sandgate, Bancroft and Cooper, to name just a few. I saw how hard all of them are serving their communities, and I was pleased to be there to support them.

 **Hon. TL MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games) (5.36 pm): I move the following amendment—

That paragraphs 4 to 10 be omitted and the following paragraphs inserted:

4. notes the ongoing efforts of energy crews to restore power and notes the government's commitment to ensure all resources are made available to fast-track reconnection.
5. notes the key roles played by all agencies, including Seqwater, and the benefit to Queensland where such entities are made available to answer media questions.
6. notes the key role played by local government and notes the government's recently signed Equal Partners in Government agreement with local government.
7. notes the important role of parliamentarians to ask questions about the activities and priorities of government during natural disasters, while ensuring resources are not taken away from either the response or recovery.
8. notes the critical nature of timely severe weather event warnings and notes the government's efforts to provide these to the public as soon as possible.
9. notes the Premier's endorsement of the key role played by Prime Minister Albanese and federal opposition leader Peter Dutton in ensuring all levels of government were actively involved in handling the impacts of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.
10. acknowledges the commitment of various elected representatives to their communities.'

This Labor opposition, whom we saw today during question time in total disarray and without one ounce of strategy, have come to parliament tonight with a motion that reeks of everything they are accusing others of. Because they do not have the courage to come out and say it directly, they have done it in a veiled way to hide the intent of what they are trying to communicate.

We have heard comments from everybody—from local governments to constituents who have openly said they do not normally vote our way and are Labor supporters—about the statesmanlike performance of the Premier—

Ms Enoch interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Algeester, you are now warned.

Mr MANDER: There have been comments on the Premier's demeanour, the fact that he was not patronising and the fact that he gave data so people could be well informed in making decisions themselves on when they return to work or when they return to school, rather than being dictated to, which they had become used to under the former government.

There were other comments from public servants who were associated with the disaster relief. They said the change between this government's approach and the previous government's approach was stark. What were some of those things? We actually started meetings on time so they did not have to wait 10, 15 minutes or half an hour—like they did for previous premiers—to suddenly roll in. They were not used to ministers giving reports. In the past, directors-general gave reports while the ministers sat behind them and said nothing. They were not used to the accountability served up by this government compared to the previous government.

The fact is: they are accusing us of politicising a disaster when that is exactly what they have done with this motion. In one breath they talk about politicising the situation and then they start raving on about Albanese's role in all this when the Premier already graciously acknowledged the role that he played. The other first that happened that most people will not know: for the first time ever the Premier gave a briefing to all of the MPs who were affected. Never would that have entered the mind of the previous government. He showed them respect by speaking directly to them via a Teams meeting so they could hear directly from the Premier what the latest situation was. This motion is a total embarrassment to the Labor opposition. They should be ashamed of themselves. The performance of the opposition in question time today was pathetic, and this motion is no better.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members, can we have some silence so that we can hear the member for Mount Ommaney.

Ms PUGH (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.41 pm): I rise to speak about the phenomenal community effort of volunteers, paid employees in our community and, of course, public servants from my electorate of Mount Ommaney in both preparing for and recovering from the effects of Cyclone Alfred. I will start with our volunteers, who epitomise the very best of our community and the very best, I think, of Queensland. This is just a tiny number of the amazing people in my community who put their hand up to help but it is really important to share their stories with the House this evening.


We have a sandbag depot in my community in Shamrock Street in Darra. The pre-made sandbags were quite slow in getting out the door until we had some fantastic young volunteers. Some chippies who were off work—Ephraim and his buddy from Sherwood—came down for a walk and then stayed. They brought their boom box to keep our spirits high while we were lifting the sandbags into the car. I did quite a few myself and I definitely paid for it the next couple of days! On the first day we were joking, 'Wouldn't it be great if we could get some people down here who knew how to do CrossFit?' So on day two we were joined by Kourtnee from Fitstop Jindalee. She was not wearing branded gear, she was just a lovely person who gave her time and her much appreciated muscles. When I asked Kourtnee why she was there—she was lined up to get sandbags herself—she mentioned that both her home and her business, which are located in flood-prone areas of Jindalee, were in danger of being inundated. They both went under in 2011 and the business went under in 2022. Still, Kourtnee took the time to help others to load their sandbags because there were many people who would not have been able to do it themselves. She did not give herself a plug on that day but I want to tonight, so thank you, Kourtnee.

Shelby, of the world-famous Shelby's Landscaping, donated a portaloos to the Darra sandbag depot so that people could use the bathroom. The wait for sandbags at Darra, at times, was up to nine hours. One evening last week people waited nine hours. We had pregnant mums in the car. They had not necessarily brought food. They may not have had water with them in a lot of cases. There were definitely no toilets until Shelby came to the rescue. So thank you, Shelby. It also really helped encourage people to stay and volunteer. Shelby and his family are obviously strong people and they helped with sandbags that same day as well. He often helps out around Oxley. We have a lot of issues like this, so we appreciate Shelby's ongoing dedication.

Reverend Dave at the Oxley Uniting Church helped coordinate somewhere for locals to stay, including a pregnant woman and her family who got water under their house on Sunday night. They had nowhere to go because there was no BCC evacuation centres open at the time. I thank the parishioners of the church who opened their home and gave that family a place to stay. Dave ran a charging station and a clothes washing station for the thousands of people in my electorate who lost power. Riverlife church were nothing short of amazing. They opened an evacuation centre and provided hot meals from their kitchen. When I went to thank their beautiful chef, she said she wanted the food to 'taste like love' and I am sure that it did.

Ian's home was inundated in 2022 but he was the beneficiary of our raise your home program, so this time he just had to gurni the mud from under his house. When he was finished at his place, he came next door on Oxley Station Road and did several others. Tony saw us starting work on Oxley Station Road. He returned five minutes later with a Gerni and cleaned for several hours, but what makes Tony's effort so special is he has one prosthetic leg. I want to thank, of course, our amazing SES. We have a depot nearby in the member for Inala's electorate. I also want to thank the member for Inala. She came and did a lot of gurni-ing with me on that day. She didn't have to do that, and I really appreciate it.

In the time that I have left, I want to thank all of the amazing public servants who looked after our community: the hardworking BCC sandbag staff who were packing those sandbags at the Darra depot; our health staff who did an amazing job; our Energex staff who were working 24 hours a day to get the lights back on; police who were, in addition to patrolling communities at risk of flooding, also making sure there was traffic control for those long lines at the sandbag depot; and our staff who looked after stocking the shelves. Thankfully the flooding from this event did not reach the 2022 levels in our community but from the bottom of my heart, I thank every single person who prepared as if it might and was ready to pitch in.

 **Hon. LJ GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services) (5.46 pm): I rise to support the government's amended motion because residents in South-East Queensland, and in particular, residents in my electorate of Currumbin were left devastated by the effects of Tropical Cyclone Alfred. I want to thank everyone who has stepped up during this challenging time from the Energex workers to the people who stacked the shelves in Woolies and IGA; the community members who pulled together to lend generators; and our resilience hub in the Ecovillage at Currumbin who opened their doors. In 2023 we provided them with a grant so that they could become a resilience hub and they were able to provide power and electricity to everyone in Currumbin Valley. That is the power of our community coming together. The Crisafulli government has made sure there is no daylight between the recovery effort and the road to helping people.

We have made sure that the grants are open. We have made sure that sporting clubs can have grants. A grant of \$5,000 has just opened up for local sporting clubs that were devastated by Cyclone Alfred and today, we have activated Disaster Assistance Loans of up to \$250,000 for small businesses and essential working capital loans of up to \$100,000 for eligible operators. The Crisafulli government will continue to support Queenslanders because we know the devastating impact these weather events have not just on Queenslanders but on small businesses. We know that there needs to be support that rolls right the way through.

We heard those opposite come into this chamber and use the first opportunity they had to ask questions in relation to the support they might get to help their communities to try to scare vulnerable Queenslanders. They stood up and perpetrated absolute furphies in relation to the housing minister's portfolio, trying to scare the most vulnerable of our Queenslanders. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition stood up and said we were cancelling headleases when it was categorically ruled out by the housing minister—that was the first opportunity they had to ask questions on behalf of their communities, to ask questions about the support their residents need and what did they do? They stood up and perpetrated an absolute furphy. They tried to scare Queenslanders. Not only did they ask that question once, but even after the housing minister categorically ruled it out—

Ms Scanlon interjected.


Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gaven, you are on the list.

Mrs GERBER: Even after the housing minister categorically ruled it out, three more stood up and continued to try to scare Queenslanders. I take the member for Gaven's interjections and I note that the member for Gaven is on a warning, Mr Speaker. Not only did they waste their first opportunity in this chamber to ask questions that might benefit their communities, but we saw the way they behaved in 2020 when they were in government. We had a firsthand look at the way they rode roughshod over local governments and at the way they did not empower our schools to make local decisions. They closed schools without talking with principals and without talking with local government. They absolutely rode roughshod over our communities. That is the way Labor deal with crises. They do not acknowledge local government, they do not communicate with them properly and they do not communicate with our principals.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs GERBER: That is exactly right; I take the interjection. They do not care about people. It was all about politics over people. There is no better example of that than the question asked by the member for Pine Rivers. Her community was devastated by the floods and she had an opportunity to ask a question about the recovery efforts in her community, but what did she say? The member for Pine Rivers asked the local government minister, 'Why didn't we see you on TV at all? How come you weren't on TV?' That is their priority: getting their mug on television as opposed to standing with their community and supporting them through a disaster. The Crisafulli government stands with Queenslanders and we will continue to support them through this natural disaster.

(Time expired)

 **Ms ASIF** (Sandgate—ALP) (5.51 pm): Like many parts of South-East Queensland, my electorate of Sandgate has suffered the effects of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. Many of my constituents have experienced localised flooding and devastating storm damage to their properties. Thousands of residents were without electricity for four days. Some in Bracken Ridge whom I met today at our community lunch were without power for up to six days. Their power was restored this morning, thanks to Energex and Ergon workers. I know they have worked incredibly hard to reconnect power to thousands of households as quickly as possible and there are high numbers of households that need this done. I would like to thank Chris Graham and the Energex team including Ben, whom I met on Sixth Avenue while they were restoring power to Sandgate residents.

Our entire community has been impacted by this weather event to some degree, and I want to acknowledge those who are suffering as a result of this and also those who are affected by a loss of income due to this weather event. While out helping our community prepare for the cyclone, I met many volunteers who put everything aside to help other members of our community. They included Jacob, who spent six hours with me at the Boondall entertainment centre sandbagging station filling sandbag after sandbag. He told me that he thought he had done enough at his house and then he wanted to help vulnerable members of our community to make sure they had the sandbags they needed. Thank you, Jacob, for supporting our community.

I also say thank you to Pushkar, who filled his van with sandbags to deliver them to other people, especially those who were not able to wait in their cars for up to five hours at sandbagging stations. That included Lee from Taigum and other vulnerable residents who were unable to get to a sandbag station. I thank Margaret from the Sandgate Uniting Church who volunteered to open the church as a place of refuge for those residents who needed to evacuate and did not have friends or family to go to, as they were told to do by this government. There was also Ann and Holly from Fitzgibbon, who worked together to keep the Fitzgibbon Community Centre open. Thank you. Holly, who lives near the centre, took a key to make sure that people had somewhere to go at all times—something that was not offered by this government. There was also Susan and her team at SANDBAG who helped pack up tents and belongings of rough sleepers in my community and offered them a place of safe shelter and food at SANDBAG. It is a great organisation that has itself been impacted by this weather event.


Not one evacuation centre was established to offer a safe haven in my community. I wrote to the minister for disaster and to this day I have not heard back about this. When questioned, Brisbane City Council did end up opening a temporary refuge centre. It was a place of last resort and had basic amenities: no beds, cooking facilities or food for people to take.

Once the storm passed, we began to learn of the impacts of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred and the thousands of residents who have been affected including Faye and John in Brighton who lost the roof from their house. My thoughts are with them. Faye and John, I would like to do anything I can for you to support you in this time.

I have also had residents from Bracken Ridge call me to report sewage overflow in their pipes. Despite reporting it to Brisbane City Council, they were told they could not provide them assistance. Residents of my electorate have been concerned about not being included in the disaster relief payments, so I wrote to the minister for disaster to request this. While I did not hear back, I am grateful that this is now being added and residents in my community are able to access this payment. Fitzgibbon, however, was left off the list, so I wrote another letter to the minister for disaster and am yet to hear back. However, I am pleased to inform the residents of Fitzgibbon that they are now able to apply for this. Just like people in neighbouring communities, they are able to get the support they need. I want them to know that I will do whatever I can in this time to support them. Please reach out to my office if I can help in any way possible.

Today I met a nurse, Steph, at our community barbecue. She has a family of four with another one on the way. Steph is a nurse at Caboolture Hospital. She told me that, while they did not have power for five days, she was at the hospital caring for others and supporting them and also trying to manage her three-year-old who was at home with gastro. My thoughts are with you, Steph. You have gotten through and you now have power. I wish you the best in recovery.

Natural disasters demonstrate very clearly the strengths of our community, and I have a very strong community. I want to talk about sporting clubs in my community that have been impacted including the Brighton Roosters, the Sandgate Hawks and other clubs like the Sandgate Golf Club. I will support them throughout this recovery in whatever way I can. I implore the government to make sure it continues to support our small businesses. There is currently no payment for our small businesses. They are suffering and have had to close. I would like to see some support for small businesses in my electorate of Sandgate.

 **Mrs YOUNG** (Redlands—LNP) (5.56 pm): I rise tonight because our community was deeply impacted as a result of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. It is a place where I have lived for 43 years and I have never seen an event like this in the Redlands; nor have my fellow Redlanders. We experienced high winds and a large amount of rain. As the cyclone reached South-East Queensland, our Southern Moreton Bay Islands were one of the first areas hit.

Those who know Redlands will know that we love trees, and we have some very big trees in Redlands. Unfortunately, we have a little fewer now. The fallen trees have done real damage to the powerlines and, unfortunately, to a lot of our community members' houses, particularly on the islands of Russell, Lamb, Karragarra and Macleay as well as Coochiemudlo, which was the first to lose power in the event on Wednesday. We knew it was going to be important that we work hard to ensure they received fast support in their recovery. The QPS, Water Police and coastguard worked to ensure that, before SeaLink were able to safely recommence their operations, they got our Energex workers moving. No big machines or trucks were possible, just vehicles that could fit on the QPS barge. That is where our community banded together to assist in clearing the way to ensure the Energex workers could get to where they needed to go to begin the restoration. There were local businesses—family businesses—taking their chainsaws, backhoes, skid steer excavators and sheer muscles to the streets of the islands, all led by the Southern Moreton Bay Chamber of Commerce President, Dan Golin.

I want to acknowledge these volunteers by naming them here tonight so they know their volunteer hours were so appreciated by us. They were: Dan and Michelle from Marley's Place, Jamie and Robyn from J&R Earthworkz, John and Sharon from SMBI Air and Electrical, Steve and Sandy from Russell Island Block and Building Services, Terry from Toolman Property Maintenance, Darryl from DLB Cranes, Chris and Kirsty from Bay Island Property, Shane from Canaipa backhoe and front-end loaders, Brad and Kylie from SMBI Septic Systems and Simon and Kim from Island Life real estate.

Simon and Kim went door to door doing welfare checks for family members when people contacted my office to say that they could not get in touch with their family. It was Simon and Kim who went out and knocked on those doors. I cannot forget the volunteer puppies on the ground—Jess, Dolly and the gorgeous little Daisy—that kept everyone in high spirits while they slept in a shed on Russell Island during the event. The efforts displayed by this group are the true meaning of community, helping community and what resilience really looks like. Their work helped our community get back on track as soon as possible.


The largest impact to our community was power outages, and I want to acknowledge the work the energy minister and Energex did to take the numbers in Redlands from about 4,500 houses just yesterday to only 575 this afternoon. It was a massive effort. In fact, the people in places like the Sanctuary over-50s retirement village, Thornlands rental village, the Redlands Business Park and Muriel Street at Redland Bay were really doing it tough because they had no water or electricity. All got their power back on today.

I was on the ground before the event assisting our community to get prepared. As I stood at the local shopping centres and ferry terminals, I heard gratitude from Redlanders for the efforts that the government put in to ensure they were assisted in being prepared and straight after the event for the continual updates and support. In fact, I want to read a direct quote from Karly from Bayside Coolrooms—

I was also hoping you could pass this message on to David Crisafulli, he has been such a calming voice throughout this entire disaster. He really has done such an amazing job in keeping calm to what has been a terrifying unknown for people in our state, and for someone like me who suffers anxiety he really has been a reassuring voice. Clear, concise, constant calming nature—THAT is leadership in its darkest hour.

I am going to run out of time; there are so many people to thank. Whilst there was so much work done by everyone, we know there is still more work to go and I am committed as a part of the Crisafulli team to continue to support the Redlands community to ensure there is no daylight between the disaster and recovery.

(Time expired)

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (6.01 pm): Gold Coasters have certainly been through it in the last year, like many other parts of Queensland, with storms over the previous Christmas and now Tropical Cyclone Alfred. My priority at all points has been to make sure that everyone in my community was safe, had shelter and that nobody was left behind. Clearly that was not a priority though of all members of this parliament, as we discovered in question time yesterday. On Monday, 3 March I wrote to the housing minister asking for urgent clarity on the Crisafulli government's plan to protect those experiencing homelessness after hearing very little from the government about what was happening for some of the most vulnerable Queenslanders. While waiting to hear—

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection from the member for Bonney. You are now the housing minister. You may not want to be, but you are now responsible. While waiting to hear of the government's plans, I reached out to services in my community and I met with a number of rough sleepers to make sure that they were aware of what options were available because of the absence of information from the government at the time. Charities like Set Free Care and Burleigh Church of Christ stood up facilities run by volunteers with little to no government assistance because they knew that people without shelter were going to be the most impacted by this natural disaster. Regrettably on Thursday, right as the cyclone was predicted to hit my community, it was decided to shut down the Nerang evacuation centre which really did put a lot of rough sleepers in the lurch because that is where police, myself and other people had told those people to go and unfortunately it was closed. Instead of ensuring that people knew accurate information, the housing—

An opposition member interjected.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection from the member. If it was not safe, where was the communication from the housing minister to rough sleepers?

Mr O'Connor: It was the council.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection that he is blaming council and not taking any responsibility. There were two places that were set up. I will acknowledge that there were some incredible volunteers who set up those two places. In fact, the department of housing and minister were referring people to those organisations that were run by volunteers—

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Ms SCANLON:—and supported by the council. When they closed their doors, those people exited into homelessness despite the promises made—

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bonney, cease your interjections. Member for Gaven, I ask you to address your comments through the chair.

Ms SCANLON:—sorry, Mr Speaker—by the Premier and the member for Bonney, both of whom were repeatedly saying to people that anyone experiencing homelessness was going to be offered accommodation. That is not the case. I have stories and I know that the member for Inala has stories. Multiple people have experienced—

Mrs Gerber: Tell us about headleases.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection from the member for Currumbin. She wants me to talk about headleasing. I do not know why you want to talk about it because whistleblowers have told us that the government was not wanting to take any—

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Ms SCANLON: It is a whistleblower complaint, member for Currumbin.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Currumbin—

Ms SCANLON: You used to rely on whistleblowers to make your political points, but now when you are being criticised you are not interested, just like you used to be supportive—

Mrs Gerber interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members on my right! Member for Gaven, address your comments through the chair.

Ms SCANLON: It is just like the LNP used to believe in frank and fearless advice and transparency until it got into government and thought, 'No, we don't want to actually see that.'

I can totally understand why homelessness services are now calling for a housing summit, because these issues need to be addressed. I doubt that we will be seeing Peter Dutton at that summit, because of course we know how he feels about social housing. He has spent the last year and all of his political career continuously opposing investment in social housing, so I am not sure how the member for Bonney reckons he is going to achieve his housing targets if his mate gets elected as the prime minister of this country. We also saw Peter Dutton vote against—

Ms Camm interjected.

Ms SCANLON: I take the interjection from the member for Whitsunday. The housing targets that you released are reliant on federal government investment—federal government investment—


Mr SPEAKER: Through the chair.

Ms SCANLON:—so if the LNP gets in you cannot deliver on your targets.

Ms Camm interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Whitsunday, you are now warned.

Ms SCANLON: If only Peter Dutton was as passionate about housing as he is about travelling interstate to make money for the LNP. Instead of filling sandbags, he was filling Liberal National Party coffers. That is their priority.

 **Mr HUNT** (Nicklin—LNP) (6.06 pm): This afternoon when the Leader of the Opposition got up and began addressing his motion, I started to think that maybe he had had a moment of reflection overnight about how pathetic their previous question time was and how embarrassing it looked for this parliament for those opposite to come in here and ask such ridiculous questions about how long someone was on the phone for or whether they hung up too early or who got on the telly and who did not get on the telly and that absolute embarrassment yesterday with regard to the politicisation of a disaster.

I thought those opposite had had a moment of reflection when he started with ‘acknowledges the devastation and impact felt by Queenslanders as a result of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred’—tick, I can get behind that; and ‘expresses its deep appreciation to all responders, including volunteers who supported Queenslanders’—tick. He got all the way down to 9—there were a couple of little political barbs in there—and 10 ‘acknowledges the commitment of various elected representatives to their communities ... and presence rather than being distracted by electioneering in the lead-up to and during the severe weather event’.


All we have seen from the Leader of the Opposition and indeed the previous pathetic contribution by the member for Gaven is those opposite being political, completely disregarding their own motion. I have been in opposition and understand that there is a time for politics. I understand that there is a role for those opposite to hold the government to account, and I can only imagine how difficult that role is with such an outstanding Crisafulli LNP government in power. However, while we are in this House and our communities are suffering it is not the time to undertake the political pointscoring that those opposite have been trying to do. It undermines this House and it embarrasses every member here who is trying to stand up for their community. Therefore, I am going to disregard their motion and talk about the amended motion as proposed by the member for Everton and about my community.

On the night of 9-10 March, the Nicklin areas of Nambour, Palmwoods, Woombye and surrounds were hit with severe flash flooding as a result of the ex-cyclone. Firstly, I want to congratulate and thank Premier David Crisafulli and the disaster management team for their outstanding leadership, information and preparation for our community. As a result of the timely updates and information, we as a community were able to jump into action and conduct preparations, including an extensive sandbagging operation at the Nambour Showgrounds, along with a refuge centre for vulnerable people and displaced persons in our community. Nambour in particular has a large population of homeless people living in tents by creeksides and waterways. Our community services were able to reach out to them and offer them a place of refuge in preparation for the severe weather event, ensuring their safety throughout the event. The fact that there were quick responses provided to dangerous incidents, rescues, road closures and, thankfully, no reports of major injuries or loss of life, is testament to the outstanding preparation of our community and the response by volunteers and emergency services locally.

In the early hours after the floods on that night I visited the refuge centre at Nambour where many homeless and vulnerable people were gathered with beds and food, with government services and volunteer organisations. On speaking with them, concerns started to develop amongst the group that the facility may be closing that same day. I reached out to Mayor Rosanna Natoli, who was quick to act to ensure the facility remained open another night to serve those vulnerable people. I want to thank the mayor for that and I also want to thank her for her leadership locally in relation to the disaster.

In the short time I have remaining I am not able to list all of the organisations that helped in our community efforts, but I want to thank them all collectively—all our volunteers and emergency services that responded so well. I made calls to many business owners. The biggest impact was to business owners in our CBD and sporting and community groups in low-lying areas affected by flooding. It was devastating to hear stories of complete loss of stock and equipment, especially for those unable to get

insurance for flooding and who are now facing losses in the hundreds of thousands of dollars—people like Jill Bingham, owner of Jetts gym in Nambour, and Daneyl Green from Mix Taste Eat, small businesses absolutely devastated by complete inundation. I look forward to working with our Crisafulli government, along with both the federal and local governments, to support the recovery of our community and businesses locally.

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (6.11 pm): If the member for Nicklin had continued reading the amendment moved by the Leader of the Opposition he would have seen that point 10 ends with ‘in the lead-up to and during the severe weather event’. One thing is clear: the LNP are incapable of caring for the community. They only care for themselves and their political survival. Who could forget ScoMo and his Hawaiian holiday during the Black Summer bushfires from which he returned with the perspective, ‘I don’t hold a hose, mate.’

A government member interjected.

Ms BOYD: Absolutely; I take that interjection. It is a bit like the vibe we are getting from the other side of, ‘I’m not a teacher.’ As my community was bunkering down with bare supermarket shelves, sandbagging station queues around the block, people being doorknocked to evacuate, along with school closures—an event not seen in 50 years in the south-east—there was one person in our community we simply could not find, and that was our federal member.


Time constructs make for interesting reading, but perhaps one of the most interesting is, ‘Time doesn’t mean anything when you’re about to have water lapping at your door,’ when hot-miked around the climate reality facing Pacific Islands nations with rising sea levels resulting from climate change. Time does matter. Accounting for it in this job is important. We saw Peter Dutton jet off to Sydney to fundraise for the LNP. When repeatedly asked about his whereabouts, his office denied the claims.

For the short while Peter Dutton was in Brisbane, he said that Tropical Cyclone Alfred was very serious and talked about how major the event would be for the state. He ought to know: he was afforded a high-level briefing at the emergency services complex. It appears Crisafulli decided to brief Peter Dutton, the federal opposition leader, before even offering opposition MPs a briefing and an opportunity to ask questions to ensure we could keep our communities informed. Jetting off is A-OK by LNP standards, with key senior emergency personnel approved to head off on leave and, despite a cyclone tearing down the coast, never recalled by this police minister.

We saw an extraordinary set of events with the Premier, who blew up and used stern language—reportedly—with a mayor on a phone hook-up during the event and then came into this place to spruik that his government was committed to being an equal partner with local government. To local government we say thank you. You were the glue that held this disaster response together, along with our frontline emergency services personnel and volunteers. When government members talk about no daylight between response and recovery, perhaps they are referring to the very dark location where they are keeping all of the ministers responsible for managing the agencies that were responding to the weather event—so much so that the Premier’s own front bench were in the dark and when they asked a question on a phone hook-up the Premier hung up the phone on them. He disconnected the phone. The member for Everton talks about showing respect. Well, I have not seen it from the Premier. What I have seen is a premier who blows up and hangs up.

Let us talk about the fire minister, who was asked more than 10 times to come on local radio and talk about the event. She came into this place yesterday and joked about the power being out and people not being able to watch TV warnings. She had the opportunity to go on radio and to alert the South-East Queensland public and she declined. She did not even respond. She is a water minister who could not explain the flood manual and instead ordered Seqwater to hold separate disaster press conferences every single day. As if two were not enough, the media needed to be tied up with three.

Yesterday the fire minister came into this place and, despite four opportunities, she could not bring herself to thank our Rural Fire Service volunteers. Did the Deputy Premier ruin it for everyone, rambling on like an incoherent lawyer for 20 minutes about supermarket shelf stock only to not be able to come good on the promise of supply? Thank God for Energy Queensland, our publicly owned provider, which has the capacity to reconnect our community—something those opposite have spent years opposing. In my final seconds I thank the QRA, which once again has been politicised with another LNP appointment. As if a federal Senate candidate was not enough for the North Queensland recovery, we now see a former LNP councillor appointed, further politicising disaster recovery.

 **Hon. AJ STOKER** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (6.16 pm): Deary me, the poor member for Pine Rivers. There is no helping some. I rise tonight to pay tribute to the persistence, courage and decency shown by members of my community in the Redlands in the lead-up to and into the aftermath of Tropical

Cyclone Alfred. We saw so much good stuff out in our community. We saw young people filling sandbags for older people. We saw community members checking in on older people who they thought might be feeling isolated—checking they had the food and water they needed and that they had not been left too lonely and worried. We had people helping the sick during power outages, offering a room in a powered house to people who needed a pump to breathe, for instance. We had the sharing of generators and people opening their homes to provide assistance to others in the community who did not yet have power. It showed the very best of our community's character and I want to pay tribute to the goodness of Redlanders. I am so proud to be a Redlander right now. It has been so good to see.


I have also been pleased to see cooperation between the state and federal governments, working together to get people back on their feet following this event. Whether it is the personal hardship payments that are available or the disaster assistance loans that can help small business get back on their feet again, all of these things will help our community recover swiftly. I am so pleased to have had the advocacy of our federal member, Henry Pike, and also to see that unity ticket from the federal government and the federal opposition—all rowing in the same direction to get the community back together and working hard. I wish I could say the same for those opposite, that they were prepared to work to get the right things done in the hour of need, but they were not prepared to do that. We have seen from the contributions of those opposite, such as we just saw from the member for Pine Rivers, that there is no cooperation with this crew.

It was great to see the seamless cooperation with Redland City Council during this time. I take a moment to give a shout-out to and thank Redland City Council for the work that they have done in cooperation with our SES, police, fire, ambulance drivers and paramedics, the workers at the Redland Hospital and the Marie Rose Centre—including the midwives who delivered twins during the cyclone, which I think is quite extraordinary—the Energex workers and the ADF, who came to help clear branches and trees on Straddie just yesterday. The quality of the communication and interaction that we saw, in particular from Deputy Mayor Councillor Talty, in the lead-up to the event was extraordinary. I acknowledge the cooperation and information sharing of Councillor Mitchell. It was a pleasure to work together to get the best possible intel from the ground so that we could get the solutions rolled out as quickly as possible. Long may that cooperation continue. It was really good to see. Council officers such as Michael Tait went above and beyond to make sure that people had what they needed at a time when many felt isolated and afraid. I think that is really significant.

The storm itself was quite frightening for a number of people in our community, particularly older people. It was great to hear stories of people inviting in neighbours and distracting one another with chats and food at a time when people were feeling anxious about what was ahead. That kindness does not just get people through a difficult time; it builds a community that endures into the future in a way that is a little old fashioned but is awfully lovely. I love to see it.

If small businesses are stressed about the period ahead, I encourage them to look at the disaster assistance loans that are available on concessional rates. Up to \$250,000 of concessional loans are available to help people get back on their feet. Essential working capital loans are also available. Those loans will help to get our community back to the full service offering and to the financial security that I know our small business people so desperately want to see.

There is one way that all of our community can help to back in the Redlands and its recovery. Straddie is a beautiful place to have an Easter break. They need your bookings now. They will be ready to receive visitors by the time Easter comes around. There is no better place to enjoy beaches, to take a bush walk and to enjoy Indigenous culture. All of those things are available on Straddie. The community of tourism operators have been doing it tough and continue to do it tough, but they have really stepped up in the course of the past week to care for their community. There is a great opportunity for people from across Queensland to help them. They can do that by booking their Easter trip and making the most of the Easter break to help get those small businesses back to their best. We know that they can do it and we are backing them in every step of the way.

 **Hon. CR DICK** (Woodridge—ALP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.22 pm): I rise in the House tonight to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition and to oppose the amendment moved by the member for Everton. I can assure you, Mr Speaker, and all members of the House that there is absolutely no way that the state opposition will endorse an amendment endorsing the Premier's approach to the leader of the federal opposition, Peter Dutton, cutting and running from Queensland when a cyclone was bearing down on this state. There is no way the state opposition will ever support that approach.

If you are a real Queenslander and you have maroon blood in your veins, when adversity strikes you stand shoulder to shoulder with your fellow Queenslanders. That is what real Queenslanders do. We know that. We have seen it time and again. We saw it, time and again, in the north of our state over the past few months and in the south-east in the last week or so. I acknowledge, as the Leader of the Opposition's motion notes, the commitment of all elected representatives to their communities, demonstrated by their focused attention and presence rather than being distracted by electioneering. In times of trouble, the last thing a Queenslander does is cut and run.


Of course, that brings me to Peter Dutton, the federal LNP member for Dickson. The seat of Dickson includes suburbs such as Kurwongbah, Petrie, Strathpine, Albany Creek, Ferry Hills, Everton Hills, Murrumba Downs and parts of Kallangur. He also represents people who live around Lake Samsonvale and Lake Kurwongbah. His seat of Dickson covers 724 square kilometres and he represents more than 100,000 Queenslanders in the Australian House of Representatives. But does he really? Does Peter Dutton really represent the people of Dickson? Does he really represent the people of Dickson when it matters the most? Did Peter Dutton really represent them when a cyclone was baring down on the 100,000 people he represents?

We know that the Premier organised a special briefing on Cyclone Alfred for Peter Dutton. That briefing would have told him that the cyclone was barrelling towards Queensland. What did Peter Dutton do? He took that information and he went straight to Sydney. He took that information and he shared the latest Cyclone Alfred update with Sydney's elite at a \$100 million mansion on Sydney Harbour. That is exactly where Peter Dutton went. Peter Dutton went straight to Sydney.

Peter Dutton was in Sydney as the more than 100,000 people of Dickson were preparing for Cyclone Alfred. While Peter Dutton's electorate was preparing to confront a natural disaster, Peter Dutton himself was preparing to go to a big-dollar donor fundraiser. He was filling the LNP moneybags but not sandbags. Peter Dutton was in Sydney at a fundraiser, cleaning out the pockets of well-heeled big-dollar LNP donors, while the people of Dickson were back home cleaning out their backyards. Peter Dutton was in Vaucluse, a suburb that Domain.com.au says always gets a podium finish when it comes to the wealthiest suburb in Australia. He was in a \$100 million harbourside mansion, collecting cheques while Queenslanders in his electorate were doing safety checks. That is what he was doing.

I will go back to what I said at the start but before I do, I know one person who was helping her community prepare for the worst cyclone in 50 years: Ali France, the Labor candidate for Dickson. Ali France was out there helping her community. That is what she was doing. She was not in Vaucluse, lining the bank account of the LNP with big-dollar donor funds. Peter Dutton was on the red carpet, with all the glitz and glamour and the big-dollar donors at the \$100 million mansion. That is where he was when the cyclone was baring down on Queensland.

I finish by saying that Peter Dutton let the people of Dickson down. Peter Dutton let his fellow Queenslanders down. Everyone in Queensland, everyone in this parliament and everyone in Australia know it.

 **Hon. RM BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (Minister for Finance, Trade, Employment and Training) (6.27 pm): I rise in full support of the motion as amended by my colleague the Minister for Sport and Racing and Minister for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in recognition of the impact of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. This week in the House I have certainly told people about how badly the cyclone affected the electorate of Mudgeeraba. I take my hat off to my colleagues the member for Currumbin and the member for Theodore. We know what it is like when we get hit by freak storms, tornadoes and flooding. What I have found really offensive this week is the opposition absolutely playing politics with a disaster. How insulting. How duplicitous. How hypocritical. They did not ask one question in question time yesterday—

Ms Farmer interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Bulimba, you are now warned.

Ms BATES:—and there was nothing today. It is appalling. It is insulting. If we are talking about Peter Dutton, he will win the seat of Dickson and hopefully be the next prime minister of this country. I remind the House of January 2024 when my electorate and that of the member for Theodore were destroyed by a tornado that ripped through our area. It was absolutely devastating. Where was the then premier, Steven Miles? I have an article from the *Courier-Mail*, which I will table.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail* online, dated 2 January 2024, titled “‘Where are you mate?’ Premier Steven Miles blasted for taking hols amid floods chaos” [\[197\]](#).

The article with the headline—“Where are you mate?” Premier Steven Miles blasted for taking hols amid flood chaos’ contained a very emotional interview with the member for Theodore, Mark Boothman, who has always stood up for his local community. That was where Steven Miles was the last time we had a natural disaster in our electorate. It is heartless. The member for Woodridge cannot keep using the Binna Burra bell and saying that he was covered in soot and he saved the day. He did not save the day. He was not even there. It was pathetic.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Members to my right, I cannot hear the member for Mudgeeraba because of the noise coming from my right.

Ms BATES: My electorate received 1,600 millimetres of rain in Springbrook. That is not unusual. In Cyclone Debbie, we had 600 millimetres in 12 hours overnight. I live on a floodplain. I have four floodplains in my electorate: the Carrara floodplain, the Merrimac floodplain, the Robina floodplain and the Mudgeeraba floodplain. My roads were already closed on Thursday night. My electorate was already flooding. The member for Currumbin lives a block away from my sister. I got my sister out of Currumbin Waters that night because I knew that all of Stewart Road would go under and the entire Currumbin Valley and Galleon Way would go under as well.

A government member: You didn’t get the member out?

Ms BATES: I did not get her out. She is big enough and ugly enough to look after herself! I got my sister out because I knew that she would not only be flooded in but also have no comms and no power. This is what happens in my electorate. Parts of my electorate went out that have never gone out before. The only suburb in my electorate that did not lose power was Robina. It was like a little doughnut in the middle of my electorate. Places like Merrimac, which has never lost power, were without power for days and days. I was in Springbrook today and they had no comms. The global wireless network went down so they had to use old VHF radios.

The member for Currumbin and I need the federal government to make sure that all of our Telstra towers and backup generators are protected so it does not happen again. Playing politics with this is appalling. Today in Bonogin, there are still trees over the top of powerlines, and people were dicing with death driving under and over live powerlines. I take my hat off to the people from Energex and Ergon. Those blokes came from all over the country to help in Mudgeeraba. It was not just one tree that they were chopping down; there are thousands of trees that have fallen. They are absolutely amazing and they worked through the night.

We also had engineers at the Hinze Dam. The Hinze Dam was closed. No-one could see the spillway because it was too dangerous and they had to make sure it was repaired before they could open to it the public.

Most of my electorate has had no power since Thursday night. There is flooding all over my electorate, we have had no comms and there are live wires down. I take my hat off to David Crisafulli, the Premier of Queensland, because the messaging that he gave to my people meant that we were well and truly prepared. Those on the other side have just politicised what could have been a tragedy in many of our electorates. It is just disgusting.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time allotted for the debate has expired.

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

AYES, 50:

LNP, 50—Baillie, Barounis, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Dalton, Dillon, Doolan, Dooley, Field, Frecklington, Gerber, Head, Hutton, Hunt, B. James, T. James, Janetzki, G. Kelly, Kempton, Kirkland, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lee, Lister, Mander, Marr, McDonald, Mickelberg, Minnikin, Molhoek, Morton, Nicholls, O’Connor, Perrett, Poole, Powell, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Stoker, Watts, Vorster, Young.

NOES, 34:

ALP, 34—Asif, Bailey, Bourne, Boyd, Bush, Butcher, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Grace, Healy, Howard, J. Kelly, King, Linard, Martin, McCallum, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Nightingale, O’Shea, Pease, Pugh, Russo, Ryan, Scanlon, Smith, Sullivan, Whiting.

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 50:

LNP, 50—Baillie, Barounis, Bates, Bennett, Bleijie, Boothman, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Dalton, Dillon, Doolan, Dooley, Field, Frecklington, Gerber, Head, Hutton, Hunt, B. James, T. James, Janetzki, G. Kelly, Kempton, Kirkland, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lee, Lister, Mander, Marr, McDonald, Mickelberg, Minnikin, Molhoek, Morton, Nicholls, O'Connor, Perrett, Poole, Powell, Rowan, Simpson, Stevens, Stoker, Watts, Vorster, Young.

NOES, 35:

ALP, 35—Asif, Bailey, Bourne, Boyd, Bush, Butcher, de Brenni, Dick, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Furner, Grace, Healy, Howard, J. Kelly, King, Linard, Martin, McCallum, McMillan, Mellish, Miles, Mullen, Nightingale, O'Shea, Pease, Power, Pugh, Russo, Ryan, Scanlon, Smith, Sullivan, Whiting.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Motion, as agreed—

That this House:

1. acknowledges the devastation and impact felt by Queenslanders as a result of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.
2. expresses its deep appreciation to all responders, including volunteers who supported Queenslanders during and after the cyclone.
3. will continue to support all Queenslanders to recover from ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred and all natural disasters.
4. notes the ongoing efforts of energy crews to restore power and notes the government's commitment to ensure all resources are made available to fast-track reconnection.
5. notes the key roles played by all agencies, including Seqwater, and the benefit to Queensland where such entities are made available to answer media questions.
6. notes the key role played by local government and notes the government's recently signed Equal Partners in Government agreement with local government.
7. notes the important role of parliamentarians to ask questions about the activities and priorities of government during natural disasters, while ensuring resources are not taken away from either the response or recovery.
8. notes the critical nature of timely severe weather event warnings and notes the government's efforts to provide these to the public as soon as possible.
9. notes the Premier's endorsement of the key role played by Prime Minister Albanese and federal opposition leader Peter Dutton in ensuring all levels of government were actively involved in handling the impacts of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.
10. acknowledges the commitment of various elected representatives to their communities.

Sitting suspended from 6.39 pm to 7.35 pm.


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (SUPPLEMENTARY 2023-2024) BILL

APPROPRIATION (SUPPLEMENTARY 2023-2024) BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from p. 446, on motion of Mr Janetzki—

That the bills be now read a second time.

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (7.35 pm), continuing: I will try to pick up from where I left off. It is important to note that the unforeseen expenditure does not necessarily equate to departmental overspending as the LNP have mistakenly claimed. I was dismayed to see in the media the LNP labelling this expenditure as blowouts, even though the Acting Under Treasurer clarified in correspondence to the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee that the unforeseen expenditure is typically due to emergent issues, policy implications, changes in Australian government payments or new decisions impacting the year's budget. It is not the result of overspending by departments. As an example, \$2 billion of the unforeseen expenditure in 2023-24 went towards delivering vital cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders. Does the Treasurer consider that a blowout? I can assure him that my constituents who are struggling with the rise in the cost of living do not see that as a blowout.

My main concern, however, is that the Crisafulli government might use these figures as an excuse to cut vital services. Queensland Health had the highest unforeseen expenditure, which is not unexpected as Queensland Health is the largest Queensland government department. It required additional funding for things like depreciation and a new 10-year service agreement with LifeFlight, the emergency helicopter.

I am very concerned by the Crisafulli government's recent cuts to our health services, which are already coming to light. On 25 February, the Crisafulli government slashed funding for an eight-bed perinatal unit in Townsville that supported new mothers. This is a promise that the Crisafulli government has walked back on. They promised to not cut health services. Just 111 days into their leadership, we see this critical service being cut. This was a slap in the face for very vulnerable women, especially when it was announced during the community's recovery from the recent floods in North Queensland. It was cold and heartless.

On top of this, the government has reduced operating hours for the nurse-led clinics in Gladstone, Brisbane City and Mount Gravatt—limiting them to regular business hours. It took a whistleblower to raise the alarm that the seven-day Brisbane City clinic, which opened in September, would have staffing reduced and opening hours dramatically cut to remove evening and weekend work. Under changes proposed by the Crisafulli government, the same has occurred, from my understanding, in Gladstone and now in Mount Gravatt. This will force people to attend emergency departments for non-life threatening conditions such as infections and sprains—the very issues that these clinics were designed to address.


I also worry that this is just the beginning. If the government continues to undermine these services, we could see nurse-led clinics closed altogether, all because the government made them less accessible to those who need them most. I guess we have to wonder what is going to happen to the previously named satellite hospitals, which are now called healthcare centres. If members want to talk about waste, changing the name is a significant waste.

The Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety saw unforeseen expenditure, particularly to cover increased funding for out-of-home care services in response to the ongoing pressures in the child protection system. Given the unprecedented nature of these services, this funding was necessary.

Queensland Corrective Services also received additional funding, primarily to cover the recruitment of operational staff for the 1,536-bed Lockyer Valley Correctional Centre, which is set to open later this year. This Labor built facility will be Queensland's largest correctional facility, with rehabilitation at the core of its operations.

Similarly, the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning received funding to support priority racing infrastructure for Racing Queensland and minor venue programs for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Queensland Fire Department received supplementary funding for the recruitment of additional firefighters. The now abolished department of energy and climate received funding for the Queensland building plan.

The Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service also received funding for rectification works to level 7 of the Parliamentary Annexe and for enterprise bargaining outcomes. Those additional details about unforeseen expenditure in certain departments, like the Queensland Police Service and Treasury, were fully provided and the explanatory notes for the Consolidated Fund Financial Report 2023-24 provide further insights into these issues.

 **Ms DOOLEY** (Redcliffe—LNP) (7.41 pm): As the member for Redcliffe, I rise tonight to speak on and support the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill. These bills provide formal authorisation for the former treasurer's spending of unforeseen expenditure from the Consolidated Fund during the 2023-24 financial year—a staggering \$1.132 billion from 13 departments and an additional \$4.2 million for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service. While this process is a necessary part of financial accountability under the Financial Accountability Act 2009, we cannot ignore what these figures represent: a final stamp on a decade of reckless financial mismanagement by the former Labor government.

Unforeseen expenditure is intended for genuine emergencies, not for routine budgeting failure. Under the former Labor government it became the norm rather than the exception. Over the past decade, Labor's financial mismanagement saw Queensland's unforeseen expenditure hit record highs. In the 2023-24 financial year alone, this soared to an unprecedented \$9 billion, confirming what we all knew: Labor completely lost control of the budget.

This bill finalises the last chapter in Labor's decade of fiscal irresponsibility. Queenslanders will remember this period not only for the mismanagement of public funds but also for the neglect of essential services from health to infrastructure, crime prevention and cost-of-living relief. Under Labor, the budget process was reduced to a marketing exercise. The numbers in their budget papers became meaningless as spending blew out time and time again.

Consider the following: Cross River Rail was promised at \$5.4 billion but is now expected to be three times the cost, at \$17 billion; Gold Coast Light Rail, a \$330 million budget blowout; the hospital capacity expansion plan, originally \$9.7 billion, now estimated at \$16 billion; the CopperString project, costs ballooning from \$6.2 billion to \$9 billion; the Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro scheme, originally \$12 billion, now an eye-watering \$36.8 billion.

A government member: Waste.

Ms DOOLEY: Waste. Labor also left behind billions in underfunded essential services—a \$461 million black hole in child safety funding and a staggering \$12 billion in underfunded or unfunded health programs. These are not just numbers on a page. These represent real consequences for Queenslanders, for people like Mark, whom I met during the 2024 campaign and who, under a Labor government, was left for five hours on a footpath at Woody Point while waiting for an ambulance to arrive. Under Labor we saw the worst ambulance ramping in the nation. These numbers represent longer hospital wait times, failing infrastructure and a cost-of-living crisis that is hitting families across my electorate of Redcliffe and the state.

We are having to clean up Labor's mess. Labor's inability to manage finances did not just burden Queenslanders with record debt but also put our financial reputation at risk. The numbers tell the full story. In January, Labor's last budget under MYFER showed the debt climbing to \$218 billion—an increase from \$172 billion in the 2023-24 budget. Queensland now has the highest debt per capita of any state, at \$40,000 per man, woman and child. Our state's annual interest bill will reach \$9.9 billion by 2028—wasted money that could be spent on hospitals, schools, roads and essential services.

Since coming to office, the Crisafulli government has taken immediate and decisive action to restore fiscal responsibility. We have cancelled Labor's \$36.8 billion waste of the Pioneer-Burdekin hydro fantasy; we have paused BPIC, saving taxpayers approximately \$17 billion by 2030; and we have, as of last night, restored the Queensland Productivity Commission to ensure sound economic decision-making moving forward.

The people of Redcliffe and Queensland demand and deserve a government that has respect for their money. The people of Redcliffe and Queensland want accountability and transparency in their elected representatives and governments. This bill seeks to provide that so future budgets reflect the expectations of my electorate of Redcliffe and Queenslanders so my four adult children and the millions of other Queenslanders like them can afford to buy a home.


That is why the Crisafulli LNP government has appointed the first Minister for Home Ownership—our Treasurer. This is because the LNP is committed to respecting taxpayers' money. It is because the LNP is committed to seeing more, not fewer, people owning their own homes. In my electorate of Redcliffe, housing is the No. 1 issue raised with me day after day—a legacy left by a decade of a Labor government that did not build one house under the \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund. I am proud to say that it is an LNP Crisafulli government that will deliver 82 one-bedroom brand new social and community units for over-55s through a partnership with the Brisbane housing corporation. This is due to be completed midyear and cannot be finished fast enough. This is because the LNP is committed to delivering the critical infrastructure and houses that Queensland needs. To do this we need to appropriate the funds to deliver essential infrastructure like the Redcliffe Hospital expansion plan, which will add an additional 204 beds. With exploded population growth in Redcliffe, Murrumba and Bancroft—residents who all use the Redcliffe Hospital—this project should have been delivered five years ago. Last year alone we saw 1,600 babies born at Redcliffe Hospital, 65,000 presentations at Redcliffe emergency and 58,000 outpatient appointments.

While talking about the Redcliffe Hospital, I put on the record my special thanks to the hardworking doctors, nurses, allied health and ancillary staff who not only worked tirelessly during Tropical Cyclone Alfred in the past week but also work tirelessly every single day to make sure the people of Redcliffe and surrounds get the care they need. I also pay tribute to the Redcliffe Hospital Auxiliary, which raises funds for projects that improve facilities for patients and staff around the hospital. I give a shout-out to Rhonda Neal and the many other hospital staff who fundraise through the Reddy Fun Run. They have raised over \$83,000 in the last three years which makes a real difference. In partnership with the Hospital Auxiliary they have used those funds to create many safe and beautiful spaces around the hospital.

While I am at it, I acknowledge the remarkable community of Redcliffe and businesses that have got behind the Raise it for Redcliffe Hospital fundraising campaigns. In the past four years we have hit the magic million under the capable leadership of Sharyn Tidswell and the incredible business impact partners, including: The Komo, the Bel, GKS Law, Crew Legal and the Redcliffe RSL. These funds have

seen the rehabilitation and stroke unit and palliative care unit lounge refurbished. I worked there as a registered nurse 30 years ago and it had not been refurbished in that time. These funds also support life-saving research. Why am I highlighting these fundraising efforts? While our communities rise and cherish the challenge to fill gaps where government funding does not match needs, it should not be on already stretched communities to do so.

This appropriation bill will release the additional funds needed for the much needed Redcliffe Hospital expansion plan and other health related projects across Queensland, including a cancer centre for Redcliffe. Queenslanders want, and deserve, a better economy. A stronger economy means more schools, more hospitals, more roads, more jobs, successful businesses and appropriately funded public services such as child safety. I commend the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill to the House.

 **Hon. MC de BRENNI** (Springwood—ALP) (7.51 pm): I rise to speak on the cognate appropriation bills before the House. This bill brings to a close the appropriation process for the 2023-24 financial year—a year where Labor delivered a budget that halved net debt and a budget that was absolutely on the side of Queenslanders. On this side of the House we know that a budget is more than just numbers. Every single budget that we delivered has been about Queenslanders. It is about the people that we serve. In September following this budget S&P affirmed Queensland's stable AA+ credit rating, yet after less than just four months in office those opposite have been on a reckless and wilful politicking mission that has resulted in a credit rating downgrade. That is the legacy of those opposite in just four months.

Government members interjected.

Mr de BRENNI: If I was them, I would be embarrassed too. We have heard a lot of commentary around what is unforeseen expenditure. It is clear that it is not a cost blowout and it is not a department overspend. The Acting Under Treasurer has made that clear. In fact, in 2023-24 unforeseen expenditure was delivering absolutely vital cost-of-living relief right across every corner of this state to every single Queensland household through the cheaper power act. We legislated—

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Member for Burnett, you can stop your interjections. You have been talking since you have been in this chamber.

Mr de BRENNI: We legislated that so the LNP could not cut cost-of-living relief. The numbers for unforeseen expenditure in these bills are entirely legitimate. In contrast, last year the now Premier continuously told Queenslanders that power prices were increasing and had increased by over 19 per cent over three years. We know, and we have always known, that those figures were fundamentally false. In fact, we delivered the lowest power bills in the nation for every single Queensland household. Whilst this unforeseen expenditure for energy ensured Queenslanders were better off, the unforeseen expenditure we are debating tonight meant that Queenslanders were better off, and the contrast I want to point to tonight is quite striking.

Just consider the foreseen, the foreseeable, the acutely forecast and real expenditure that Queenslanders will bear the brunt of under a Dutton government—expenditure the LNP want to saddle on every single Queensland for decades and generations to come. Queenslanders know what Peter Dutton and the LNP want to do. We have seen them in Canberra talking about how Premier Crisafulli will crumble when pushed on nuclear policy by Peter Dutton. We all know those opposite will not just entertain the federal coalition's nuclear fantasy: we know it is their fantasy too. Members will note that in the 2023-24 budget there is an allocation for a clean and affordable energy future for Queensland, one that creates jobs in manufacturing in regional communities and here in the south-east, one that protects our agricultural sector, one that protects the great Queensland environment. In stark contrast, the LNP's plan is for small and large nuclear reactors that have been modelled to cost 23 times the cost of large-scale renewable energy and up to 26 times the cost of rooftop solar. We know how much nuclear project costs have blown out around the rest of the world. If members want to think about unforeseen expenditure they only need to look to the Hinkley nuclear project in the UK, which is now costing \$92.6 billion. Looking at the small-scale nuclear reactors they want to talk about, the one in Utah, NuScale, at \$9.3 billion was such a failure when it comes to unforeseen expenditure and its budget that it could not even get off the ground.

Mr LISTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order under standing order 118, relevance. I think it is clear that the material the member is talking about, nuclear energy and so forth, has no link whatsoever to the appropriation bills. It is not even remotely close.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Springwood, if you can provide the relevance to your contribution I would appreciate that.

Mr de BRENNI: For the benefit of the member for Southern Downs, I was drawing a contrast—which I think in a debate on an appropriation bill particularly is incredibly relevant when the unforeseen expenditure was around supporting Queenslanders with delivering the lowest power bills in the nation—with the LNP's plan to deliver incredibly high power bills, and therein lies the relevance of my comments. While that foreseeable expenditure from the LNP's nuclear plan will be footed by Queenslanders, those assets will probably not even stay in the hands of Queenslanders.


Their record is clear. When it comes to the cost of living and cost-of-living support, the LNP have already broken one of their key election promises. For a government that said it was one of their top priorities, their actions simply do not match their claim. It is a big broken promise. When it comes to fiscal management, we have heard a lot from those opposite about fiscal management. It has all been a game for them—juiced-up figures to benefit them politically. After just four months there has been a credit rating downgrade. It is cheap politics that have become incredibly expensive for every single Queenslander. That is what they think of Queenslanders' welfare and the taxpayer dollar.

Labor, on the other hand, will always stand shoulder to shoulder with Queenslanders, especially when it comes to the cost of living and especially when it comes to staring down natural disasters. Unforeseen expenditure is entirely appropriate when it helps Queenslanders pay their rent. It is entirely appropriate when it helps keep food on the table for your family. It is entirely appropriate when it helps keep fuel in your car to get you to work or to school. We will hold the LNP to account because who will pay the price of the LNP's nuclear fantasy? Who will pay for that massive foreseeable expenditure—

Mr Crandon interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Take you seat, member for Springwood. Member for Coomera, you are now warned.

Mr de BRENNI: They do not want to come clean with Queenslanders about who will pay for their massive but foreseeable expenditure to fuel their nuclear fantasy—the reactors that will cost billions of dollars over years to come. It is a policy that will only ever benefit the rich. That is expenditure that Queenslanders simply cannot afford.

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (8.00 pm): I rise to address the debate on the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill and the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill. I first wish to briefly address the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill and the approval being sought for the amount of approximately \$4.2 million in unforeseen expenditure incurred by the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service. I acknowledge, as advised by Treasury, that the additional amounts being sought for the 2023-24 financial year were primarily due to funding for the Parliamentary Annexe level 7 podium rectification works.

In turning to the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill, it is this legislation which is necessary in order to finalise the fiscal wreckage that was left behind by the previous state Labor government—a Labor government that spent a decade engaged in what can only be described as financial vandalism, leaving Queenslanders with a debt-ridden, mismanaged budget and a state of economic uncertainty. The objective of this legislation is clear. It is seeking this parliament's formal authorisation for the reckless cost blowouts overseen by the former treasurer, the member for Woodridge, and to rectify that. Incredibly, this is now the third time that the Queensland parliament has been asked to approve unforeseen expenditure by Labor for the 2023-24 year. This fact alone highlights the sheer economic incompetence and total disregard for taxpayer dollars of the previous Labor state government.

The unforeseen expenditure contained in this legislation is across 13 departments and totals a staggering \$1.128 billion. This legislation ultimately underscores Labor's true legacy of fiscal failure—a legacy of unfunded promises, cost blowouts and irresponsible economic management. Over the last decade, Labor lost control of the Queensland state budget and the consequences have been there for all Queenslanders to see. As Standard & Poor's reported in June last year, Labor's fiscal discipline was 'waning' and 'eroding' Queensland's financial credibility. Embarrassingly for the member for Woodridge, the *Australian Financial Review*, following the release of Labor's last state budget, wrote—

Queensland budget a populist clown show

The budget further trashes Queensland's traditional reputation as a low debt, lower taxing, business-friendly jurisdiction as Labor tries to spend its way back into power.

The article went on to label the member for Woodridge's budget as 'politically shameless' and 'fiscally irresponsible'.

When considering the topics of revenue collected and unforeseen expenditure by a state government, it is important to remember that the former Labor treasurer collected \$70 billion more revenue than he had forecasted in his first budget just four years earlier. What did Queenslanders get in return for this substantial revenue windfall? Under Labor, Queenslanders received record debt, record deficits, a record interest bill, more Queenslanders waiting for medical treatment, more families sleeping in their cars due to the housing crisis, and more victims suffering from Queensland's crime epidemic. That is the legacy of the member for Woodridge and the legacy of Labor in Queensland. This legislation certainly cements the member for Woodridge as the worst treasurer in Queensland's history.

Upon coming to government following the 2024 October state election, the Queensland Treasury's incoming brief to the Crisafulli Liberal National Party government laid bare the dire state of Queensland's finances, including that structural deficits were now a certainty, that debt levels were surging with no stabilisation in sight and that the risk of a credit rating downgrade was heightened. As the Treasurer warned as early as November last year, the Liberal National Party state government had likely inherited not just a negative outlook but a full credit downgrade, an entirely avoidable disaster caused solely by Labor's reckless spending.


As Queenslanders know, under Labor Queenslanders were burdened with a growing mountain of debt. The 2023-24 budget had forecast debt at \$172 billion, but by the time Labor left office that figure had ballooned to \$218 billion, as revealed in Labor's last budget update. Every single Queenslanders was left carrying a debt burden of \$40,000 each, the highest in the nation. The interest payments alone have been projected to skyrocket from \$3.9 billion in 2014-15 to \$9.9 billion by 2028.

Since the 2024 state election, the Crisafulli LNP state government has worked calmly and methodically to uncover the full extent of Labor's capital project blowouts, including Cross River Rail, where the former Labor state government originally promised a \$5.4 billion budget but which is now expected to exceed \$17 billion. In relation to the hospital capacity expansion program, we have uncovered exorbitant cost increases, from \$9.78 billion to now \$16 billion. On top of this, Labor left behind unfunded operating expenses, including a \$461 million funding black hole in Child Safety, leaving the sector facing a financial cliff, not to mention \$12 billion in underfunded or unfunded Queensland Health services and programs.

The Liberal National Party promised Queenslanders a fresh start and that is what we are delivering. The Crisafulli LNP state government is already taking decisive steps to clean up Labor's mess and restore financial integrity. This includes measures such as: cancelling the \$36.8 billion Pioneer-Burdekin hydro hoax; pausing BPIC and saving taxpayers \$17 billion to 2030; halting over \$1 billion in equity and grants for speculative infrastructure projects; and just this week passing legislation to establish the Queensland Productivity Commission to drive improved economic activity and productivity for all Queenslanders.

This is what responsible government is all about—commitment to sound fiscal principles and financial management. This is what it looks like when you have a good, competent government here in Queensland. The Labor opposition may not recognise it, but this is what respect for taxpayers' money looks like.

In concluding my contribution today, I want to again reassure Queenslanders that this appropriation bill marks the final dark chapter of a decade of Labor mismanagement and incompetence. The Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill is a reminder of what happens when a government loses control of its budget and when the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars is dictated by political expediency rather than fiscal responsibility. The Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government is committed to restoring trust, rebuilding Queensland's finances and ensuring that the reckless waste and deceit of the past under Labor never happens again. Queenslanders voted for a fresh start and, when it comes to the management of our state's finances and budget, that is exactly what we are delivering.

 **Mr SMITH** (Bundaberg—ALP) (8.07 pm): I do note that whilst this debate is going on there is a very serious game between the Dolphins and the Knights. I was hoping that the member for Redcliffe would be here, but she is off roster. I might need to go to the—

Government members interjected.

Mr SMITH: That is okay; you can be off roster.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Member for Bundaberg, you know not to reflect on members when they are not in the chamber.

Mr SMITH: Yes. I am hoping that my good friends the members for Lockyer and Buderim may give me a big 'Phins Up' if the Dolphins score and yell out, 'We were robbed,' if the Knights score. Can you do that for me? Excellent. Let *Hansard* show that he nodded enthusiastically.

We have new members on both sides of the House so I want to talk about appropriation bills. Basically, the way that appropriation bills go is that we get up and say, 'What a great Labor budget,' and then the LNP get up and say, 'What a bad Labor budget,' and then we keep going through the whole charade. Normally, these supplementary appropriation bill debates do not keep going on this long, but the government have run out of legislation so they have to keep it going well into the night. Hey, we are all a part of the same hypocrisy in here, aren't we? That is wonderful.

Here we are talking about unforeseen expenditure. This occurs when we need to fund more on the front line and infrastructure projects. It is just doing the things that governments should do—providing the services and the key strategic infrastructure that Queenslanders need. This is a routine, yearly expenditure appropriation bill.

We know that Labor budgets deliver for frontline services. They deliver for the workers who are there day in and day out, night in and night out, making sure they are keeping our communities safe and attended to. We make sure we fund the volunteer services, like we saw across the state at the beginning of this year as they were doing what they do best—that is, volunteering and giving up their time to help others. It is only fair that we acknowledge their fantastic work, whether it is up in the north or down in the south-east corner. Those volunteer organisations do tremendous work and they receive their funding through the appropriation bill.

We also know that it is important to deliver on some key infrastructure. I look forward to seeing the member for Southern Downs deliver Emu Swamp Dam in the upcoming budget. I know it will be there, absolutely.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr SMITH: I tell you what, there are no bigger supporters now than on this side. I want to see it built, member for Southern Downs. I will be there with you. I will be standing up in this House every day calling on the Crisafulli government to deliver Emu Swamp Dam. I hope you join me in that crusade.

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr SMITH: Well, I am a big supporter of it now, member for Southern Downs. It is, of course, important that we continue to deliver the services, that we continue to deliver for the police on the front line, the police officers who I think of up in Bundaberg who served our community so well, our firefighters who do such an amazing job, our ambos, our emergency department health staff and all of our health staff right across our hospital system who would benefit from this.

We heard the government talk about their proclaimed blowouts in terms of health infrastructure, but would they rather not have three new hospitals being built in Queensland? Would they rather not have the expansion of hospitals so that there can be greater levels of bed capacity? Would they prefer that does not happen? How will they magically build it? They will not build it out of steel anymore; it will be out of cardboard, will it?

Let's take their argument about blowouts and that they are having a review on infrastructure projects that have exceeded their initial cost. Why is the new Bundaberg Hospital under review? When I talk to the chair of Wide Bay Health and when I talk to the CEO of Wide Bay Health, they say that the new Bundaberg Hospital is on budget. The \$1.2 billion has not been exceeded. CPB, the contractors, say that it is on schedule. Why are we putting it under review? Why is the government putting under review a hospital—

Mr Lister interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Member for Southern Downs.

Mr SMITH: Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I am sure he was calling about Emu Swamp Dam. The LNP say they want to put under review health infrastructure projects because they have blown out, but why would you put under review a project that is still costed at its original cost?

An opposition member: Unless you are going to cut it.

Mr SMITH: Unless you are going to cut it; that is right. If the new Bundaberg Hospital will exceed \$1.2 billion, if the new cost comes in at, let's say, \$1.8 billion, does that mean that the LNP will not fund it? Or will they just cut it by \$600 million meaning that the bed capacity will be less than what it was

under the Palaszczuk government and the Miles government as intended? Does it mean there will be less services provided into the Bundaberg community which serves the greater Wide Bay community as well? Why is it under review? Why can the health minister not put forward the reason for reviewing and pausing a health infrastructure project that the CEO and the chair are saying is on time and on budget? It does not make any sense. We are not really hearing a lot about that.

We should also talk about other unforeseen expenditure in hardship grants. I do not think there would be a member here who does not believe that anyone who was impacted by Tropical Cyclone Alfred and, of course, the events that we saw in the north, should be denied hardship grants. I think everyone is on board in making sure that people who are in a time of need get the support they need. If it is financial assistance that they require, then absolutely they should get that.

I gave my good friend, George Seymour, the Mayor of Fraser Coast, a call on Sunday when I looked up the BoM and saw that Hervey Bay was being inundated. On the radar, it was yellow and red; that is how heavy the rainfall was there. I spoke to him and he obviously spoke about the need to make sure there were personal hardship grants. I want to thank our candidate for Hinkler, Trish Mears, who got on the phone straightaway and made sure that Senator Chisholm was in Hervey Bay to announce that funding. Well done to Trish Mears, a hardworking candidate, a far better candidate than the LNP's David Batt and his recycled waste management plant. Do you remember him? He was so good that he is now the candidate for Hinkler.

What we did see across the Fraser Coast local government areas were defined locations—Berowra, Burrum Heads, Craginsh, Dundowran, Eli Waters, K'gari, Kawungan, Pialba, Point Vernon. I have a lot of friends and I have some family in Hervey Bay who were inundated. It is fantastic to see that that personal hardship grant was offered.

What was interesting was to see the Deputy Premier go up to Hervey Bay today with the member for Hervey Bay, but he forgot someone—the member for Maryborough! The member for Maryborough perhaps does not know that Burrum Heads is in the electorate of Maryborough. Maybe he does not know that Craginsh is in the electorate of Maryborough, or Dundowran Beach, even a part of Urraween.

Mr Barounis interjected.

Mr SMITH: Mate, the ambulance station belongs to you! He does not know. I printed off his electorate map and there is a little insert, so I zoomed in on the part where Dundowran is. I table those.

Tabled paper: Map depicting the electoral district of Maryborough [198].

Tabled paper: Enlarged insert of map depicting the electoral district of Maryborough [199].

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bundaberg, take your seat. That is totally irrelevant to the bill. I will bring you back to the long title of the bill.

Mr SMITH: What we see with those tabled documents is that the areas that are defined for the personal hardship assistance grants are there and they are in the electorate of Maryborough. It is wonderful to see that because of Trish Mears, because of the Hinkler candidate, that assistance is being funded there.

We had the member for Springwood talking about cost-of-living pressures and how this appropriation bill made sure that Queenslanders had the lowest priced power bills in the country because the Miles Labor government made sure that the electricity rebates were there for everyday Queenslanders. What a difference it made. What a difference it made when I doorknocked through Bundaberg South, through Walkervale, over in Bundy North. Families—

An honourable member interjected.


Mr SMITH: Not in Maryborough, but it is definitely in Bundaberg. It was critical that we made sure that we put the investment in there for everyday families through the appropriation. It was absolutely critical. What we have seen is a backflip. In a press conference before the election, the now Premier said that he would continue electricity rebates, but now after the election he is saying there will be no more electricity rebates in the upcoming budget. While, as we know, power prices are going to go up an extra \$100 a year, the LNP government are taking away the cost-of-living support. They are going to take it away from everyday Queenslanders who relied on the Miles Labor government to deliver the cost-of-living relief that they needed so badly. This is the record that we have seen of the LNP. We have seen that they have cut funding to health care. We have seen that they have put under review important health infrastructure projects—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SMITH: I take those interjections. They do not want the health infrastructure delivered.

Mr G Kelly interjected.

Mr SMITH: There will be no infrastructure going to Mirani, because the member for Mirani does not want a single dollar over to go to any infrastructure project. The LNP government will take away any projects that will go to Mirani because if it goes one dollar over, that is a blowout, according to him. Member for Maryborough, next time, brother, jump on a plane.

 **Hon. ST O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (Minister for Housing and Public Works and Minister for Youth) (8.17 pm): For honourable members who are disappointed with the quality of members for Bundaberg after that contribution, I have some great news—Batty's back! Our former member for Bundaberg is our candidate for Hinkler, and I know he is going to do an outstanding job in that new role and we look forward to seeing him be successful in the federal election in the not-too-distant future.

The Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill represents the latest example of Labor's 10 years of fiscal vandalism in Queensland, revealing the final part of their record \$9 billion overspend last financial year. After a decade of Labor, Queensland is facing an unprecedented housing crisis. People from all walks of life are struggling to find a safe, secure and affordable place to call home. Instead of delivering outcomes, Labor spent years wasting money, making promises they never kept and leaving our most vulnerable Queenslanders behind. We have seen it all before. Labor talks a big game on housing, they are obsessed with getting headlines, but when it actually comes to delivering roofs over the heads of people, they failed. Their failure has real consequences for Queenslanders doing it tough. We see it in this bill—an overspend of \$137 million in the housing portfolio with very little to show for it.

Let's talk about Labor's mismanagement of their so-called Housing Investment Fund. This fund was meant to be a game changer. Labor promised it would build 5,600 new homes over the time it was meant to be running when the fund was topped up to \$2 billion in October 2022. But in reality, in the over three years the fund was open, it did not complete a single new home during Labor's time in office.

For a fund launched in 2021, the data shows that as of 31 October 2024—I have been generous with the time I have chosen—the Housing Investment Fund delivered 678 existing homes which were purchased from the private market. Not a single new build was delivered during Labor's time in office. We saw major blowouts on the Housing Investment Fund's projects under the former government which meant the fund would deliver 1,600 fewer homes than they promised—a fact they hid and which only became public knowledge for Queenslanders when we came into government and got our incoming briefs.

Then, of course, there is Labor's sweetheart deal with the CFMEU: Best Practice Industry Conditions, BPICs. These would have resulted in rents rising an additional seven per cent over the next five years, or 22,000 fewer homes being built across our state. One of the biggest issues was the complicated BPIC prequalification system for contractors and subcontractors to undertake government projects. I have shared this advice before but it is important to reiterate. It was advice that was commissioned by the former government on the impact of BPIC, and it quantified this impact on the building and construction sector. It found that, of the 176,000 QBCC licenced trade contractors and subbies in Queensland, just 204 were certified under the BPIC prequalification system.

Labor's CFMEU funnel had major flow-on effects. It meant that projects took longer and cost more to get built. It would have increased our construction costs by \$17.1 billion over the next six years according to Treasury modelling—most of it in the transport portfolio of my colleague next to me. That is not just a failure; it is an insult to every Queenslander struggling to find a place to call home, struggling to put food on the table or stuck in traffic because the infrastructure we need was not delivered. These failures show a complete disrespect and disregard for Queenslanders' money.


Mr Bailey interjected.

Mr O'CONNOR: It is ironic that the member for Miller is interjecting. The Crisafulli government is also repairing the critical housing maintenance black hole left by Labor's neglect of Queensland government managed housing. A failure by the former government to properly fund the maintenance budget has left thousands of homes at risk of falling into disrepair without our urgent intervention. Not only have Labor failed to build homes; they have also failed the frontline workers who help Queenslanders at risk of homelessness every single day. Our dedicated specialist homelessness services provide emergency accommodation and crisis support and help to get Queenslanders back on their feet. These services are stretched already and yet, instead of giving them the funding certainty they need, every financial year the former government would leave them hanging.

How is it that the former government could waste billions of dollars on cost blowouts for major projects but could not find the funding needed to ensure homeless Queenslanders got the support they deserved? We will not. We will deliver a 27 per cent uplift in funding across the forwards, as we said we would in the last budget. By committing to a 20 per cent uplift for our specialist homelessness services we will give frontline workers across over 90 organisations the certainty they need to do their job without wondering whether funding will be coming in the next budget. Under Labor they were dismissed, but we recognise the important role these workers play in supporting people experiencing homelessness to access the help they need and to get into secure housing.

Let's not forget what we are talking about: people who desperately need a home. We are talking about families with young children forced to live in cars; older Queenslanders who have worked their entire lives and are now struggling to keep a roof over their heads; young people trying to escape domestic violence left with nowhere to go because the former government added fuel to the fire of the Queensland housing crisis.

The failures of the former government are clear, and the Crisafulli government will clean up Labor's mess. We are working to cut red tape and get more homes built. We are working alongside local governments—not going to war with them—to deliver the houses that Queenslanders need. We are committed to supporting specialist homelessness services with the funding certainty that they deserve, and we will make sure the budget is managed properly and with respect for taxpayers' money.

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (8.24 pm): It is always good to follow the Minister for Housing, who really should be called the 'minister against housing', given one of his first acts was to kill housing. Arundel had hundreds of extra homes under the previous minister for housing, and the first act of the member for Bonney was to kill off the prospect of more than 500 homes and units on a decrepit golf course in his own electorate. It is pretty amazing to be the Minister for Housing when your record is against housing, but I digress.

We see in this bill the evidence that net debt was more than halved, from \$12 billion to \$5.7 billion—lower, in fact, than in the last year of the Newman government. When we are talking about fiscal responsibility, I think that is a salient point. We still have on the other side large chunks of the old Newman government: the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Minister for Education, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Sport, the Minister for Finance and a number of other things, and others who were assistant ministers. It is the same old gang still in control, so we will see how we go on this bill and other bills in 12 months time. It will be very interesting to see how their commitments stack up in reality, because they had a plan to get elected but they did not have a plan to govern Queensland. We know that. One thing that does not change is the turgid, predictable and inane talking points regurgitated over and over by those opposite.

One of the key parts of this bill relates to the cheaper power act—a \$1,000 energy rebate to help people with the cost of living. When I was knocking on doors last year, the relief on the part of people who really needed it was palpable. They appreciated it. It was timely, necessary and compassionate and it helped people through a hard time. It is something that this government have axed because they do not believe in cost-of-living relief.

The Crisafulli government believe in leaving people to the wolves. That is what they stand for, and that is what Peter Dutton also stands for. He is not committing to cost-of-living relief for people. He is more obsessed with visiting Sydney Harbour mansions moneybagging, rather than sandbagging like his local constituents were doing. It takes a particular kind of person to desert their own constituents with a natural disaster bearing down on them. I have very rarely seen that in public life, and Peter Dutton has reached a new low in doing so. Cost-of-living relief is very important and is certainly relevant to this bill.

Those opposite have criticised that, so they obviously criticise cost-of-living relief. Good luck with that because people need it. They need it at a state level and at the federal level. This government's policy seems to be leaving people to the wolves. It is pretty clear from the consistent criticism from those opposite that they define it in another way. It is really code for cuts. That is what we know. They cannot say—they will not be honest about cuts—but we know that it is in their DNA. We saw the juicing up by the Treasurer of the MYFER statement—after he had dragged himself off the beach. You would think that after getting elected, after three terms and 10 years in the wilderness, you would be eager to get in there and get the job done. In a very salient action, the Treasurer's response to being elected was to go to the beach for weeks and put MYFER back. What a dynamic start to government by the member for Toowoomba South! It is incredible. I loved his criticism of me yesterday with respect to some of my criticism. As it turns out, my criticism led the *Australian's* report on the bill yesterday, so I will happily joust with him anytime.

Let's be very clear: the former Miles and Palaszczuk governments were committed to investing in the infrastructure that was necessary for a booming population. That is what we were doing. The national context—despite the ridiculous criticisms from those opposite—is that over the 10 years we saw a commitment to infrastructure.

In the first five years, from 2015 to 2019, we saw many projects not only come in on budget but come in under budget because the value is out there and the national economy needed the infrastructure investment after nothing was done by the Newman government. Industry was desperate for projects and we worked with them. Of course when the pandemic hit we saw impacts on not just our economy but economies all over the world and all around this country. We had a choice: do we continue the infrastructure commitment that is necessary for the state with the biggest booming population or do we dump it? We were not going to leave Queensland in the lurch, but we know that is what those opposite would have done. We know that because we have heard them in here today, so good luck with those policies going forward.

What we saw was a national economy—by the time the LNP's incompetence left Canberra, we were dealing with inflation of over six per cent surging through the economy, surging through costs and surging through the construction industry. That was a reality created by those opposite and their federal colleagues, and I note the member for Oodgeroo was part of that economic incompetence under Morrison, Abbott and Turnbull. We were committed to the infrastructure.

I take note that a previous speaker, the member for Redcliffe, in a really extraordinary contribution was attacking the Housing Investment Fund. She was saying, 'Oh it's terrible,' but on 3 February she was at a construction site of 82 units that were funded by the Housing Investment Fund and was claiming credit for it. The member cannot have her cake and eat it too. She cannot criticise it and bag it and then go on her social media and claim credit for it. For the last three months, the member for Clayfield has been claiming credit for a whole range of infrastructure funded by the previous Labor government: the Tara Hospital, the Moranbah Hospital, the North Queensland Persistent Pain Management Service, the free flu vaccine, the free RSV vaccination extension, the Rockhampton mental health facility, the Cairns mental health facility, Mater Springfield and the Queensland Ambulance clinical hub, to name a few. Here we have a government that do not know how to govern Queensland mailing in the achievements of Labor while trying to pretend on social media that they were actually done by themselves. It is really quite laughable and ridiculous. They will actually have to make some decisions at some point and we are going to be fascinated to see how it all adds up.

I will make a couple more comments in relation to the specifics of the bill. We see a reference in here to the funding of the Direct Sunshine Coast Rail Line. I had a lot to do with that, along with the member for Aspley, in terms of getting the full funding in place from both federal and state Labor. It is a transformational project for the Sunshine Coast that is absolutely necessary for the third largest city in Queensland. I note its reference within this bill. It is something that needs to go ahead. It cannot be cut by those opposite, who promised not only to build it but to build twice as much of it to Maroochydhore as a solemn election promise. We will wait and see how that goes. I can tell honourable members right now that if that project is cut by the member for Buderim and the member for Broadwater and the Sunshine Coast residents are duded and betrayed they will pay a terrible price for it because that rail line is essential for construction. It is worth paying the market rate for.

Mr Mickelberg: Why didn't you do it when you were minister?

Mr BAILEY: The member for Buderim has not done a single thing of note since he became the minister, who is being—

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Member for Buderim!

Mr BAILEY: The member for Buderim has not achieved a single thing since he has been there other than bumbling around and embarrassing himself in boofhead kinds of performances. We will wait and see what he can actually achieve because to achieve something he actually needs—

Mr KRAUSE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I think the member for Miller may have used some unparliamentary language. I would ask if you could ask him to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not quite pick up on it due to the noise in the chamber. Member for Miller, if there was some unparliamentary language I ask you to withdraw.


Mr BAILEY: I withdraw. If you want to actually achieve something, it takes commitment, hard work and vision. You need a lot more than a few key lines and themes written by some second-rate spinners opposite.

Mr Mickelberg: Member for Miller, you presided over blowout after blowout.

Mr BAILEY: I hear the member for Buderim bleating opposite. That is all he is: a bleating, bumbling member for Buderim.

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

Mr BAILEY: He has absolutely no achievements to his name whatsoever.

 **Mrs POOLE** (Mundingburra—LNP) (8.34 pm): I rise this evening to speak on the appropriation bill on behalf of the electorate of Mundingburra. I rise with commitment, hard work and vision because that is what our government is all about.

The former Labor government are record breakers. I never thought those words would come out of our mouths. I will say it again: they are record breakers. Labor governments are infamous for not being able to manage money, but the former government have taken that challenge and they have gone above and beyond.

Mrs Frecklington: Overachievers.

Mrs POOLE: Overachievers. They are now the former government with the highest unforeseen expenditure on record. That is your money; that is my money. It is a formal legislative requirement for this amount to receive formal appropriation by parliament and it is our government that must now clean up this mess. The bill relates to decisions made by the previous government including unforeseen expenditure of \$1.128 billion, the final component of their record \$9 billion overspend last financial year.

Conventionally, unforeseen expenditure within the financial year is approved by parliament in a single supplementary appropriation bill introduced and assented to in the following financial year. This record \$9 billion expenditure came as no surprise as the former Labor government had lost control of the budget and their spending. I have to say that this reminds me of an ad that I know we have all seen, 'Budget? What budget?'

Regarding the 2023-24 financial year, unforeseen expenditure has already been approved on two occasions. This is now the third attempt by Labor to work out how they manage a budget. Everybody knew that they had lost complete control and it was made quite evident in their election campaign. There was a three-week period during the campaign when the former Labor government committed to borrowing an additional \$33 billion for their uncosted, outlandish promises. Let me remind honourable members of just a few of those: state owned medical practices, uncosted; state owned servos, uncosted; state delivered school lunches, uncosted; another state owned energy retailer, uncosted. In the week leading up to the election the former Labor member for Mundingburra made millions of dollars in commitments to so many community groups and organisations—

A government member: Flashing the cash.

Mrs POOLE:—he was—lighting up graves, cricket pitches, building expansions—you name it, he committed to it. He made all of these promises to our community, to my community, and this bill shows it is highly likely that those commitments were made on false pretences. The former treasurer broke his 'no new or increased taxes' promise, a promise that he gave the people of Queensland—


Mr Stevens: Twenty-six.

Mrs POOLE: I take that interjection, thank you—26 times. He collected \$70 billion more in revenue than was forecast in his first budget less than four years before.

Mr Field: Up against a wall.

Mrs POOLE: I take that interjection. What do Queenslanders have to show for it? Queenslanders were left with record debt, record deficits and a record interest bill at the same time as there were record numbers of sick people waiting on ramps, homeless people sleeping in cars and victims of Queensland's crime crisis. The buck does not stop with this bill. This bill is the full stop on Labor's nightmare 10 years of fiscal incompetence. The Crisafulli government will do better. We will be better. The Crisafulli government is already taking steps to improve the budget position. We have cancelled the \$36.8 billion Pioneer-Burdekin hydro hoax, we have paused BPIC—that will save the budget \$17 billion—and we have opted not to provide significantly more than \$1 billion in equity and grants for a speculative hydrogen project. We are showing respect for taxpayers' money.

Under the former Labor government, unforeseen expenditure totalled nearly \$1.2 billion when people are crying out for more housing and our housing industry is being frustrated by regulations stopping it from just getting on with the job. We are committed to delivering an improved productivity performance and have just this week passed the legislation to establish the Queensland Productivity Commission, and its first item of business will be a review of the Queensland building industry. The Crisafulli government has the right plan to restore respect for your money, our communities' money. We are putting the focus back on driving down the costs of living and getting the maximum benefit from every single taxpayer dollar spent. We are putting to bed Labor's expensive failures and budget blowouts and we are getting on with the job. We are delivering the fresh start that Queenslanders voted for. I commend these bills to the House.

 **Hon. DE FARMER** (Bulimba—ALP) (8.42 pm): Isn't it nice to know that some things in life are predictable, and that is exactly what we have been seeing since the LNP came to government: it is the LNP playbook that those opposite took straight from Campbell Newman; they just changed the date. They blame the previous government for so-called budget blowouts and say that everything is a disaster and make stuff up to make it look worse than it is and introduce mechanisms—whatever they need—to get the outcome they want. They make it so that no-one can scrutinise anything they do and then they say that they did not want to cut, they did not want to sack and they did not want to sell but that is our fault, so they have to cut and they have to sack and they have to sell, and then that is exactly what they do. It happened with Campbell Newman and it is happening right now. In fact, there was a great article by economist John Quiggin in the *Guardian* earlier this year in which he said—

You could pretty much have cut and pasted their report from 2012 to what we're seeing today, and the same warnings of disaster and so forth and obviously we haven't seen any sign of that disaster ...

It would all be a bit amusing if it were not so serious. We could just look on it and say, 'You know what the LNP's like. They never let the facts get in the way of a good story. It's just politics.' We could take that kind of approach and say, 'It doesn't really matter. That's just what they do,' but actually it is as a result of their dishonesty and their obsession with political gain at the expense of everything else that there are absolute dire consequences for Queenslanders. We have to worry about whom those opposite are going to sack, and they have already started sacking anyway; what they are going to cut, and they have already started cutting; and what they are going to sell. It can happen to any of those members opposite because we know that if they do not play by the rules—if they do not do as they are told—they will be cut themselves and starved of resources. We not only have to worry about the cutting and sacking and selling; last night's Productivity Commission Bill means that the Treasurer can make anything look bad if he wants to and none of his decisions to cut, sack and sell as a result of a Productivity Commission report will be scrutinised. In fact, he can even ask it to conduct research to make it look like he has a good case and we would not even know.

It is as a result of the irresponsible actions of those opposite that now Queensland's credit rating has been downgraded. We came out of the last budget and all of the budgets before that which delivered all of these goodies for all of these people—lovely schools, lovely buildings, lovely hospitals, roads, bridges. We did not hear them complaining about any of those. We came out of the last budget and in September last year Standard & Poor's confirmed our AA+ credit rating and then we had the LNP cooking the books for political purposes to soften up Queenslanders for whatever it wanted to do. Some of the things it has been doing is that it slashed \$3 billion in savings planned by Labor, it juiced up \$23 billion in allowances and it pronounced budget blowouts on major projects like the Cross River Rail. The Minister for Transport over there is adding the maintenance costs for the next 30 years on the overall budget—something which no-one does. Now that those opposite have set that precedent that that is the way that they are going to cost all of their projects, I cannot wait to see all of their projects on major infrastructure, and do not worry because we will be looking at those very closely.

Those opposite said that unforeseen expenditure was a blowout. They talked about \$9 billion in blowouts and then the previous acting under treasurer—look, she got sacked for the Treasurer's mate from Heritage Bank probably because she actually said this—said—


A department that incurs Unforeseen Expenditure has needed more appropriation than has been provided by the original Appropriation Acts for a year.

For example, a department may need additional appropriation to respond to emergent issues, implement government policy or ... a change in timing of Commonwealth payments or project delivery.

Another source of Unforeseen Expenditure is new Government decisions made throughout the year ...

An example of that is the cheaper power act which delivered \$1,000 electricity rebates to Queensland households. I would challenge any LNP member to say that that was a bad idea and that cost of living is not the No. 1 issue. We have the hardship grants that were given out as a result of the cataclysmic weather events in the last week. I do not think the LNP would want us criticising that anytime in the future because they were absolutely needed.

As S&P Global was watching what it was doing and the LNP government tried to create panic about a hit to our credit rating, S&P said publicly—and how embarrassing was this for those opposite—that the LNP needed to stop playing politics and get on with governing Queensland. How embarrassing that a credit agency would say that. It said that it wanted to see the books first before it announced anything about our credit rating to make sure the government was not just using politics. But then it did announce a downgrade, which means that it is going to cost Queensland more to borrow, which means that there will be less to spend on the things that Queenslanders need, and the need of Queenslanders is great at the moment. Do members know what S&P said about the reason for the downgrade? It was the elevated uncertainty around the LNP government's fiscal strategy that contributed to the downgrade. That was the reason, so to all of those opposite who have been given their speaking points by the Treasurer's office who sound like they have been economists since the day they were born, there it is from a credit ratings agency. It is saying it is this government's fault that we are already in a dire financial situation, so thanks so much, Treasurer, and thanks so much, Premier. We will never stop fighting for Queensland and we will never stop shouting out what this government is doing to pave the way for Queensland going backwards.

 **Mr VORSTER** (Burleigh—LNP) (8.49 pm): This parliament is a custodian of Queensland's hopes and aspirations. Through its appropriation powers it is also the custodian of the hard-earned contribution of taxpayers. I have always felt that the word 'taxpayer' is a dangerous one. It can tempt weak governments to dehumanise real people. Taxpayers are working mums and dads providing for their children, taxpayers are young people saving for their first home and taxpayers are the small business owners creating new jobs. When we ask them to pay taxes they incur opportunity costs—that is to say, when governments raise revenue, Queenslanders have less capacity to fulfil their own dreams. It is money out of their pockets and taken out of their hands. We ask that they do contribute to lifting up the next generation, to take care of the sick and to deliver the infrastructure that sustains jobs. Given these costs, making spending decisions is a burden that should weigh heavily on the shoulders of those charged with governing the state.


Yet what we have learned in these bills is that the former Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government felt no burden. It is arguable they felt nothing at all for the plight of hardworking Queenslanders because with reckless abandon they smashed the piggy bank, went on a manic debt binge and broke promise after promise not to introduce new taxes. In short, rather than carrying the burden of governing well, they burdened Queensland with debt and deficit and they did it because it was easy, even though it would make life hard for ordinary Queenslanders. To put it another way, because the former Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government could not manage their own budget, they put pressure on household budgets instead. They did so at the worst possible time: while households were already suffering through Labor's cost-of-living crisis. With productivity languishing under their watch, eroding purchasing power and suppressing wages, living costs were rising because Labor's youth crime crisis pushed up insurance costs, because Labor pushed up power prices by failing to maintain state owned power generators, and because of Labor's obsession with regulation and control that destroyed construction capacity and pushed more families into housing poverty. When struggling Queenslanders deserved compassion and competence they were treated with contempt.

Given Labor does not believe in balancing the budget, I am grateful that our democracy has its own checks and balances. So it was in October 2024 electorates across Queensland punished an incompetent and profligate government and voted for a fresh start. They voted for the Liberal National Party to stop hardworking families, aspirational young people and seniors paying for Labor's failures. The tragedy, of course, is that the punishment should have been more severe than was doled out at the ballot box, but voters were never given a full picture of the dire state of our finances in Labor's last budget. If only voters knew. If only voters knew.

These bills do what Labor refused to do and lay bare Labor's failures. It tells the story of a conceited and dying government. At best it exposes the former Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government as an incoherent rabble with no capacity to understand the consequences of its decisions. I worry the truth is that the former Palaszczuk-Miles government was more malevolent: wilfully and deliberately trashing the state's finances for the sake of holding onto power. Far be it from me to judge; Queensland has already passed judgement.

I do want to place on record once again what others have said. In the dying days of that government Standard & Poor's called them out, warning of Labor's waning fiscal discipline. Who could forget the *Financial Review* calling Labor's last budget a 'clown show'. Unsurprising perhaps, because Labor had turned governing into a five-ring circus. Let us consider what Labor's last budget update told us. Were the credit rating agencies and the analysts correct? It showed that debt would total \$218 billion, up from \$172 billion in the 2023-24 budget, and it showed debt per capita would be the highest of any state in the nation at \$40,000 for every man, woman and child. Perhaps worst of all, it showed the state's interest bill would climb from \$3.9 billion in 2014-15 to a forecast \$9.9 billion at the end of financial year 2028. Because of their unfunded commitments and cost blowouts, Queensland was last month placed on a negative outlook. This risk increases to borrowing costs which will add insult to the injuries already caused by Labor's bad decisions. We have heard those opposite attempt to rewrite history during the course of this debate, claiming that they were victims of circumstance, but that is not the full story and much of the pressure on Labor's last budget was entirely self-inflicted. I think, for example, of that dreadful CFMEU tax.

Now that I have got that off my chest, let me say I am optimistic about Queensland and ambitious about its future, but we cannot move forward without drawing a line under the sorry mess that was the former Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government. I am proud to be part of a Crisafulli LNP government that will work harder for Queensland by respecting taxpayers. That means making better decisions for the long term, delivering projects on time and on budget and lifting productivity. We will achieve more for those who need help, who are dreaming big or who are right now building a better future for Queensland. My message to the Burleigh electorate is simple: the Crisafulli LNP government respects the sacrifices you make for the welfare of Queensland. We will honour the trust you have placed in us and never, ever take it for granted. We will stretch your dollar further so you can get further ahead.

 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (8.56 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the appropriation bills. It is important when we are having debates around important investments in infrastructure and services that we understand the reality of how governments operate. There are circumstances that come up from time to time, like natural disasters—we have had one in the last couple of weeks—which then give rise to unforeseen expenditure.

We have been hearing in the debate tonight and throughout this bill around what those opposite categorise as unforeseen expenditure. They cannot have it both ways. They cannot on one hand say that the unforeseen expenditure which is covered by these appropriation bills is irresponsible financial management, they cannot say that they are cost blowouts, and they cannot say that they are reckless waste and then on the other hand say these things are essential services and necessary. The reality is that they either support the unforeseen expenditure because it is investing in services and infrastructure or they say they do not support what they have just categorised in this debate as being irresponsible fiscal management, cost blowouts and reckless waste. I will explore these things in a moment, because the examples that are covered by the appropriation bills are things that Queenslanders prioritise, they are things that Queenslanders need to support their daily lives and they are things that are critical to how government operates.

Budgets are about priorities. Government has to make decisions about what it spends valuable taxpayer investment on. When governments make decisions to respond to unforeseen expenditure circumstances, there are decisions around priorities. For instance, cost of living was and continues to be a significant issue for the people of Queensland. One of the things which those opposite categorise in the appropriation bills as covering irresponsible fiscal management, cost blowouts and reckless waste is the cost-of-living investments that the previous government made, particularly and directly the cheaper power act \$1,000 rebates. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot on one hand say that what is covered by these appropriation bills, which includes the \$1,000 electricity rebate, is important for Queenslanders to address their cost-of-living challenges, but then on the other hand, in the same debate, say that it is waste. That is an argument that is nonsensical, but it highlights the contradiction that those opposite have created.


Debate, on motion of Mr Ryan, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (Leader of the House) (9.00 pm): I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Mansfield Electorate, Weather Events; Nurse-Led Clinics


 **Ms McMILLAN** (Mansfield—ALP) (9.00 pm): I begin by acknowledging the Mansfield electorate community for their resilience and strong community spirit during ex-Cyclone Alfred. Neighbours checked in on one another. People pitched in to fill sandbags. They supported local business and helped elderly residents clear their yards. I highlight the Friendly Grocer, a local business that showed its community spirit by leaving the icebox unlocked, allowing residents in need to take ice as they required it.

On behalf of my community I extend my heartfelt thanks to Energex, the SES and the many community volunteers who worked tirelessly before, during and after the cyclone. I commend the parents who, in the midst of the disaster, were juggling cleaning, work and getting children back to school, many with empty fridges and no power. I know that the work is far from over and there is still much to be done. People continue to clear water from their homes, pull up carpets, mend fences and clean up. However, I know that we are a resilient community—one that comes together in times of need. I am eager to return to my electorate and support our recovery alongside everyone else.

I now turn to a concerning issue raised by my community regarding the Mount Gravatt nurse-led clinic. The LNP has proposed reducing the clinic's operating hours from 8 am until 10 pm to 8 am until 6 pm and slashing staffing roles. This would severely limit access to free after-hours health care, forcing more residents to get help at already overwhelmed hospital emergency departments. In my community, the Mount Gravatt nurse-led clinic is essential for families, seniors and workers who need timely health care. I have spoken with clinic staff and they are understandably very worried about job security and the future of the clinic. Those staff members are very passionate about the important service they provide to our community and they do not want to see it cut.

David Crisafulli promised Queenslanders that there would be no cuts to the health system, but the LNP has already reduced hours and staffing at the Gladstone nurse-led clinic and now both the CBD and Mount Gravatt facilities are heading in the same direction. I call on the LNP to provide assurances that there will be no cuts to the hours and no job losses at the Mount Gravatt nurse-led clinic. I will continue, as will my community, to fight against cuts to free health care closer to home as the people of my community deserve so much better.

Hervey Bay, Weather Events

 **Mr LEE** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (9.02 pm): I rise to honour our astounding and dedicated Hervey Bay emergency services personnel who have courageously demonstrated selfless service in very challenging circumstances. On Sunday, 9 March at about 5 am, Hervey Bay experienced the effects of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. There was a deluge of rain in a short period and our open stormwater drainage infrastructure simply could not function. Unfortunately, the surge in rainfall, in conjunction with stormwater drains blocked with vegetation and debris, resulted in widespread flooding.

At Parklands Aged Care, the personal care staff had to evacuate 32 frail residents to the second level of the nursing home after the residents' rooms became inundated with water. Multistorey apartments located on the Esplanade were awash with water as their basements flooded, irreparably damaging main switchboards. The Sugar Coast Village was submerged, with a wall of water causing localised flooding in low-lying homes. The Hervey Bay Bowls Club may have sustained hundreds of thousands of dollars in damage to the synthetic bowling greens as water engulfed the club's grounds.


Others affected include our hardworking small business owners and many home owners. This morning, Deputy Premier Jarrod Bleijie and I engaged with local business owners. Our Hervey Bay community is hurting. I commend Premier David Crisafulli for his outstanding leadership and support. The Premier was in daily contact with me and had a sound grasp of the issues affecting Hervey Bay.

I now wish to thank each of our hardworking emergency personnel. The Hervey Bay Fire and Rescue Station, which under the leadership of Rob Hocking, attended 74 call-outs in six hours, including 20 swiftwater rescues on 9 March. Superintendent Anne Vogler, Senior Sergeant Brooke Flood and the Hervey Bay police services staff, who were supported by 15 police from Capricornia, providing a strong presence in our community.

The Hervey Bay SES tirelessly supported our community, and our local Hervey Bay Lions Club kept the SES nourished and hydrated throughout the entire ordeal. The Queensland Ambulance Service supported our community, notwithstanding the loss of an ambulance, which I understand sustained extensive water damage. Ergon Energy restored power to many homes and businesses, notwithstanding very challenging road and weather conditions.

Finally, I thank the Fraser Coast Regional Council for establishing a targeted kerbside collection program. Our thoughts, hearts and prayers go out to our Hervey Bay community and our emergency services personnel who selflessly serve our community.

Stafford Electorate, Weather Events; Road Upgrades

 **Mr SULLIVAN** (Stafford—ALP) (9.05 pm): Firstly, I would like to thank all those in our community who came together to prepare, and now recover from, the latest damaging water event. Thankfully we did not quite see the damage that we experienced locally in 2020, but there were still homes, businesses and clubs that were severely impacted. I thank the hardworking frontline emergency services, including the SES crews from Newmarket and Stafford, for their efforts in sandbagging and also for the crews who are trained and based at those depots who were dispatched to support communities right across the northside.


To the hardworking staff at the Prince Charles Hospital and the RBWH, thank you. Thank you to all the volunteers in our community organisations, like Meals on Wheels in Stafford and Chermerside, and to our churches, including the wonderful Father Daniel at All Saints and his team who provided warm meals and food stores for vulnerable people. The list goes on. To the volunteers who helped our sporting clubs recover, like Rob and the gang down at City FC, thank you to you all.

It is a shame it took the government so long to declare Brisbane an affected area, but even more disappointing was that when they did they left out key suburbs that had been impacted—namely, Wavell Heights and Kedron. I find it particularly ironic that they could not even get that right considering Kedron hosts the State Disaster Coordination Centre. I wrote to the minister as well as the council and the error was finally fixed, but it caused so much unnecessary stress to people during an already stressful time. I thank our community for coming together and we will continue to work together.

Talking about Kedron and BCC delays, anyone who knows Kedron will now the Turner Road precinct. It is a unique educational precinct with Mount Alvernia, St Anthony's and Padua effectively co-located across four campuses. Whilst independent administratively, they share a community, they share their Franciscan identity and they have extensive cross-campus activities before school, during the day and well after the bell involving some 3,000 students plus staff and parents. The Labor government recognised this and provided significant funding for pedestrian safety improvements through the School Transport Infrastructure Program—STIP—across two rounds. They not only promised it but delivered it in black and white in the budget.

The BCC, which looks after council roads, has been an anchor on this program from day one. The upgrades should have been delivered in the middle of last year or in the term 3 holidays and certainly by the Christmas holidays. All three schools have explicitly supported this upgrade in writing, as did the after-school-care providers, who are sick of seeing near misses on pedestrian crossings of students and staff. The BCC needs to support these school communities and get on board. The Franciscans on the hill deserve it.

Coomera Electorate, Weather Events

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (9.08 pm): To our SES, our rural fires, our police, indeed all of our emergency services workers, thank you. A special thanks to our Energex crews, ably supported by Ergon crews who came to lend a hand. The individual stories during this event are many, like the neighbours who checked on their elderly neighbour to find that he had no food other than a few raw potatoes but was too proud to reach out. Thank you for looking after one of our most vulnerable. There are the likes of the 12 Baskets Outreach who care for the boaties, permanent liveaboards at Jacobs Well and in other parts of the Broadwater, not just during Alfred but on an ongoing basis through regular welfare checks. Once again, thank you for your commitment.

I am happy to report that as at 5.30 this afternoon there were 21,316 properties without power, but that is down from 400,000 across the south-east corner at the peak. On the Gold Coast, there are 12,605 properties still without power, with 1,530 of them on the northern Gold Coast—a far cry from last Friday night when it seemed there were only that many with power.


I want to reach out to those people without power now: the people of Alberton and Stapylton, totalling 282 properties; Coomera and Pimpama, totalling 454 properties; Willow Vale and Kingsholme, totally 24 properties; Cedar Creek, totalling 116 properties; and Wongawallan, Upper Coomera and Mount Tamborine, totalling 654 properties. Most of those properties are in rural communities. In all of

this, it seems so unfair that the most reliant on electricity—although none of us can do without it for long—those in our rural communities, are the last to be reconnected. Electricity runs everything, including water pumps, sillage pumps and biocycles. They are the properties most difficult to resolve.

There are obvious reasons we live in rural areas, of course. We choose to live in the bush up in the Darlington Range, Mount Tamborine and our green behind the gold hinterland, like Wongawallan, or down in cane lands in the very north of the Gold Coast, including small communities like Jacobs Well and Cabbage Tree Point. Then there is Yatala, Cedar Creek and so many other places where we enjoy acreage living. We live there because they are beautiful places to live, but with that there are challenges for the restoration of power. At the end of the day, though, there are not too many who will trade places with those in the suburbs.

Coming back to those helping us through the struggle of the loss of power, let us give the biggest shout-out to the Energex crews. As one local told my wife a few days ago, 'I have not seen my Energex team husband since last Thursday.' There are no surprises there. They are working tirelessly to get the job done, together with their Ergon counterparts. Thank you to all the leadership teams out there. The residents of the northern Gold Coast: I thank you for your patience, thank you for your preparedness and thank you for your resilience in this, yet another, natural disaster Mother Nature has forced upon us.

Health System

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (9.12 pm): I rise to talk about the spectre of health cuts that we are facing from this LNP government. During the election campaign, we heard the LNP say that there will be no cuts to Queensland Health and that Queenslanders had nothing to fear—nothing to see here. We can see now that they will do it just like they did it last time.


Let me tell members how this happens. In 2015, when I was doorknocking in North Lakes on one day I came across two small business owners. One supplied equipment for preemie babies in maternity wards. The other business was contracted to Queensland Health to supply laundry supplies. Both their small businesses were devastated because they were told by hospitals, 'Sorry, we have an order to cut the budget, and we are cutting what we get from you.' These businesses were devastated by these blind, Campbell Newman era cuts. These businesspeople were devastated and they never forgot.

What we are seeing is a similar style of things happening again. This time the LNP are trying to be sneakier, but Queensland businesses are now feeling the pain as the LNP brings the hospital expansion program to a screaming halt. That is one of the ways that we are facing cuts. Local contractors that I have talked to who work in the health construction area have told me that their businesses are now facing very uncertain times and that confidence in this sector has dropped remarkably. Their future work trajectory has evaporated because hospital construction has now ground to a halt. They are not hearing a thing from Queensland Health about what is going to happen. They are now facing a void. That is because the LNP has called a halt to the hospital expansion program. All these workers and all those businesses had plans and they are not hearing a thing about what hospital construction is happening in the future. Once again these are the sneaky cuts that we are seeing in the area of health from the LNP.

We have heard about cuts to the nurse-led clinics in Mount Gravatt and Brisbane—cuts to opening hours, after hours and on the weekends as well. Without these nurse-led clinics, more pressure is put on local emergency departments. They have cut the workforce incentive fund, and that puts pressure on hospitals in rural and regional areas when they find it hard to attract staff. We also heard stories about the eight-bed perinatal unit in Townsville, yet at the same time 2,000 more Queenslanders have been added to the elective surgery waiting list under the Crisafulli government—2,000 more Queenslanders are now on that list.

(Time expired)

South-East Queensland, Weather Events

 **Mr McDONALD** (Lockyer—LNP) (9.15 pm): Tropical Cyclone Alfred is the first cyclone in 51 years to cross the coast of South-East Queensland. These events bring out the best and the worst in people. I can tell members that the best communities in the world are those that help themselves, and I am proud to have the Laidley community in the Lockyer area and to see the wonderful work that they do. It was on full display this week—from the LDMG who do what they do in the response and recovery operations, to the frontline workers, to the volunteers who did a massive amount of work in preparation and then after rain passed and the floods subsided last week. I give my gracious thanks to you all.

I want to tell the House here tonight of the amazing community in Laidley. When I arrived, there were a dozen or so people in the QN Hotel with Gernis and generators because the power was not on yet. In fact, it would not be on for another day. There was a conga line of volunteers going from business to business helping each other get back on their feet.

I want to give thanks to the community not only for the preparedness before the event but also for their seriousness when the event and subsequent floods happened. After the event, the demonstration of our community's worth was on full display for us all to see. After the event though, we need to see mitigation projects in Laidley delivered. We want to see flooding of the Warrego Highway stopped. We also want to see our growers recover. I pay tribute to Mick Sippel and his team from the Lockyer Valley Growers as well as Acting Mayor Chris Wilson, who attended with Minister Tony Perrett this week to show him the extent of the damage right the way through the Lockyer.

I also have to give thanks to the CEO of Growcom, Rachel Chambers, who, together with our community and me, are working to find fit-for-purpose support to deal with the cumulative effect of these events. The cumulative effect I am talking about is having floods, storms, droughts and now floods again. It is something that many in the community would not be able to tolerate. That is why it is so important and heartwarming for me to see our community on full display. The ode by Growcom really reflects this well and the culture of getting back together, because many in our community just simply want to get back to business. It goes—


So here is to you Queensland's Best,

You battle to feed us, You never rest.

And though the world may look away,

We will be standing beside you, Come what May!

South-East Queensland, Weather Events

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (9.18 pm): Author Coretta Scott King said, 'The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.' Over this past week we have seen that greatness in action as our community responded to Cyclone Alfred. Queenslanders are no strangers to extreme weather but, for many in the south-east, this was our first experience of a cyclone, apart, of course, from many residents in The Gap who experienced winds that were commensurate with a category 3 cyclone in 2008. Many locals still recall that devastation but, unlike that event—or the 2022 floods—this time we had more time to prepare.

Most people really stepped up, securing their homes and cleaning debris from around their homes and checking on their neighbours. I give a huge thank you to our community and sporting group volunteers who not only keep things running on a day-to-day basis but went above and beyond the call of duty last week in relocating equipment and ensuring facilities were protected so that games could resume as soon as possible.

I want to highlight Sporting Wheelies, a premier Paralympic training facility and fantastic community sports hub in my electorate. They are unfortunately located in a flood zone and they have incurred around \$15,000 in costs having to relocate equipment in and out of the centre. The Miles Labor government funded that purpose-built Milton centre, but it was always supposed to be temporary. I do hope that the Olympics 100-day review addresses this and looks at a permanent home for them. Our para-athletes dominated in Paris. We need to find them a more secure, non-flood-zone facility. I have so many examples of greatness. I wish I could stop there, but there are some things I need to raise.


I urge the government to activate the Care Army before disasters and not just after. In the lead-up to the cyclone my office spent a full three days assisting residents who needed help with moving furniture, cleaning out yards and cleaning out gutters. We even hired a tradie, Cameron from Hire a Hubby, who was fantastic. He spent a full day making repairs for local people who did not have those informal supports. He was an absolute godsend.

Mr Dick interjected.

Ms BUSH: Thank you. Yes, I will take that. This is the second sitting week I have raised the impact of natural disasters on small businesses. Small businesses do not just drive our economy; they are the heart of our communities. We have a lot of them in Rosalie, Milton and Paddington that continue to shut down every time there are major flooding events, not just cyclones. They lose power, stock and

income. They still have to pay their staff. I have written to numerous ministers in the past week about this. We really do need some action in the Milton and Rosalie area. We are continuing to call on the government to look at more relief payments for small businesses that are affected by flooding and natural disasters. We will continue to call on them to do more for our small business community.

Redcliffe Electorate, Tropical Cyclone Alfred


 **Ms DOOLEY** (Redcliffe—LNP) (9.21 pm): I rise tonight to say a heartfelt and well-deserved thank you to my remarkable community of Redcliffe for how they prepared, rallied and supported each other during Tropical Cyclone Alfred. Like Jim said, during natural disasters we see the best—and sometimes the worst—of humanity. We saw neighbours helping neighbours, strangers helping strangers. At the Margate sandbagging station we went from seeing people help those who could not shovel or did not have one to hearing reports of sandbags being stolen from local businesses like Bazil & Co at Scarborough.

I pay tribute to the Redcliffe Citipointe Love Army, which, with the federal member for Petrie, Luke Howarth, was helping fill and deliver sandbags for hours for those who could not. The Love Army also activated its volunteers within one hour of my call to help a distressed resident whose rental property was completely destroyed and inundated with water. The Love Army—faith in action—brought their trailer, hands and feet to help.

I also thank our Premier, who was calm, measured, clear and concise when it came to guiding Queenslanders through this crisis. The Premier listened and acted and was present in Redcliffe this week to meet with locals who were affected by the cyclone. He met with business owners and residents, offering reassurance. So many candidly praised him for his support through this crisis.

I say thank you to the residents and businesses of Moreton Island, also in my electorate of Redcliffe, including the Gutter Bar at Koorungal, which made it on the news, and Castaways at Bulwer, for providing safe havens during the cyclone. I thank our police, who were out doorknocking every day to ensure that flood-prone homes were ready and followed up with seniors to make sure they were safe when we lost power; our SES; Energex; all the staff at Redcliffe Hospital; and community organisations like Encircle Redcliffe homelessness outreach assistance program for helping our vulnerable evacuate and get to safe refuges. Thanks also to: Superintendent Adam Guild, our DDMG; Scarborough, Humpybong, Clontarf and Kippa-Ring state schools; Redcliffe and Clontarf high schools; Woody Point and Redcliffe special schools; Grace Lutheran and Southern Cross College; and all of the principals, teachers and staff who helped clean up our schools to get students back as soon as possible. Last but not least, I express my gratitude to the City of Moreton Bay council, which led the disaster management team. I am both humbled and proud to be the member for Redcliffe—a community that wraps around each other in times of crisis.

North-West Queensland, Special Economic Zone


 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (9.24 pm): I rise to say that in the North West Minerals Province we are now in a state of economic emergency. There have been numerous mine closures, many of which are related to malaise and a lack of suitable fit-for-purpose policy. Some of these things just need policy adjustment and do not need money. It requires the treatment of Mount Isa to Townsville as a special economic zone. There are a bundle of issues that need to be fixed there that do not fit the models of governance and policy that come out of Brisbane.

Firstly, we need to talk about CopperString, which is a big part of the mix out there. There is a high cost of energy from a monopoly supplier, APA. It would be broken by connecting us to the NEM. There has been some great support from the previous government and now this current government for CopperString. However, Powerlink has failed to take that up. There was a rather deceptive comment this week by the CEO, Paul Simshauser, who said that he inherited a project two years ago that was at concept stage and he has taken it to construction. It was not at concept stage at all. It had full environmental federal approvals and it had contract approval for the construction of it. It was shovel-ready; he got a shovel-ready project. The government took it and ordered them to build it, and here we are two years later and that CEO is saying they might decide to start building it somewhere else now.

After two years, we have some dongas up in Hughenden and an interpretive centre in Townsville. There are mines out there quite literally saying, 'We can't make the billion dollar financial decision. They can't even give us a price after two years.' That is disgusting, it is a disgrace and it is embarrassing. That is why we have called for him to be stood down. The chairwoman forgot to tell us all that she was also on the board of a gas company in the Northern Territory that has deals with APA, which is the counterpoint to CopperString, which is the monopoly provider of power in the North West Minerals Province. To me, that is a pretty big conflict of interest and it is irreconcilable. It does not help when they are in the road with those sorts of things.

CopperString needs to be put up now. You cannot play around with the aspirations and the confidence of people from Townsville to Mount Isa. We are all banking on it going ahead. The mines out there are saying, 'We've got to make investment decisions.' They cannot plan. Tell me if I am wrong, but if you are building a house or units and you are selling off the plan, you have to work out a budget and have some discipline around a budget so you can offer a price. After two years, they are not capable of giving a price to their customers. They must go. CopperString needs to be resolved. We need to resolve the rail and the water utilities. They cannot be treated as cash cows. They need to be used as levers of industry which will be covered by a special economic zone.

Townsville, Youth Crime

 **Mr BAILLIE** (Townsville—LNP) (9.27 pm): It has been a challenging start to the year for many Queenslanders, with flooding up north and cyclones down south. Many Queenslanders are still cleaning up after floodwater inundation and waiting on power to be restored or roads and bridges to be repaired. Thankfully, the weather has moved on and recovery is underway. Sadly, in Townsville we are still living through another disaster. It is the disaster known as Labor's youth crime crisis. For years we have been living through this disaster with more and more residents being impacted. The structural, financial and psychological impact will take years to recover from. Since being elected, the rain may have stopped but the waters are still rising on youth crime.

Over the last few weeks alone, we have seen convoys of vehicles being recklessly driven through suburbs like Hermit Park and Cosgrove with no regard for property or public safety. Under the previous Labor government, this disaster was denied. We were told that it was a media beat-up or that it was not that big of a deal. We disagreed then and we disagree now.

Since being elected late last year, we made Adult Crime, Adult Time law before Christmas as we committed, we have appointed an Expert Legal Panel to monitor and advise of further changes to strengthen our laws even more going forward, we have opened up the courts to reporters and put the rights of victims ahead of offenders, and we have made sure detention is no longer to be used as a last resort.

We have announced additional funding to open up two new courtrooms, which will reduce the wait time for victims to see justice carried out. We have begun work already on early intervention programs by locking in funding for local after-hours programs like the Garbutt Youth Hub. We have given the judges the ability to hand down sentences in line with community expectations. We have given our police more tools they need to do their job as well as Queensland's first dedicated rapid response unit, the Flying Squad. The Flying Squad has already been to Townsville once this year, resulting in 34 juveniles charged with 153 offences.

Our work is not done. We know it and our community knows it. We understand that our community is yearning for change, and so are we. I look forward to the day we can move to the recovery phase with regard to Labor's youth crime crisis. It took 10 years to get to this point and it will take time to recover. The impacts of the storm have not passed. We are still very much in disaster response phase, but we will end Labor's youth crime crisis.

Question put—That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.30 pm.

ATTENDANCE

Asif, Bailey, Baillie, Barounis, Bates, Bennett, Berkman, Bleijie, Bolton, Boothman, Bourne, Boyd, Bush, Butcher, Camm, Crandon, Crisafulli, Dalton, Dametto, de Brenni, Dick, Dillon, Doolan, Dooley, Enoch, Farmer, Fentiman, Field, Frecklington, Furner, Gerber, Grace, Head, Healy, Howard, Hunt, Hutton, James B, James T, Janetzki, Katter, Kelly G, Kelly J, Kempton, King, Kirkland, Knuth, Krause, Langbroek, Last, Leahy, Lee, Linard, Lister, Mander, Marr, Martin, McCallum, McDonald, McMillan, Mellish, Mickelberg, Miles, Minnikin, Molhoek, Morton, Mullen, Nicholls, Nightingale, O'Connor, O'Shea, Pease, Perrett, Poole, Powell, Power, Pugh, Purdie, Rowan, Russo, Ryan, Scanlon, Simpson, Smith, Stevens, Stoker, Sullivan, Vorster, Watts, Weir, Whiting, Young