

**WEDNESDAY, 30 JULY 2025**

---

**ESTIMATES—STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKS  
COMMITTEE—STATE DEVELOPMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING;  
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

Mr Speaker (Hon. Pat Weir, Condamine)

**Committee Members**

Mr JJ McDonald MP—Chair

Ms JM Bush MP

Mr TA James MP

Mr D Kempton MP

Mr SR King MP

Hon. CR Dick MP

Hon. G Grace MP

---

**Members in Attendance**

Dr CAC Rowan MP

Mr MC Berkman MP

---

**In Attendance**

Hon. JP Bleijie, Deputy Premier Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning,  
Minister for Industrial Relations

Mr Nathan Ruhle, Chief of Staff

**Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning**

Mr John Sosso, Director-General

Mr Darcy Creighton, Policy Advisor (State Development and Planning)

Mr Shaun Ferris, Deputy Director-General, Strategy, Insights and Advisory

Mr Mark Tierney, Acting Deputy Director-General, State Development

Ms Helen Craze, Policy Advisor (Infrastructure)

Ms Donna Heelan, Acting Deputy Director-General, Office of Industrial Relations

Mr Jock Power, Senior Policy Adviser

**Economic Development Queensland**

Mr Julian Simmonds, Acting Chief Executive Officer

**Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority**

Mr Nick Elliott, Interim Chief Executive Officer

**WorkCover Queensland**

Mr Michael Pennisi, Chief Executive Officer

---

**The committee met at 1 pm.**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Good afternoon. I declare this hearing of estimates for the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee open. 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.

I am Pat Weir, member for Condamine and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Under the provisions of the Parliament of Queensland Act 2001 I will preside over today's hearings. The members of the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee are Mr Jim McDonald, member for Lockyer, who is the chair; Ms Jonty Bush, member for Cooper and Deputy Chair; Mr Terry James, member for Mulgrave; Mr David Kempton, member for Cook; Mr Shane King, member for Kurwongbah; the Hon. Cameron Dick, member for Woodridge, who is substituting for Mr Bart Mellish, member for Aspley, between 1 and 5 pm; and the Hon. Grace Grace, member for McConnel, who will substitute for Mr Bart Mellish, member for Aspley, from 5 pm. The committee is joined by other members who have been granted leave to attend and ask questions at the hearing today.

I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at the Speaker's discretion or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat. Staff who are assisting our witnesses here today are permitted to use personal electronic devices in the chamber. I ask all present to ensure that phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode or turned off if not in use. Please also note that the first three rows of the gallery are reserved for department and ministerial staff supporting the minister. Members and others who are attending to observe are welcome to sit in the remaining rows or in the gallery upstairs. I also remind everyone that food and drink is not permitted in this chamber.

The House has determined the program for the committee's estimates hearing. Today the committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2025 for the portfolios of the Deputy Premier, Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations. I remind honourable members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can only be raised during the time specified for the area, as was agreed by the House. I refer members to the program set by the House, available throughout the chamber and on the committee's web page. The first session will examine the proposed expenditure for the state development and infrastructure portfolio areas until 4 pm. We will suspend proceedings for an intermission from 4 pm to 4.30 pm. The proposed expenditure for the planning and industrial relations portfolio areas will be examined from 4.30 pm to 6 pm.

I remind everyone that these proceedings are subject to the standing orders and rules of the Legislative Assembly. In respect of government owned corporations and statutory authorities, standing order 180(2) provides that a member may ask any question that the committee determines will assist in its examination of the relevant Appropriation Bill or otherwise assist the committee to determine whether public funds are being efficiently spent or appropriate public guarantees are being provided.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning and Minister for Industrial Relations, the director-general, officials and departmental officers and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the Deputy Premier or director-general. Please remember to press your microphones on before you start speaking and off when you are finished. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of state development, infrastructure, planning and industrial relations open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Deputy Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes regarding the state development portfolio area.

**Mr McDONALD:** Before the Deputy Premier starts, I am seeking a point of clarification. The ruling you made before about those in the first three rows, I am sure the assistant minister is considered to be part of the minister's team so is able to be there?

**Mr SPEAKER:** She is assisting the minister.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is great to have you chairing these estimates. It is my absolute honour to be here as the Deputy Premier of His Majesty's Crisafulli government in Queensland that was elected in October last year and elected with a fresh start for Queensland's future. We have many challenges. We know the Labor government had 10 years in office. They left it in an absolute mess, whether it was the budget repair the honourable Treasurer David Janetzki has had to do or each of our ministers we have seen—the minister for finance and now state development, which we will deal with. We want to put development back in the department of state development. For too long we have had projects delayed; sit on ministers' desks in the Labor government for too long. The Crisafulli government is taking an active approach to making sure approvals get through the system. This is the fresh start we promised Queensland and that is exactly what we are doing.

Queensland is open for business. We want the spotlight to be on Queensland, to say bring your business to Queensland, and to businesses that are already in Queensland we want to say not only survive but thrive and grow your businesses. We want international companies to look at Queensland and know they have a government that they can deal with; they have a government in Queensland now that does not hate the private sector, that is happy to do PPPs with the private sector, recognising Queensland's state government cannot do it all on its own. That is exactly why in the portfolio responsibility of state development we are targeting three issues: defence, biofuel and biomedical.

We announced today a Sovereign Industry Development Fund, a \$180 million fund which reprioritises 11 former Labor government priorities in state development into three: defence, biofuels and biomedical. This is about ensuring businesses know the department of state development—this government—is open for business. We have opened applications for that grant today for strategic and catalytic investment partnerships.

On the EDQ front, we have focused all of EDQ's energy into delivering homes in the PDAs and increase housing supply right across Queensland—not only housing supply but also commercial and industrial supply. Where you have PDAs you have thousands of people moving there and they need jobs, they need economic benefit and they need economic opportunity. You cannot do it if you just build the houses without the infrastructure and also without the business opportunities, hence why EDQ's focus is not only housing but also commercial and industrial land supply.

Since the election of the Crisafulli government EDQ have been kicking some amazing goals. Recent levels of approvals are at a record high since the October election of the Crisafulli government. In April 2025 I declared another PDA—the Southern Thornlands PDA—unlocking 8,000 lots in Queensland which, incidentally, is in the electorate of my assistant minister, Rebecca Young. I thank her for her advocacy and assistance in this portfolio. But there is lots more to do. EDQ have a great board, they have an acting CEO and they are getting on with the business of unlocking supply in Queensland. As I said, congratulations to all involved. They have had a record few months in unlocking thousands of lots of land.

If we turn to major projects in the state development space, we have the amazing Office of the Coordinator-General. I acknowledge the Coordinator-General today. They continue to lead the charge in project assessments across Queensland, jobs, particularly regional supply jobs, looking at regional supply chains.

The Bribie Island issues were neglected by the Labor Party for 10 years. They allowed Bribie Island to disintegrate, meaning flooding for residents of Golden Beach and putting the business community at risk. In Jason Hunt they had a member for Caloundra who did nothing—blame game. We were elected and within a matter of months we did a review and we are already taking action. We can announce today that the Coordinator-General will lead the major project assessments across Bribie Island to fill the second and third gaps where Cyclone Alfred punched through following the first punch-through, which is now two kilometres wide and puts businesses at Golden Beach at risk. The Coordinator-General will lead the urgent restoration efforts for Bribie Island, and he can do that because he has the powers to get on with the job.

Recently I appointed Julia Scodellaro as CEO of the South Bank Corporation. There are many opportunities for South Bank as we lead into 2032. If I were to sum up the role of the department of state development it is this: build, baby, build—and we will.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Deputy Premier. We will go to opposition members for the first questions.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, page 1 of the SDS refers to the department's commitment to delivering economic prosperity and a better lifestyle through a stronger economy. The department of state development funds and operates the Worker Transition Scheme and rapid response program,

which is designed to assist workers who may find themselves without work as a result of business closures or redundancy programs. Director-General, are you aware that that scheme has operated to assist workers facing redundancy in Queensland since September 1989, which is almost 25 years? Are you aware of that scheme that is operated by the department?

**Mr Sosso:** Yes.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, the department is leading a Worker Transition Scheme and the \$12 million support package for the workers impacted by the closure of the Mossman Mill, isn't it?

**Mr Sosso:** Yes.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, are you aware that 150 workers in Kingaroy and Tolga, on the Atherton Tablelands, will be made redundant following the decision of the Bega Group to close one of their companies, the Peanut Company of Australia?

**Mr Sosso:** No, I am not.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, I put it to you that 150 workers are about to lose their jobs in Kingaroy and Tolga.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Director-General, do you have anything? No.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, are you aware that some of the impacted workers who have worked at the Kingaroy processing factory for up to 30 years are about to be made redundant?

**Mr Sosso:** I accept your statement to that effect.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, are you aware that the CEO of the Bega Group had proposed that workers could relocate to Bega in southern New South Wales, which is almost 1,500 kilometres and an almost 16-hour drive from Kingaroy, to continue working for the company?

**Mr Sosso:** I accept your statement to that effect, member for Woodridge.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, have you spoken to the CEO of the Bega Group about the workers who are about to be made redundant and how the department of state development might assist through the Worker Transition Scheme and rapid response program?

**Mr Sosso:** Having regard to my previous answer, I think the response is an obvious no.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, Director-General. I appreciate your directness in these matters. Director-General, can you advise how many department of state development officers have met with affected workers in Kingaroy to discuss departmental support under the Worker Transition Scheme and rapid response?

**Mr Sosso:** Member for Woodridge, if you allow me until the end of the session I will get that information for you.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Are you happy with that, Minister?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yes.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, can you advise the committee what funding your department has made available in the current financial year and next to support the 150 workers in Kingaroy and Tolga who will be made redundant?

**Mr Sosso:** As with my previous answer, if you will give me to the end of the session I will obtain that information for you.

**Mr DICK:** But as at this moment you are not aware of any funding that has been allocated?

**Mr Sosso:** That is obviously axiomatic from my response to you.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, can you list for the committee the program support services and other initiatives that have already been activated to support the impacted workers and their families?

**Mr Sosso:** As I have said to the honourable member for Woodridge, insofar as I am deficient in that knowledge and I will obtain the information, I repeat my previous answers to you and they will be the same if you ask any further questions about it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** That is enough. You have answered.

**Mr DICK:** I want to summarise. Director-General, as at this point in time, you are not aware of any funding that has been allocated or any meetings or engagements that have occurred with the impacted workers?

**Mr Sosso:** As I said, I will obtain the information for you by the end of the session.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Woodridge, you have asked the question a number of times in a different fashion. You have the call for the next question.

**Mr DICK:** Deputy Premier, given the evidence of the director-general, will you immediately activate the Worker Transition Scheme and rapid response? Given that he does not appear to have any knowledge of any activity taken by the department, will you immediately activate that scheme to assist the impacted workers in Kingaroy and Tolga, please?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The director-general has indicated that he will get information to the honourable member before the close of the session this evening. I might point out that the member for Woodridge is incorrect about the immediate closure of Bega. It is an 18-month transition. If they request any assistance through the Worker Transition Scheme, we will consider any such request. At this point, I am not sure a request has been made to the department.

**Mr DICK:** On a point of order, I did not say it was about to imminently close. I said 150 workers are about to be made redundant.

**Mr SPEAKER:** You have clarified that. Do you have another question?

**Mr DICK:** I do, and I look forward to the answer from the department. Director-General, are you aware of research previously commissioned by the department of state development into the future of the Queensland battery industry, including a discussion paper titled 'Battery industry opportunities for Queensland'?

**Mr Sosso:** Yes, honourable member.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, are you aware that that research has concluded that a Queensland battery industry could generate up to \$1.3 billion in economic activity for the state and create 9,100 jobs by 2030, prior to the Olympic and Paralympic Games?

**Mr Sosso:** Yes, I am aware of that research.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, I refer you to the Queensland Battery Industry Strategy, which was released in February 2024. Are you aware that that strategy was released by the former government?

**Mr Sosso:** Yes, I am aware of that.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, the Queensland Battery Industry Strategy has now been terminated, hasn't it?

**Mr Sosso:** Yes.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, as part of that strategy, new funding of \$210 million was committed, including \$105 million to establish the Australian Battery Industrialisation Centre; are you aware of that?

**Mr Sosso:** Yes, I am aware the department developed a detailed business case for ABIC, prepared by BDO, to assess the implementation, operations and economic impacts of the Australian Battery Industrialisation Centre.

**Mr DICK:** Thanks for that answer. The question was: are you aware that, of the \$570 million allocated to that strategy, \$210 million was new money? Are you aware of the new money that was allocated by the former government to the strategy that has now been terminated?

**Mr Sosso:** I am aware that the Queensland Battery Industry Strategy of the previous Palaszczuk-Miles government contained \$210 million in new funding aimed at stimulating growth in Queensland's battery ecosystem. I am aware that included in the overall \$570 million initiative: \$275 million was for innovation and commercialisation; \$92.2 million was to invest, integrate and grow; and \$202.5 million was to position and promote the battery industry.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, I table an article from the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* which states that \$105 million for the establishment of the battery centre has been cut from this year's budget. That funding has been cut. That is correct, is it not?

**Mr Sosso:** I can say to the honourable member for Woodridge, as the Deputy Premier has just announced, the government has announced the establishment of the Sovereign Industry Development Fund. The focus of the government is, as the minister said, biomedicine, biofuels and defence, not the battery industry.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Woodridge, were you moving that that be tabled?

**Mr DICK:** I am a member of the committee, so I am able to table it. Thanks for the answer, Director-General, even though it really was commentary on the new Sovereign Industry Development Fund. That article states that the \$105 million of funding that the previous Queensland government committed to that centre has been cut. Is it correct that the funding has been cut?

**Mr Sosso:** I would say to the honourable member two things. Firstly, the Queensland Battery Industry Strategy is being wound up. Contracts already in place are being honoured. Secondly, the Crisafulli government has made a decision with respect to the reprioritisation of grants to the Sovereign Industry Development Fund. That is a policy question. If you ask anything further, you should direct it to the Deputy Premier.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will do the chairing, thank you, Director-General.

**Mr DICK:** This money was allocated by the previous government to a fund that has now been cut. Director-General, can you confirm a portion of the Queensland government's \$105 million contribution has already been deployed for a detailed feasibility and engineering design package for stage 1 of the Australian Battery Industrialisation Centre?

**Mr Sosso:** I might get back to you on the exact figures in terms of the expenditure from that fund later in the session, honourable member for Woodridge. I would not wish to mislead you or anybody else by giving you a definitive answer unless I went through the figures one by one.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you. I will ask you these questions and perhaps you can come back at the end of the session or take them on notice if you cannot answer them then. I am seeking from you, Director-General, an answer to this question: what is the value of the funds deployed by the department for the detailed feasibility and engineering design package for stage 1 of ABIC, which I understand has already been expended? Are you happy to come back to the committee if you cannot answer that now?

**Mr Sosso:** I think that is connected to the previous question. I will get back to you on both because they are connected.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you. I am seeking an answer from you, Director-General, as to whether the department has received the detailed feasibility and engineering design report.

**Mr Sosso:** Can you just bear with me for one second? With your indulgence, Mr Speaker, I would like to ask Mr Mark Tierney, the Acting Deputy Director-General, State Development, to assist me. I think he will have some of the information that the honourable member for Woodridge is looking for.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Speaker, I have a point of order before we proceed. The question was to the director-general. I am seeking an answer from the director-general.

**Dr ROWAN:** Point of order, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will hear the member for Woodridge's point of order.

**Mr DICK:** If I could, I will just finish articulating my point of order, please. If Mr Tierney is able to appear, am I then given the discretion to ask other deputy directors-general at another level in the agency to answer questions if the director-general is deferring this answer? Otherwise I am happy for him to answer the very clear questions about how much was expended and whether the report is available.

**Dr ROWAN:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: the director-general is entitled to bring other officers forward and delegate the responsibility. It is not a blanket opportunity for the member for Woodridge to do two things. He has been around for a long time and understands the rules and the processes which apply to estimates, but it is also not an opportunity for him to state further information and a case as well.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The director-general is well and truly able to refer to Mr Tierney for more information, if that is in his area.

**Mr Sosso:** I am sorry, Speaker, if I erred. I thought the honourable member for Woodridge was looking for a correct answer, so I thought I would assist him. If I am in error in attempting to assist him, I apologise.

**Mr DICK:** I was looking for a direct answer from you.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Mr Tierney, do you have something to contribute to this, please?

**Mr Tierney:** Thank you. In relation to the Australian Battery Industrialisation Centre, we entered into a \$4.25 million contract for the planning and design work. That will be completed in September. We also entered into a \$5 million contract with a university consortium to put in place what is referred to as a concierge service to assist industry to access the university R and D network across Queensland.

**Mr DICK:** What was that \$4.25 million contract for, Mr Tierney?

**Mr Tierney:** That was for planning and design work at the CleanCo site at Swanbank.

**Mr DICK:** What did that \$4.25 million investment result in? Was it a detailed design report? Was it an engineering report? Can you explain to the committee what was received for the \$4.25 million?

**Mr Tierney:** It was for the site investigation, geotechnical work and early designs through to a schematic design. That is currently being completed, so we have not yet received the full report.

**Mr DICK:** On what date will the full report be received, Mr Tierney?

**Mr Tierney:** It is due during September. I do not have a precise date. That is subject to the professional services contractor completing the work.

**Mr DICK:** I appreciate that answer, Mr Tierney. That is for the engineering and design work for the Australian Battery Industrialised Centre that will now not be built—that is correct, is it not?

**Mr Tierney:** That is correct.

**Mr DICK:** I appreciate your direct answer. Director-General, the balance of the \$210 million in new funding allocated to the Queensland Battery Industry Strategy—being \$105 million—has also been cut, has it not?

**Mr Sosso:** I say to the honourable member for Woodridge it has been reallocated.

**Mr DICK:** For what purpose has it been reallocated, please, Director-General?

**Mr Sosso:** As I indicated to the honourable member before, it has been reallocated to the Sovereign Industry Development Fund.

**Mr DICK:** Could you remind the committee again of the value of the Sovereign Industry Development Fund, please?

**Mr Sosso:** The government has provided additional funding of \$180.6 million over four years for the Sovereign Industry Development Fund: in 2025-26, \$21.68 million; in 2026-27, \$21.68 million; in 2027-28, \$40 million; and in 2028-29, \$97.176 million.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, it is not additional money, is it? It is a reallocation of funds from the new funding that was provided for the Queensland Battery Industry Strategy, including the Australian Battery Industrialisation Centre. It is not additional funding; it is a reallocation. That is a more honest way to represent that; is it not?

**Mr Sosso:** As I said to the honourable member, that component from the Battery Industry Strategy is a reallocation. I did not say that the whole of the money was a reallocation.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, can you provide the committee with a breakdown of the \$105 million—other than the expenditure that has already occurred, which is \$4.25 million for a centre that is now not going to be built—that was allocated for the establishment of the Australian Battery Industrialisation Centre and where it has gone?

**Mr Sosso:** I will endeavour to get you that figure by the end of the session.

**Mr DICK:** I appreciate that, Director-General.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We will move to government members' questions.

**Mr JAMES:** Thank you for travelling to Cairns recently to meet with me, the member for Cook, the member for Barron River and also local mayor Amy Eden to discuss solutions to address the shortage of housing opportunities for the Cairns region. In addition to the recent Scheme Supply Fund grant provided to council, can you please update the committee on what further actions you are undertaking to support the delivery of more housing in my electorate of Mulgrave?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The member is a great advocate for the people of Mulgrave. He is right: it was great to join him recently in his beautiful electorate when I was in Far North Queensland, having just visited the member for Cook and the member for Barron River. He is right: we need to get on with the job and deliver housing.

One of the answers to the crisis in Queensland is supply, supply, supply. That is what the Labor Party failed to recognise for 10 years. They did not release enough supply. They did not approve enough buildings. They did not declare enough PDAs, priority development areas, across the state. We received advocacy from the Cairns Regional Council and Mayor Amy Eden a number of times I was up there with respect to housing and supply. She absolutely wanted us to reset the planning partnership with council to unlock Cairns. I am very pleased to announce today that I have declared Mount Peter a priority development area.

The Mount Peter Priority Development Area will cater for 18,500 homes and roughly over 42,000 new residents, which, in a sense, is another electorate in your beautiful electorate of Mulgrave. When I was up there with you and Mayor of Cairns Amy Eden talking to the community, I could see that there are huge pressures. Whether it is Far North Queensland, South-East Queensland, Western Queensland or regional Queensland, the pressure for housing supply is real. The Crisafulli government is committed to ensuring we pull every lever possible to unlock land.

These same levers were available to the former Labor government, but it is unfortunate that they did not use them. I am not sure why. We have a gentleman at the table asking questions today who had a very important position in that government. He was deputy premier and I think he might have been the minister for state development at some stage. He could have used these powers and levers of state government to unlock land. I guess if the member for Woodridge did, we would not have the housing crisis and the homelessness issue we have right across the state at the moment.

I am not sure why he sat on his hands for 10 years and did not do anything about. I would love him to ask me about it. Just like question time, it does not look like I am going to get any questions in budget estimates either. He is not game enough to ask me questions in question time during parliamentary sittings. It looks like he is not game to ask me questions today either. That is a matter for him and his bad record in government.

As well as the PDA declaration for Mount Peter, I can also announce today that I have declared—and Governor in Council approved yesterday—the North Harbour Priority Development Area. The North Harbour Priority Development Area will cater for over 3,700 new homes.

Here is a little history lesson for not the member for Mulgrave but the member for Woodridge on the North Harbour PDA. In 2015, it was requested that Jackie Trad declare it a PDA. She rejected it. In 2018—here is an interesting name—Dick rejected it as a PDA. In 2020, Dick rejected it again. Within nine months of the Crisafulli government, we have declared North Harbour a priority development area.

If you look at the North Harbour PDA and the Mount Peter PDA, we are talking about in Mount Peter 18,500 homes and in North Harbour over 3,700 homes. That is unlocking real blocks of land and real infrastructure on a scale we have not seen before. This is on top of the PDA that I have already declared in southern Thornlands, in the Redlands electorate, which will cater for upwards of 8,000 homes.

The Crisafulli government is getting on with the job. We understand that the housing crisis is real. We will reset the planning partnerships with council. We will make the decisions the Labor Party failed to make for 10 years. I think by the end the former deputy premier in particular became a bit arrogant in office and was more interested in the job, the opportunities and his own welfare than the people of this state. That is why we are doing what we are doing and why we will make the decisions we need to.

The Cairns Regional Council is very excited that we have declared the Mount Peter PDA. The City of Moreton Bay is very happy that we have declared the North Harbour PDA. We will keep using the levers available to the state government to do what we need to do to unlock land to end the housing crisis and address homelessness in Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before I go to the next question, I remind the Deputy Premier that you are here to talk about areas of your portfolio, which you are doing, but could there be fewer personal reflections and could you also use correct titles in this chamber, please.

**Mr McDONALD:** Deputy Premier, with reference to Economic Development Queensland, can you please update the committee with regard to recent changes in its CEO position?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** As chair of the state development committee, I know how interested the member is in economic development across the state. I thank you for your efforts and the great discussions you have had with me over the years around economic development in this state.

First, I thank former EDQ chair Debbie McNamara for her advocacy. I thank and congratulate Acting CEO Julian Simmonds on his appointment. We have refocused. We took an election commitment to the people of Queensland to refocus the efforts of EDQ to build homes, look at residential land supply and look at industrial and commercial land in the state. That is what we are doing.

I have been very impressed with the work of EDQ in the last few months. In the last two weeks I walked the floors of the department with the EDQ public servants and there is a level of excitement the likes of which I have not seen or heard for a long time, because they now have a government that is focused on the issues of housing supply and economic development in Queensland. The board have also refocused their efforts and their strategies going forward. I think what we are going to see from

EDQ over the next few years is the land supplied and the homes built breaking all sorts of records. I said earlier in my opening statement that EDQ broke records in the last financial year. They approved more homes than ever before. I congratulate everyone at EDQ.

When I accepted the board's nomination of Mr Julian Simmonds, I looked at what roles Mr Simmonds had had before. When I appoint people or accept the recommendations for appointment of people, I look to statements made by other honourable members in support or otherwise of those people as part of my due diligence. I reflect on a media statement issued on 11 January 2024. It was a statement by former minister Grace Grace, the minister for state development at the time. She talked about the new South Bank Corporation board being appointed. I quote from the media statement—

The new board will drive a period of renewal at the iconic Brisbane destination ahead of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

It goes on—

The seven other board members are ...

One of those is Mr Julian Simmonds. She said—

The Miles Government is committed to ensuring South Bank remains a world-class destination for generations to come.

...

With the new board in place, we can continue powering towards our vision of ensuring South Bank remains a world-class destination ...

The new board members bring a wealth of experience and expertise across a range of fields including public and private sector corporate governance, tourism, planning, community engagement, innovation, finance, property and law.

I had no choice but to accept the board's recommendation to appoint Mr Simmonds as acting CEO based on the former minister Grace Grace's strong endorsement of Mr Simmonds for a board that she appointed him to. I had no choice, with that strong character reference, but to appoint the acting CEO, Mr Julian Simmonds. I congratulate him. He has been doing an excellent job and, by all accounts, the staff in EDQ are loving it and getting on board.

**Mr McDONALD:** Deputy Premier, in relation to Economic Development Queensland, what actions are being undertaken to refocus EDQ to deliver not only more housing but also industrial development?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I thank the honourable member for Lockyer for the question. It is great to know you have such an interest in industrial development. As I indicated before, a lot of people think of EDQ just as housing supply and PDAs, but they do far more than that, of course, with industrial and commercial. They are the three focuses that we have given EDQ and the priorities of the Crisafulli government. It is great to know your interest in industrial development as well, as I note the Laidley industrial development in your electorate has been a popular place for industrial developers to do business, originally started by EDQ.

Industrial development is really important to the EDQ development model, and we support it entirely. They have had a new strategic plan recently put in place for 2025-29 with three key priorities—firstly, housing supply and making land development ready for housing; secondly, economic prosperity across the state, facilitating commercial industrial development; and, thirdly, livable places with proper planning through the PDA process.

I will go to some of the record levels in approvals for the honourable member—I think he may be interested in this. Last financial year saw 3,357 lots and 4,656 dwellings approved—a total of 8,003. This is a record number for EDQ. In July to September, there were 1,817 approvals under the former Labor government. In October to June, there were 6,186 approvals under this LNP government. This represents a 13.5 per cent increase in average approvals over the October to June LNP quarter compared to the July to September Labor quarter. This is what a refocused EDQ looks like—more approvals sooner for people to call Queensland home and to give them a place to call home.

**Mr KEMPTON:** With reference to the Waraba Priority Development Area, can the Deputy Premier please update how the Crisafulli government is bringing more homes to market sooner, including some of the history regarding supporting infrastructure within the Waraba PDA?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I thank the member for Cook for his question. I congratulate him on his advocacy. It is great to have you back in the parliament. Boy, what you have achieved in the last nine months as the member for Cook with your advocacy—and we will get to that a bit later in some of the other processes. You have been a great member for the people of Far North Queensland. They are served well by you, member.

You asked me about the Waraba Priority Development Area and you also asked me about the history of it. This is a priority development area that had been in the planning for about 30 years. Under the Labor government, I recall Steven Miles—I was the deputy leader of the opposition at the time—coming before estimates as the state development minister all but a few years ago rolling out the big maps and making the big declaration that Waraba, which is the Caboolture area, would be a new priority development area.

That is the problem with how the Labor Party did things. It was all just brochures, glossy announcements and media releases. There was no action. In fact, since the Waraba PDA was declared, we saw AV Jennings pull out of the development because of a lack of approvals, a lack of discipline around the approval processes and I guess a lack of confidence in the former Labor government to be able to deliver projects and the infrastructure required.

What happened with a lot of the PDAs under the former Labor government is that they just announced them. Their consideration of success in the Labor Party was how many press releases they put out. Our consideration of success is how many homes come out of the ground; how many families move into those areas; and having the infrastructure required for those areas including road, rail, kerb and channelling, lighting—resetting the planning partnership with local government.

We are absolutely refocusing EDQ to deliver the homes in the priority development area and increase supply. We have recently announced the Residential Activation Fund as well which is designed to help with infrastructure needed to unlock new housing across the state.

In the PDA you spoke about, I recently turned the sod on Stockland's Rivermont project, the beginning of a 2,000-homes development. The 2025-26 Crisafulli budget commits increased funding of \$151.9 million over four years for the delivery of the Catalyst Infrastructure Fund to assist developers get the infrastructure funds needed, whether that be for roads or whatever it is, to allow the opening of the lots.

I toured there with a few of the developers in recent months. It is going to be an amazing development. We are still concerned that, because of the policy failures of the former Labor government, the certainty of business to invest has to be turned around. We have a lot of work to do to show that this government is helping oil the cogs and move things along. We are getting approvals in place. EDQ, as I said, have already achieved record numbers in their approval process, so we are going to continue that process.

As I said, it was disappointing in Labor's record that AV Jennings pulled out of delivering homes. That was 3,500 homes that were going to be delivered by AV Jennings in the Waraba development. They did not progress because Labor did not get the planning right and did not deal with the infrastructure needed to unlock more homes. At the time AV Jennings withdrew, the Mayor of Moreton Bay, Peter Flannery, said—

It's all well and good for the State—

remember he was talking about the state Labor government—

to mandate growth targets for Councils but they need to support that growth.

He goes on—

... we will not meet State Government mandated housing targets if a pipeline of catalytic infrastructure is not prioritised now.

That was from the local mayor when AV Jennings pulled out. Their pulling out of that development meant 3,500 families would not have homes to move into. You are talking about 3,500 homes. You are talking about 7,000 to 8,000 people—families—who are not now moving in there because of the decision by AV Jennings.

We are trying to turn it around. We are showing that there is a government now that works with the private sector. There is a government pulling all levers to unlock the land. We absolutely support the PDA. Now we have the Waraba PDA. We have the Southern Thornlands PDA, which I have declared. We have the Mount Peter PDA, which I have declared today, signed off by Governor in Council yesterday. Also, we have the North Harbour PDA, which I declared, which was signed off by the Governor yesterday. We have PDAs all around the state now. We are talking about thousands and thousands of blocks of land that in a matter of months this Crisafulli government has unlocked through the declarations of PDAs that the former Labor government could not do in 10 years in office.

**Mr JAMES:** With reference to the Southern Thornlands Priority Development Area, can the Deputy Premier please update the committee on the progress of the PDA including how supporting infrastructure is being delivered alongside new housing?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** This is a PDA that I also declared that had Governor in Council support and also support from the member for Redlands, my assistant minister. Again, there was a senior Labor member, the former member for Redlands, who could not get the deal done, who could not get the former Labor minister to actually make the decision. I think that is what industry wants government to do: they want ministers to make decisions. Then they can see those decisions and they invest. Companies are not going to invest in Queensland if ministers leave things on their desk to gather dust. There is no response from ministers. I think in nine months we have shown to the industry and to people wanting to build homes in Queensland that this is a government that will act to secure our housing foundations for many Queenslanders, particularly young people.

As the Premier said during his estimates proceedings, we have abolished two taxes—one of which was the stamp duty for first home owners buying or building their first home in Queensland. Add to that the abolition of Labor's housing tax and add the declarations of the PDAs that we have done as a government, including the Southern Thornlands PDA—and I declared that within six months of being minister. It had sat on the Labor government's desk for years. This government got it done within six months. Not only did we get it done within six months; it is going to provide up to 8,000 homes. We will get \$4 million from EDQ to secure Boundary Road and Springacre Road—the main road which is in the early release area. If memory serves me correctly, the early release was some 200 blocks of land.

I went down there with the member for Redlands, and I again congratulate her on her advocacy. If the people had not voted for Rebecca Young as the LNP member, they would have been stuck with the former member, who would not have been able to get this approved and across the line. It is only because the people booted out incompetent Labor members and a bad Labor government in October that we are now able to show industry and Queenslanders that we do believe in securing your housing foundations, whether it is in Far North Queensland—for the members for Cook and Mulgrave—or in Moggill, Leader of the House, or in Lockyer. No matter where you are in Queensland, this government's priority is housing supply and using every lever available to unlock housing supply, and we are not afraid to do it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We will now go back to non-government questions. Member for Woodridge?

**Mr DICK:** Deputy Premier, on 4 June last year the Premier, as then opposition leader, promised the people of Queensland that he would honour each and every one of the four-year forward estimate budget and funding commitments of the then Labor government. Deputy Premier, did the Premier direct you to cut funding to the Queensland Battery Industry Strategy and the Australian Battery Industry Industrialisation Centre, or did you propose to the Premier that the funding for the strategy and the centre be cut, consequently breaking the Premier's promise to the people of Queensland.

**Mr McDONALD:** Mr Speaker, point of order: there are clear imputations in the question.

**Dr ROWAN:** Mr Speaker, point of order: it is a double-barrelled question. There are two parts to it. I would say to you, Mr Speaker, that consideration should be given to the question as asked being rephrased.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am going to allow the question. Deputy Premier, I am sure you are capable of answering.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I was not going to interrupt the honourable members on the government side, but I am very happy to answer this question because I need to put some facts on the table that the member for Woodridge is neglecting to tell this honourable committee. I refer the honourable member for Woodridge to page 21. The member for Woodridge would have everyone believe that the Queensland Battery Industry Strategy was locked and loaded and there was this giant battery storage facility that had been built, commenced or constructed. It was not; it was a vacant block of land. On page 21 of his own strategy it says—

Subject to the outcomes of the business case, the Queensland Government will match the Australian Government's investment of up to \$100 million in the ABIC.

There the member for Woodridge has confirmed that the business case was not completed. The former government's documents show that they were not locked in because it was subject to the federal government's commitment.

Here is the thing for the member for Woodridge: the federal government never committed to it and never gave a dollar for it. There was uncertainty around the federal government's support for this project. That is why this government has reprioritised the funding into three priorities: defence, biomedicine and biofuel. It is the department of state development that has refocused those strategic industries, as I said, as well as broader regional opportunities to support the government's economic

priorities in traditional and emerging industries. This aligns with my charter letter commitments, given to me by the honourable the Premier. The Crisafulli government's new \$180.55 million Sovereign Industry Development Fund, announced in the budget, commences today. How exciting that grants are open now. People can go—

**Mr DICK:** Mr Speaker, point of order: relevance. The question related to who directed the funds for the centre to be cut.

**Mr McDONALD:** Mr Speaker, point or order.

**Mr DICK:** He is now talking about a sovereign industry fund that I have not asked a question about. I am happy to accept his answer if I can proceed to my next question, please.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Lockyer, what is your point of order?

**Mr McDONALD:** The Deputy Premier is being absolutely directly relevant to the question and is giving a fulsome answer.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will allow the question. It was fairly broad. Deputy Premier, if you can round out your answer—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The member for Woodridge talks about direction. I directed the department to advise me whether this thing was built by the former Labor government and they said that, no, it had not been. I asked if the business case had been finished. No, it had not been. I asked if the federal government's \$100 million had come into the bank. No, it had not. There was so much uncertainty about this battery strategy the former government put in place. Today the member for Woodridge would have everyone believe that it was locked and loaded and happening. It was not. It was like the Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro scheme, a \$37 billion program that was over budget—

**Mr DICK:** Mr Speaker, point of order: relevance. I did not ask about pumped hydro. I asked about this scheme.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I wish you did.

**Mr DICK:** I take the question as answered, if I can proceed, please.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No, I have not finished.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I think you have completed your answer. We will move on.

**Mr DICK:** I look forward to the engineering report that is yet to be completed and will be received in September.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** So you have confirmed he had not finished it.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, in relation to the answer from Mr Tierney in relation to the report that is yet to be received by the government to allow construction to commence, will you commit to publicly releasing that engineering and design report?

**Mr Ferris:** No.

**Mr DICK:** With respect to my next question, I refer to answers from the Deputy Premier about the appointment of the acting CEO of Economic Development Queensland. Could I ask Mr Simmonds to come to the table, please. My question is to the acting CEO of EDQ. Mr Simmonds, further to the commentary by the Deputy Premier in relation to your appointment and his answer, prior to your appointment as the acting CEO of Economic Development Queensland did you express your interest in taking on that position to anyone in the Queensland government, including Economic Development Queensland, and, if so, to whom and when?

**Mr Simmonds:** Would you mind repeating your question? I was just gathering my notes.

**Mr DICK:** Prior to your appointment, did you express your interest in taking on that position to anyone in the Queensland government, including Economic Development Queensland, and, if so, to whom and when?

**Mr Simmonds:** As you are aware, prior to my appointment as acting CEO of Economic Development Queensland I undertook a number of roles in and around development and economic growth. That includes my time in Brisbane City Council as city treasurer and as—

**Mr DICK:** Mr Speaker, point of order: relevance. It was a simple question: did Mr Simmonds express interest in taking on that role to anyone in the Queensland government? That was the question.

**Dr ROWAN:** Mr Speaker, point of order: the individual was answering the question as asked and was providing context in relation to the question as asked, and I think he should be permitted to provide that answer.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Mr Simmonds, you heard the question clearly. If you could respond—

**Mr Simmonds:** There was my time in Brisbane City Council, then working in the industry and with local government and also my role on the South Bank board, which I was appointed to under the member for McConnel in the previous government. As part of that work I was undertaking and as part of South Bank, I certainly saw the opportunity for Economic Development Queensland to be focused on delivering—

**Mr DICK:** Mr Speaker, point of order: relevance, 118. I have not asked for the background of Mr Simmonds. We are aware of his background as an active member of the LNP, including his time in public office. The question was whether he approached anyone—

**Dr ROWAN:** Mr Speaker, point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am going to accept the point of order before it started to stray. The question was pretty clear, Mr Simmonds. I would ask you to round out your answer to the question as asked.

**Mr Simmonds:** Being in the industry, I saw the opportunities of Economic Development Queensland and certainly did express my interest in the role.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Simmonds, to whom did you express your interest in that role?

**Mr Simmonds:** I would have expressed my interest in that role to the Deputy Premier's office.

**Mr DICK:** To whom did you speak in the Deputy Premier's office and when?

**Mr Simmonds:** I do not recall exactly when but, as I said, in my role on the South Bank board and within the industry I attended similar functions and events and had cause to speak to the Deputy Premier's office regularly in those roles, and it would have been in one of those conversations.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Simmonds, do you recall if that conversation was with someone in the Deputy Premier's office before or after Debbie McNamara was terminated as the CEO of Economic Development Queensland?

**Mr Simmonds:** No, I do not recall.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you. Who did you speak to in the Deputy Premier's office? Was it the Deputy Premier's chief of staff, Mr Ruhle?

**Mr Simmonds:** Yes, I suspect it was most likely the chief of staff of the Deputy Premier.

**Mr DICK:** I appreciate that. Director-General, on 23 May this year, a board spokesperson told the *Australian* newspaper that a national executive recruitment process would be launched for a permanent CEO. Has that process commenced?

**Ms Sosso:** Could you repeat the question? I am sorry, I did not hear it fully.

**Mr DICK:** On 23 May this year, a board spokesperson told the *Australian* newspaper that a national executive recruitment process would be launched for a permanent CEO. Has that process commenced?

**Mr Sosso:** To the best of my knowledge the answer is no.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you. You are a board member of Economic Development Queensland, Mr Sosso. It has been over three months since the position was vacated. Why has this search not commenced?

**Mr Sosso:** Perhaps I might preface the answer to that question by turning back to the initial appointment of Mr Simmonds as the interim CEO, and then I will advance that, if that is appropriate?

**Mr DICK:** No, it is a simple question. If you could just say why it has not commenced when a board spokesperson had advised the *Australian* that it had.

**Mr Sosso:** Perhaps I might answer in my own way.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Yes.

**Mr Sosso:** First, with respect to Mr Simmonds' appointment, Mr O'Farrell, the chairman of the board, recommended to the board that Mr Simmonds be appointed as an interim CEO. He said to the board that he had spoken to Mr Simmonds and was satisfied that his skill set and personality would be advantageous to the future success of Economic Development Queensland. He pointed out that the curriculum vitae of Mr Simmonds highlighted significant strengths relevant to the requirements of his role, including strong network and stakeholder management, property and development planning, and system transformation. The board unanimously accepted that Mr Simmonds would be an appropriate person to be appointed interim CEO.

With respect to the question asked as to the process for filling the position on a permanent basis, I can disclose, without breaching any confidences, the board's view of Mr Simmonds. Without breaching any confidences, this is the board's position on Mr Simmonds as of now. We are of the view that Mr Simmonds has provided clear strategic direction to Economic Development Queensland. He has demonstrated effective, inclusive leadership. He has maintained strong operational oversight. He has embedded strong internal and external communication channels. His strong performance and stability has brought to the organisation enormous benefits. The board is of the opinion that, if Mr Simmonds continues in the way that he is performing—which has been above average and exemplary—he may be appointed without any further advertisement. That is the extent to which the board is supportive of Mr Simmonds.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, when the board spokesperson told the *Australian* on 23 May that a national executive recruitment process would be launched, that is not correct, is it?

**Mr Sosso:** No—

**Dr ROWAN:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: I am concerned in relation to the legal and statutory obligations with respect to the director-general in performing his functions within the remit of the board. Some of these discussions and the line of questioning may compromise the director-general with respect to those matters. I just ask you to consider that with respect to the line of questioning.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Moggill. I am sure the director-general is conscious of what is confidential and what is not so we will trust him to abide by that. Director-General, you have the call.

**Mr Sosso:** Can I say to the honourable member for Woodridge—I am sorry, in fairness, before I answer the question, could you please reword it so I can give you an entirely accurate answer?

**Mr DICK:** I will ask you a question, Director-General. There is no intention of following a recruitment process for the permanent appointment of the CEO of Economic Development Queensland, is there?

**Mr Sosso:** I thought your question was with respect to the statement in May. Is this a separate question?

**Mr DICK:** I have asked you a question. I have moved on, Director-General.

**Mr Sosso:** I am sorry. The board has not made a final decision. All I am indicating to you is that the board is very satisfied with the performance of Mr Simmonds. He has performed well and above what we expected of him. The board is delighted with his performance and a decision will be based and predicated on the level of support we have for him, which at the moment is unanimously supportive.

**Mr DICK:** When will that permanent position be filled, Director-General?

**Mr Sosso:** I cannot say with absolute certitude, but in the coming months

**Mr DICK:** In his evidence before the committee, the director-general said that Mr O'Farrell, the chair of the board, had spoken to him about your appointment. I asked you twice, Mr Simmonds—and my question is to you—whether you had spoken to anyone in Economic Development Queensland. Do you recall speaking to Mr O'Farrell and expressing interest in the position of acting chief executive?

**Mr Simmonds:** Yes, following on from your previous question in terms of expressing interest, I certainly did express interest in the opportunities for EDQ. I was told that that was a matter for the independent board of Economic Development Queensland. Any decisions along those lines were for the board that was appointed when EDQ left the department on 1 July last year under the previous government. I was told that, if I wished to express any interests or if there was a matter to be raised in that regard, it would be with the board chairman and the independent board of EDQ.

**Mr DICK:** I appreciate that, and that is the conversation you had with the Deputy Premier's chief of staff, Mr Ruhle; correct?

**Mr Simmonds:** Yes. Again, I do not recall exactly when those conversations occurred because there was reason to speak reasonably regularly, but that was the advice I received at the time.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, I appreciate that answer. Did you speak to the Deputy Premier about filling that role of acting chief executive officer?

**Mr Simmonds:** Not that I recall.

**Mr DICK:** I table this document which is a party political advertisement authorised during Mr Simmonds' tenure as the acting CEO of Economic Development Queensland. My question is to Mr Simmonds in relation to this advertisement. Following your commencement as the acting CEO,

Australians for Prosperity, a coal industry funded body, continued to run advertisements of a political nature authorised by you that attacked the Albanese federal Labor government. Is it correct that those advertisements ran after your appointment as acting CEO?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Have you had time to look at that document, Mr Simmonds?

**Mr Simmonds:** I have.

**Mr SPEAKER:** You have the call.

**Mr McDONALD:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: I wonder if the member can state how this question actually relates to the budget.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Woodridge, could you give us a bit of clarity on that, please?

**Mr DICK:** A simple examination of the SDS reveals that the revenue of the organisation that Mr Simmonds is heading up is expected to almost double this year to more than \$400 million. It has got more than a billion dollars in assets. The governance around this money that is held and managed by Economic Development Queensland is absolutely critical. The Deputy Premier has already answered questions on governance and the appointment of the CEO. I think it is perfectly relevant to the work of the committee.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I accept that. Mr Simmonds, you have the call.

**Mr Simmonds:** Thank you. Like the member, I certainly agree that the work that EDQ is going to do is incredibly important, particularly delivering homes for Queenslanders. We have seen that roll out with the record number of approvals in the last financial years—in fact, a record quarter of approvals in the last three months.

In terms of the document that the member has very kindly tabled, I note that it relates to my previous employment before I took up the role of Acting CEO of Economic Development Queensland. Like anybody changing a role, they resign their previous employment and they take up their new employment. I can confirm that I duly resigned my previous employment prior to being appointed to the role of Acting Chief Executive Officer of Economic Development Queensland.

**Mr DICK:** I want to be fair to you, Mr Simmonds. I want to put to you some words that the Premier put on the record yesterday in his estimates hearing. He said—

I do not believe that the Public Service should be led by someone who is partisan. I do not believe that the pathway to become the highest ranked director-general in the state should be through a political movement.

I want to put this to you, Mr Simmonds: prior to your appointment as Acting CEO, you were a member of, in the Premier's words, a partisan political movement, serving for three years as a Liberal National Party member of the Australian House of Representatives and nine years as a Liberal National Party councillor in the Brisbane City Council. That is correct; that is your past?

**Mr Simmonds:** I appreciate the question from the member, allowing me to talk about my background as to why I might be suited for the role of Acting Chief Executive Officer of Economic Development Queensland. First of all, I would like to say in answer to the member's question that I certainly do agree with the comments made by the Premier. My previous experience is a matter of public record, and that includes my previous experience as city treasurer for four years, working in and around local government for the better part of 12 years, spending a number of years chairing the Brisbane City Council planning and development department, and then, of course, my roles within the industry, working with the development industry, working with key stakeholders such as PCA and UDIA, and then also being appointed to the South Bank Corporation board as a board member by the member for McConnel which I greatly appreciate. My record and my past experience, when it comes to matters of development, and economic development in particular, are certainly well canvassed, and I appreciate the member taking the time to note them.

**Mr McDONALD:** Deputy Premier, can you update the committee on the new strategic position of the Crisafulli government in the department of state development, including how the defence industry and associated businesses in my electorate, such as those in Helidon, can benefit, and is the Deputy Premier aware of any alternative approaches?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** As indicated earlier, the LNP Crisafulli government is refocusing the department of state development towards three new strategic and emerging industry priorities: defence, biofuels and biomed. I make the point to the member that the biggest difference between our strategy and the former Labor government's is that ours is in the budget, locked in, and we are delivering it as of today. Their battery strategy was still subject to a business case, had not received federal government funding and was a basket case. Ours is real, in the budget, for the forwards—I make that point firstly.

I know that in the member's electorate of Lockyer there is a testing facility in Helidon, as he indicated, helping businesses further develop defence and associated capabilities. The member will be pleased to know that I have comprehensively been consulting and visiting industry, such as holding a defence round table in early July, to better understand the defence strategic landscape, global supply chain opportunities and challenges, and how Queensland and his community can capitalise on increased investment. Our government has key election commitments around these new priority areas, including identifying and, where appropriate, activating investment opportunities in Queensland for the defence industry, to actively look at ways the renewable fuel sector, such as biofuels, can expand.

These new priority industries are in stark contrast to the former government's scattergun and uncoordinated approach to industry development with 11 different priority areas, including non-viable industries such as hydrogen. Hydrogen is one industry Labor was obsessed with, just like their failed battery industry obsession. Given the uncertainty around the 2022 federal government's commitment to establish a \$100 million battery centre in Queensland, the Queensland government decided not to progress the Queensland Battery Industry Strategy or Australian Battery Industrialisation Centre at this time.

This government is focused on facilitating industry development by building sovereign capability, leaning on the state's strengths and growing our regions. Our approach is about unlocking new industry development and jobs, informed by our round tables and industry feedback, to do what is in the best interests of Queensland and Queenslanders.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Can the Deputy Premier detail how the newly announced Sovereign Industry Development Fund will support more regional jobs by unlocking new biofuel industries, particularly those related to the sugarcane industry in my electorate of Cook?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I love the fact that we have members now advocating so strongly for their tech sector, whether it is defence rockets in Lockyer, as we know, or in the member's wonderful electorate of Cook for the people of Far North Queensland and how sugar cane can be converted into biofuel. The LNP government is focusing the department of state development towards these new strategic and emerging industries. The member will be pleased to know that, as I said earlier, I have been thoroughly consulting with stakeholders. Not only did I do the defence round table; we have done a biofuels industry round table, held in May, on what settings and support industry needs in Queensland. This government wants towns like Mareeba and surrounds in the member's electorate to thrive through our focus on all of Queensland, particularly regional Queensland, which was neglected by the previous Labor government for 10 years.

The new \$180.6 million Sovereign Industry Development Fund, announced in the recent 2025-26 Crisafulli government budget, will focus on helping to accelerate the growth of these industries—defence, biomedical and biofuels and related industries. Focusing the fund on these industries means we are able to build local sovereign capability, play to our competitive strengths and continue to grow and diversify our regional economies. We have hit the ground running.

Following the budget announcement the fund has been open to general inquiries, with industry invited to express interest in developing significant catalytic new projects. A lot of initial interest has already been registered and the Crisafulli government is ready for take-off of this new fund. As I indicated earlier, I am pleased to announce that applications are now open for the Sovereign Industry Development Fund. When we announced the fund in the budget, we had expressions of interest out and that process has been taking place, but now we have the guidelines in place—we have announced those; they have released them on the website—and people and businesses can now apply for some of that \$180.6 million Sovereign Industry Development Fund.

I guarantee this, member: it is a fund that will be spent, that will be delivered—not like the former government's battery industrialisation process that had no money locked in. It did not have the federal government funding locked in, and the federal government were weighing up whether they were even going to fund the \$100 million. There was so much uncertainty around their programs. We see the former deputy premier today coming in here and trying to repair his bad legacy of incompetence whereby he could not get these projects off the ground. Here we are, nine months down the track, and we have the grant process in place. People can apply in your electorate today, particularly, as you indicated, in the biofuel space.

I recently met with the Norwegian ambassador and the Norwegian Chief of Defence. They are actually using biofuels processed from oil from fish and chip shops in the United Kingdom to power their F-35 fighter jets. There is an amazing opportunity, but we have to grasp it around all of Queensland and use whatever process necessary. That is why I would be asking everyone in your electorate to get

on board, go onto the department's website and look at this Sovereign Industry Development Fund. It will play to Queensland's strengths and it is a call to action for industry to partner with the new Crisafulli government to deliver for Queensland.

We are calling on the industry to bring forward the bold ideas that will secure a place in the global market. If the Norwegian defence force can buy old fish and chip oil from their fish and chip shops to power their F-35 fighter jets, I reckon there is great opportunity to maximise what Queensland has, including in the sugarcane industry. I am very excited by the member's question and I am excited about the projects this funding will secure for Queensland's future.

**Mr JAMES:** With reference to the facilitation of investment opportunities for Queensland, can the Deputy Premier update the committee on the Crisafulli government's work to attract private sector investment, and is the Deputy Premier aware of spending from former governments that did not work?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You bet I am aware of the former government's expenditure—or lack of expenditure, or waste of money—but we will get to that in a short moment. The Crisafulli government is focusing the department of state development towards three new industries, as I said—defence, biofuels and biomedical. At the election we promised that we would be a government that would do what we said we would do—and not what we said we would not do. Our government are consulting, meeting and visiting industry to let them know Queensland is open for business. These new priority industries are in stark contrast to the former Labor government's scattergun and uncoordinated approach to industry development, as I indicated earlier, with 11 different priority areas including non-viable industries such as hydrogen.

Even the former Labor Premier, Annastacia Palaszczuk, recently admitted hydrogen does not stack up and is too hard. This was one industry Labor was obsessed with. I have to say: I think the former treasurer was obsessed with this hydrogen industry, just as he was obsessed with pumped hydro schemes and refused to detail the cost. Is it not interesting, member, that two days into the Crisafulli government we were able to secure from the departments the cost of the Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro scheme at \$37 billion but the former Labor government could not reveal it or did not know how to get the figure. We got the \$37 billion figure within two days and now we know why—they did not want to release it because perhaps they would have lost even more seats in Queensland in the October election because of their mishandling of Queensland taxpayers' funds.

You now have the former Labor premier Palaszczuk out there admitting that hydrogen does not stack up, it is too hard. As I said, the former government was obsessed with it. The former premier Palaszczuk and opposition leader Miles were behind these pipe dreams. At least one of them can admit they got it wrong. I wonder if the former treasurer could admit today that he and his government got it wrong. Labor's entire energy and jobs con was based on delivering a hydrogen industry and a hydro hoax. The Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro scheme which blew out to almost \$37 billion further illustrates Labor was propping up unviable projects and industries to make them feel good and to feed their glossy brochures and their Energy and Jobs Plan. We are a government that respects Queensland taxpayers' money. We are a government that is focused on the right priorities and delivering the fresh start Queenslanders overwhelmingly voted for in October 2024.

**Mr McDONALD:** Can the Deputy Premier advise of the progress of the Bribie Island erosion and breakthrough review and the importance of the immediate works program in responding to community concerns?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I thank the honourable member for Lockyer for the question. It is an important question. I am a local Sunshine Coast resident. I have lived on the coast most of my life. I am 43 years old, and I have been living on the Sunshine Coast for over 35 years, so I have swum at the passage—before I developed a fear of sharks and have not been in the ocean or Pumicestone Passage for 30 years but I fish on the passage with my dad in the tinny time and again. I have three kids that now fish, swim and ski on the passage and it is in a real mess at the moment. Following Cyclone Seth there was a breakthrough from the southern end that used to have the bar that came across the northern end of Bribie Island—the bar coming into Bulcock Beach—and Cyclone Seth caused it to open. It was a very small opening at the start. That has progressively over the years gotten bigger and bigger and it is now about two kilometres wide. That is the new entry; the bar to the ocean from Pumicestone Passage. It is problematic because it gets rough there now. We have people lose tinnies and boats there, the coastguard lost an asset there not long ago and the northern area of Pumicestone Passage is inaccessible now—so much so that the coastguard in Caloundra cannot launch their boats from their marine rescue centre. They now have to go down to Pelican Waters and launch their boats from there because they cannot access Pumicestone Passage.

We have a real issue and that is why we had to take action. Upon winning government, we immediately commenced a review after Cyclone Alfred. We wanted to find out what were some immediate works we could do to prevent further openings of the passage, particularly where openings two and three had come through. At high tide, Golden Beach residents at the southern end now have water going over the roads. It is quite problematic and it will only get worse, so we have to take action.

The reason we have to take action—the former Labor government knew about this since Cyclone Seth. When the first breakthrough happened, they did not take any action to prevent further breakthroughs and it has led to what it is now. We have to spend over \$20 million—which is in the Crisafulli government's budget—to repair and maintain the breakthroughs in Pumicestone Passage. I am pleased to announce today, honourable member, that Sunshine Coast-based firm Hall Contracting Pty Ltd and RN Dredging Pty Ltd—the Australian subsidiary of global Danish dredger Nielsen A/S—are the preferred tenderers to partner with the state to deliver the urgent works in conjunction with the Coordinator-General.

I want to thank the Coordinator-General and his office for the work that they have done. I want to thank them for getting the procurement done as soon as humanly as possible to get the contracts issued for these two providers because they have a lot of work to do. That is why we made sure there was \$20 million in the budget. The Coordinator-General will manage the rollout of the works after it was approved by the Governor in Council yesterday to restore Bribie Island's northern tip and protect the Pumicestone Passage foreshore. This includes a focus on closing the southern breakthroughs, buffering the island and dredging a temporary channel link to the northern passage.

The Labor Party member had a former member there, Jason Hunt. He did lots of videos next to Bribie Island but there was never any outcomes, never any actions, never any money—not a dollar in the Labor government's budget to fix the issues of the breakthrough. Along comes Kendall Morton, the member for Caloundra, an absolute pocket rocket for the people of the Sunshine Coast in terms of her advocacy. We absolutely looked at what she was putting forward to us and the community. The Take Action for Pumicestone Passage and the community group that Jen Kettleton-Butler runs there have been doing amazing work. I think this gives some reassurance to the residents and businesses down there that the Crisafulli government is taking this issue seriously.

We have given contracts out today to ensure the two breakthroughs will be closed and there will be a channel broken through. The reviewer, RPS consulting and coastal management at the Gold Coast, will still have to work out what we do with the bigger breakthrough. These are temporary emergency solutions that we have to do immediately because the Pumicestone Passage is in a bit of a mess. I would say to the honourable member: what we are going to do in Caloundra in the Pumicestone Passage is dredge, baby dredge!

**Mr SPEAKER:** I understand the member for Maiwar has a question.

**Mr BERKMAN:** I had a question for the Deputy Premier in relation to the Gabba arena which the government has claimed will be funded by the private sector and built by 2032. Deputy Premier I am keen to know: will you rule out privatising public land at this site either by selling or by way of long-term leases issued to convince private companies to build the new stadium?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order, Mr Speaker. The arena and the games is in the next section of infrastructure; not in the state development section.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Okay.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Would you like to rephrase your question?

**Mr BERKMAN:** I will reframe a different question around the Woolloongabba PDA redevelopment scheme. That development scheme still assumes that the Gabba will remain and it still includes the scrapped Woolloongabba metro station, so can you advise when it is expected that that PDA will be revised and whether the existing requirement for 20 per cent high-quality social or affordable housing will remain?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Premier, you have three minutes.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We are reviewing the Woolloongabba PDA at the moment. It is another PDA that was declared by the Labor Party and then not much action ever happened on it so we have to sort out another mess left to us by the Labor Party. We are getting down to business on that. It will be a PDA that will take into consideration the government's priorities in the future, including what it looks like in terms of the Gabba.

I will talk more in the infrastructure section about 2032 and what happens to the Gabba but, of course, there is a PDA there at the moment. We will be consulting with industry. The department are already looking at what possible changes are necessary to unlock that. I can assure the honourable member that the East Brisbane State School is safe and secure. We have announced that already. The member would know that under the former Labor government's plan, one day the school was being demolished, the next it was not—then it was going to be. There was a lot of concern among the P&C and residents but we will save East Brisbane State School. We have committed to that and I have said that publicly.

In terms of the PDA, we will be reviewing it. It will not only be changed in line with the government's priorities under our 2032 Delivery Plan but also the industry feedback we are receiving. We are in a market process at the moment, a generalised market process seeking views of the private sector in terms of what can be done at not only the Goprint site but the Gabba site after the Gabba comes down after 2032.

I think it is an exciting opportunity for the community to be involved, to reimagine what Woolloongabba looks like at not only South Bank but also the Visy site, which we are going to fix as well. We were left a terrible mess by the Labor government at the Visy site. The Crisafulli government will fix that as well. I think that will be a South Bank 2.0. On top of that you have the Woolloongabba PDA, which we will amend. It may be that we repeal that PDA and put in a new PDA. That will depend on the market process in terms of what happens with the Gabba and the arena site.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you, Deputy Premier. We have now reached the end—

**Mr BERKMAN:** Deputy Premier, can you say anything about the social and affordable housing component?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Maiwar, the time for this section has expired. We have now reached the end of the time allocated for the consideration of the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of state development. Thank you, Deputy Premier, officials and departmental officers. The committee will now examine the estimates for the portfolio area of infrastructure. Deputy Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement regarding the infrastructure portfolio area of no more than five minutes.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** At the start, pursuant to standing orders 262 and 263, may I declare a conflict of interest with respect to the Wave stage 2, which is in the Crisafulli government's budget. It is a declaration that I have made on a number of occasions both in the House and publicly and in many speeches. For the benefit of estimates, if I am asked those particular questions I want to again reaffirm that conflict pursuant to standing orders 262 and 263.

Infrastructure is exciting in Queensland and, as I said, Queensland is absolutely open for business. The excitement from the infrastructure industry that they now have a government that is just getting on with the job and delivering infrastructure is palpable. I have been to functions—I was at the Consolidated Properties and Hutchies function the other night where there were 900 people in the room—and the excitement from industry now that they have a government that is getting on with the job of delivering infrastructure is real and it is exciting.

The first Crisafulli government budget locks in \$116.8 billion in the capital pipeline: roads, hospitals, schools—essential infrastructure. It is no secret that we inherited a mess from the former Labor government: unfunded projects, lots of announcements with no money in the budget for them, and misleading statements about delivery and timeline for delivery, particularly in the hospital space and roads space. However, we have committed to sort it out. We have committed to deliver the infrastructure. Whether it is the capital pipeline of hospitals, roads and rail or the Olympic and Paralympic Games, we will invest the \$116.8 billion. I say that over \$116 billion in infrastructure is the biggest infrastructure investment in Queensland's history and it is across all of Queensland.

We also know that we have a housing crisis in Queensland caused by the Labor Party over 10 years. In just nine months the Crisafulli government has unlocked more than 77,000 new homes through initiatives designed to fast-track housing. Our budget locks in a \$2 billion Residential Activation Fund. It was so popular with local governments that we increased the first round from \$500 million to \$1 billion, and at least 50 per cent of that has to be spent outside of South-East Queensland. More than 47,000 homes will be unlocked with the 34 projects I have announced to date. That is just to date; of the 34 projects we have announced, 47,000 homes will be unlocked.

We talk about the Brisbane Arena. I note that yesterday the opposition leader was asking questions of the Auditor-General about financial considerations. One must laugh listening to the opposition leader ask about financial considerations considering he was the minister—the opposition

leader, Mr Miles—who was responsible for the Wellcamp quarantine facility, AKA 'Wastecamp', and he was also responsible for QSAC and \$2.25 billion wasted on temporary Olympic and Paralympic Games facilities, and we think the Labor Party still support and endorse the QSAC proposal.

We are actually getting on with the job, with the private sector, to deliver a world-class arena at the Goprint site and also at the Gabba site. I can announce that we have had over 280 organisations register an interest in the arena to unlock housing, public space and a world-class arena. As we march on to 2032, we said we would sort the mess out; we said we would deliver an Olympic and Paralympic Games delivery plan; we said we would put in legacy for all of Queensland including regional Queensland; and we said we would set up a board, which is the GIICA independent delivery authority. We have done just that. We have done a deal with the federal government to secure the \$7.1 billion and it is locked in.

We have expressions of interest out now for an integrated master plan for the new Victoria Park precinct. We have appointed a CEO, Simon Crooks, to the GIICA authority. They have four venues out to procurement—Sunshine Coast stadium, Barlow Park, and Moreton and Logan indoor centres. Forty-eight inquiries have already been logged with GIICA for those four facilities. We have introduced laws to parliament which have been passed to get on with the job. We did the 100-day review, we promised we would have a plan and now we are just getting on and delivering it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will go to the opposition for the first question. I will go to the member for Woodridge.

**Mr DICK:** My first question is to the acting chief executive officer of the Games Independent Infrastructure Coordination Authority. Mr Elliott, the GIICA 100-day games review identified a number of issues with the site for the new National Aquatic Centre, which will incorporate the existing Centenary pool. The games review said the site had insufficient flat, accessible space to meet the games' overlay requirements. Mr Elliott, has the required footprint for the National Aquatic Centre been mapped by your organisation?

**Mr Elliott:** On 25 March the Queensland government released the 2032 Delivery Plan in response to the 86 recommendations made by GIICA. The 2032 Delivery Plan announced that a national aquatic centre is to be developed at the site of the existing Centenary pool in Spring Hill. The centre is to be designed as a national hub for Australia's four peak aquatic sports. The centre will feature a main and a secondary stadium, each with large indoor pools to support elite training and competition. The venue will expand to a capacity of more than 25,000 for the games using temporary seating.

The National Aquatic Centre is planned to host the majority of aquatic sports in 2032, supported by the Brisbane Aquatic Centre at Chandler. Beyond the games, the centre will provide a world-class legacy facility with a permanent capacity of 8,000 seats delivering long-term benefits for the aquatic sports community. GIICA is currently preparing governance project and procurement documentation for the project. We will undertake further design activities and prepare a project validation report for consideration and investment approval by the Queensland and the Australian governments. The centre will be delivered as part of the \$7.1 billion games budget.

In terms of your direct question, as we enter the project validation stage and the detailed design stage we will be working closely with Brisbane 2032 from an overlay perspective and also with end users from a legacy perspective, which is very important. We will also be tying into the work that the department is leading, which is also important in terms of the precinct planning to resolve the issues you have raised.

**Mr DICK:** When is the project validation report anticipated to be received—after completion, I should say?

**Mr Elliott:** We will be moving forward quickly into the engagement of suitable expertise to assist with the project validation report, design expertise in particular, and engaging with the stakeholders that I mentioned earlier. It will be completed in 2026 and ready for government decision-making.

**Mr DICK:** Is that the beginning of 2026, the middle of 2026 or the end of 2026? Do you have visibility on that yet?

**Mr Elliott:** I do not have a definitive date that I can give you right now.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Elliott, the games review said the topographical challenges of the site for the National Aquatic Centre would necessitate substantial earthworks. This may follow on from your previous answer. Has GIICA identified the scale of earthworks required and, if so, the nature of the earthworks that will be required, or will that be done as part of the project validation report?

**Mr Elliott:** Indeed it will. We are working through the site investigations on the Victoria Park precinct in total and we will be undertaking geotech analysis and other environmental, cultural heritage and heritage analysis around the site next to the Centenary Pool. We will also be working with the design team and until we work through those processes we will not fully understand what is required in terms of earthworks.

**Mr DICK:** The project validation report will also canvass the other issues raised by the authority in its 100-day review—the risk of contamination by surface asbestos and also the potential need to relocate a 33-kilovolt transmission line. Those will be incorporated in that project validation report?

**Mr Elliott:** These are typical things that we would consider in the project validating reporting process regardless of the venue.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Elliott, the *Courier-Mail* reported on 23 June that the chair of GICA had revealed that the National Aquatic Centre would cost \$1.2 billion. Mr Elliott, was this \$1.2 billion figure provided to the chair by the staff of the authority?

**Mr Elliott:** We are working through the process of design and project validation, as I have mentioned. We will firm up the cost estimate through those processes and at this stage it would be too early to comment in terms of what the likely costs will be.

**Mr DICK:** So just to clarify your evidence to the committee, Mr Elliott, the authority and its staff did not provide the \$1.2 billion figure to the chair which was then reported publicly?

**Mr Elliott:** We worked through cost estimates as part of the 100-day review in terms of what the range of venues would cost, and that was important because the terms of reference did require us to consider deliverability as well as affordability within the funding envelope. The estimates we have provided are very preliminary in nature. That number in particular is the aggregate across a number of venues.

**Mr DICK:** Sorry, but I did not get the end of your answer.

**Mr Elliott:** That number in particular is an aggregate across a number of venues.

**Mr DICK:** The \$1.2 billion is an aggregate cost across a number of venues?

**Mr Elliott:** Yes.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you. Mr Elliott, the aggregate cost encompasses what venues, please, for that \$1.2 billion figure?

**Mr Elliott:** It encompasses work required at the National Aquatic Centre but also work required in the Chandler precinct.

**Mr DICK:** So to be clear, Mr Elliott—and I appreciate your directness with the committee—Queenslanders still really do not know what the cost of the National Aquatic Centre is at this time?

**Mr Elliott:** We are at the early stages of the project validation reporting process. We have a lot to do around understanding requirements and designs for a legacy facility that will also facilitate the conduct of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. We will work with specialist advisers in terms of the design teams, the quantity surveyors, the engineers and others. It is way too early to be quoting numbers at this stage, and I really caution that. We have worked through cost estimates across the program based on affordability as part of the 100-day review. We now need to do a lot more detailed analysis.

**Mr DICK:** Just to clarify that, you said in your evidence that, as part of the 100-day review, you did cost estimates for the venues for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Does that encompass cost estimates for all of the venues, Mr Elliott?

**Mr Elliott:** Yes. We had to work through affordability under the terms of reference. As part of the work to date, I would note that five venues have investment approval—the other 12 do not—and there are 12 venues where we need to work through detailed processes, including costings.

**Mr DICK:** So, Mr Elliott, as part of the 100-day review you talked about estimates; is that across five venues?

**Mr Elliott:** Sorry, but I am confused.

**Mr DICK:** You said estimates had been done as part of the 100-day review for venues and I am just trying to clarify it. How many venues have you done estimates for and it appears only one estimate has been revealed—the \$1.2 billion for Chandler and the National Aquatic Centre?

**Mr Elliott:** No, we worked through preliminary estimates across the program, as we were required to do in the terms of reference.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, but they have not been released publicly, have they, Mr Elliott?

**Mr Elliott:** No, and I think this is a key point. We are early in the program in terms of understanding its design. We are also very conscious that, as we progress planning, we want to maintain a competitive and transparent procurement process, we want to preserve market tension and we want to ensure value for money for Queensland taxpayers. So we do not intend to run a public discourse on cost estimates or budget as we move forward until we get through the procurement stages. We feel it is very important to maintain competitive tension in the market to ensure that we are getting the best quality and the best value for Queensland taxpayers.

**Mr DICK:** No, and I very much appreciate that, except one cost estimate has been revealed publicly by the chair of GIICA and so there is significant public interest in this. What is the aggregate cost of the Victoria Park stadium, please?

**Mr Elliott:** That is disclosed in our 100-day review report—\$3.785—

**Mr DICK:** \$3.68 billion, isn't it?

**Mr Elliott:** Sorry, but bear with me; I want to be completely accurate—\$3.785 billion.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Elliott, thank you. I may have more questions for you. My next question is to the director-general. Director-General, will the games venues be delivered within the \$7.1 billion funding envelope allocated for all games venues?

**Mr Sosso:** The answer to that question has been given by the Deputy Premier on numerous occasions, and that is that the government stands by the figure of \$7.1 billion.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, the GIICA 100-day review says of public-private partnerships—

GIICA acknowledges the Queensland Government advice that any such private sector participation will be treated as government debt. It will therefore not increase the size of the available funding envelope.

Director-General, can you confirm that this remains the case?

**Mr Sosso:** In the development of the 100-day review the issue of PPPs came up and the impact of PPPs on the budgetary situation. The honourable member would be aware of the situation that existed in Western Australia where, as a result of those matters not being followed, revised documentation had to be issued, I think, by the then Western Australian treasurer. So in answer to the honourable member's question, an orthodox approach to budgeting was recommended by GIICA and it is an orthodox approach that is accepted by the Queensland government, and all Queensland governments, I presume, would follow that approach.

**Mr DICK:** Just to clarify your evidence, Director-General, so 'private sector participation will be treated as government debt and it will not increase the size of the available funding envelope' in accordance with the review's recommendations; is that correct? That is my question to you.

**Mr Sosso:** I think what the honourable member is saying is would normal accounting practice be followed, and most probably the answer to that would be absolutely yes.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Speaker, I am not trying to argue with the witness, but that was not my question. That is not what I am trying to say; you said that that was what I was trying to say. My question to you was: do you acknowledge that any private sector participation will be treated as government debt? I think your answer to that was yes, but the report says it will not increase the size of the available funding envelope of \$7.1 billion. I am just seeking an answer if that remains the case.

**Mr Sosso:** I say to the honourable member that I am not an accountant, but I would assume there are a number of PPPs that can be brought into play and, as a general rule, that proposition is the correct proposition.

**Mr DICK:** I will take your answer as that it will not increase the size of the available funding envelope. Director-General, will contributed assets such as land be included in the government's cost to deliver the Gabba indoor arena?

**Mr Sosso:** I will say to the honourable member: as a general proposition the answer would be yes, but it is impossible to say at this stage whether it would be an absolute yes, depending on the nature of the PPP. I mean, there is a mosaic of land tenures at the old Goprint site and, as the honourable member would be aware, there is no one PPP; there is a variety of PPPs. As a general proposition, the answer is yes.

**Mr DICK:** I think Queenslanders have an interest in that, Director-General, particularly in relation to the private sector contribution to the arena and whether any government land will be contributed to that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Is that a question?

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, I table extracts from the *Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta public transport preliminary evaluation*.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Do you have copies?

**Mr DICK:** I do, Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We will get that to the director-general before you ask the question.

**Mr Sosso:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was going to be derailed otherwise.

**Mr DICK:** That document refers to property resumptions. Is it correct that a dedicated light rail corridor to Coolangatta would result in 78 full resumptions to property, 157 partial resumptions to property and 1,032 car parks? Is that correct?

**Mr Sosso:** I will say to the honourable member that I have not had a chance—this is a two-page document—to peruse it. I can say that if light rail is extended from Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta there would be a number of land resumptions. The exact number I cannot say with certitude.

**Mr DICK:** I am wondering if you could take that information away and get your officers to confirm that by the end of the hearing, please. Would you be able to do that?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is your policy. You should know how many homes you were going to knock down.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The question was: are you happy to take that on notice?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** No, we are not taking it on notice.

**Mr DICK:** You are not happy to clarify that? Or will we take it as accepted? Do you take that as accepted? I want to be fair to you, Director-General.

**Dr ROWAN:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: with the additional contributions beyond the question as asked by the member for Woodridge, he is now badgering and bullying witnesses.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Woodridge, I would ask that you ask questions without the commentary. That would be much appreciated. Do you have another question?

**Mr DICK:** On a point of order, I take personal offence that I am badgering witnesses and I ask the honourable member to withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member has taken personal offence and asks that you withdraw.

**Dr ROWAN:** I withdraw.

**Mr DICK:** Witnesses should be given an opportunity to assist the committee. That is all I am asking. Referring again to the *Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta public transport preliminary evaluation*, is it correct that a dedicated bus lane to Coolangatta would result in 78 full resumptions to property, 168 partial resumptions to property and 959 car parks?

**Mr Sosso:** I seek a clarification. Is the honourable member referring to a metro system or an ordinary extension of the existing bus system?

**Mr DICK:** No, I am referring to the *Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta public transport preliminary evaluation* that your department has conducted.

**Mr Sosso:** Could you repeat that?

**Mr DICK:** No, I am referring to the evaluation your department has conducted.

**Mr Sosso:** I say to the honourable member that the department has concluded the public engagement phase of its review and has moved to the second stage. A report has not yet been issued and it would be premature of me to pre-empt the final report.

**Mr DICK:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. I table a copy of a media release in your name dated 21 March.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Could you get one to the Deputy Premier before he answers, please.

**Mr DICK:** I note the media release does not include the number of properties potentially impacted by a dedicated bus lane. Who made the decision not to include those details that the people of the Gold Coast would be interested in? Was it you or was it a member of your staff?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am very happy to answer the question because we are doing, as a government, what the Labor government failed to do—that is, listen to the residents of the southern Gold Coast. On behalf of the people of the southern Gold Coast, I take offence at the line of questioning, because this is the former treasurer and deputy premier of Queensland asking these questions, who rode roughshod over the people of the southern Gold Coast, who said, 'You are having light rail whether you like it or not.' He then comes in here and asks questions about property resumptions that his government was doing whether they proceeded with light rail, a metro system or a bus system. I do not like using Labor figures all the time. The new Crisafulli government is doing what the honourable member did not do when he had the opportunity: we have consulted with residents of the southern Gold Coast.

I want to thank the members for Burleigh and Currumbin for the amazing work they have been doing listening to their community. We took an election commitment to the people of Queensland that we would review independent of TMR. The documents that the honourable member is referring to are, in fact, Transport and Main Roads documents under the former Palaszczuk-Miles-Dick government, not the Crisafulli government. It was the former Palaszczuk-Miles-Dick government that had the plan to knock over homes without telling southern Gold Coast residents and proceed with a light rail without community consultation.

There was a forum that we held with the member for Currumbin and the member for Burleigh. There were about 700 people in the room. I did what the former deputy premier did not do: I attended and I spoke and I listened to the people of the southern Gold Coast. There was a clear indication from the people of the southern Gold Coast that they did not want the light rail extended, which is stage 4. They wanted it independently assessed. We are independently assessing it. We are going through the process now. We are consulting the community and I am very happy with the process that my department has undertaken, separate to that of the Department of Transport and Main Roads. If the Labor government had been re-elected, if the member for Woodridge was still the deputy premier of Queensland, he would be advocating for light rail stage 4.

I find it interesting that he is asking how many homes would be resumed if it was a bus system. The only reason we are having this debate and discussion is that it was his former government that decided to proceed with light rail stage 4 in the first place. I think it is a bit cute to come in here, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and now have some new-found authenticity for connectedness to the people of the southern Gold Coast when for 10 years you neglected what they wished for and what they wanted and you did not listen to them. In contrast, this government is.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We will now go to government members for some questions. I will go to the member for Cook.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Can the Deputy Premier advise the committee on the importance of establishing the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority after the former Labor government failed to do so and, since the 100-day review and the release of the government's 2032 Delivery Plan, explain how this budget supports the delivery of this plan and puts the games back on track?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** What a wonderful question from the member for Cook. This is a doozy, I have to tell you, member. We knew that the Olympic and Paralympic Games was a shambles under the former government. You had Anastacia Palaszczuk running around in glitz and glamour on red carpets. It was all about the event. It was all about the opening ceremony and deciding who was singing at the closing ceremony. It was not about the people, it was not about infrastructure and it was not about regional Queensland.

We went about announcing, before the election, that we would have an independent delivery authority to deliver the games and sort out the mess that had been created by the Labor government. Would you believe, honourable member, we won office about 1,400 days after Queensland was awarded the 2032 games. Not one sod had been turned by Labor. The deal with the federal government was in tatters because of the arena. A \$2.5 billion taxpayer-funded arena at Roma Street had been quietly moved—I might say, by Steven Miles, the member for Murrumba—down the road because their first plan did not stack up. The engineering did not stack up. They worked out that you cannot build an arena above a rail track, so they quietly moved it and dropped it to the media that they had moved the location.

We promised we would have a 100-day review and we set up the independent committee. We were elected in October. We immediately set up and legislated the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority. We tasked the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority with conducting a 100-day review. They did that. We got the copies of it. We worked with them.

We want to ensure this is not just about sport for the four weeks of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It has to be about legacy, it has to be about road and rail and it has to be about regional Queensland. At the election, political parties were calling for the games to be stopped because the former Labor government did not bring people on the journey and did not show them the benefits the 2032 games could deliver for all of Queensland.

We set about it. We set up the committee and we appointed board members. The former Labor government forgot to appoint a board. They set up what they called GVLDA, the Games Venue and Legacy Delivery Authority, but it had no board. It had no direction because it had no board to deliver it. They forgot to appoint a board and I guess that is why it was in such a mess. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition was the treasurer and the deputy premier. You would think that if anyone was in a position to sort this out then he would have been, but obviously not. Alas, he could not.

The former Labor government wasted 1,200 to 1,400 days. We passed legislation and got on with the job. In March we delivered the 2032 Delivery Plan, which is 90 per cent of what GIICA recommended. We changed it slightly because we want a national aquatic centre that will be the best aquatic centre in the world; we want the RNA showgrounds—the Ekka, where the country meets the city—to have a 20,000-seat outdoor arena; and we also want to make sure this is about all of Queensland. We did get it back on track. Now Queenslanders can see that we promised we would sort it, we promised a review and we did that. We promised a plan and we have delivered the plan. Now we will get on and deliver it.

**Mr McDONALD:** Deputy Premier, after 1,200 days of games chaos and crisis under the former Labor government, can you update the committee on the progress of delivering the main stadium for the Olympic and Paralympic Games and are you aware any alternative approaches?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I will start with the alternative approaches because there are a lot. I still do not know where the Queensland Labor Party sits. I do not know where the official opposition sits in Queensland because, when our legislation was passed through the sittings a few weeks ago, they voted against it on the second reading but then did not vote against it on the third reading so they are having a bet each way. The member for McConnel backed our motion in parliament to support the 2032 Delivery Plan, which incidentally is the Victoria Park stadium, but then she secretly put in submissions to the Heritage Council to say that Victoria Park should be heritage listed. The Labor Party do not support the delivery plan. They do not support the games.

I think it is embarrassing that, at every function I go to where you have the development industry, the building industry, the athletes and the young kids who are so pumped and excited not just for the games but also the delivery of infrastructure, particularly in regional Queensland, then I look at the sad, miserable, moping Labor Party members who are just sticking to their legacy of QSAC. QSAC was a \$2.25 billion temporary solution that Steven Miles, the member for Murrumba, came up with, backed by all the Labor members. That was their plan and Queenslanders rejected it. They said it was a stupid plan. They wanted a proper plan.

We have gone through the 100-day review. We have put the expert panel in place. The government made the decision on Victoria Park as the major stadium, which will be a 63,000-seat stadium in legacy mode, which is going to be great. It is not only Victoria Park; if you look across the precinct, we have the National Aquatic Centre and the Ekka. We will have the Ekka in a couple of weeks time. After this Ekka, the walls will come down and they will start delivering a 20,000-seat outdoor arena—and guess what, member? It is fully funded by the state and federal governments at \$7.1 billion.

I see the misinformation the Deputy Leader of the Opposition put out in the media a few weeks ago about the National Aquatic Centre. A \$7.1 billion deal has been struck between the Crisafulli government and the Albanese government. The federal government redirected their \$2.5 billion arena money into our plan—not QSAC but our plan. We have exchanged cabinet letters and we have done the deal. Just as the Premier did a deal with the Prime Minister over cannoli for the biggest education funding the state has ever seen, I have done a deal with Catherine King to deliver the 2032 Delivery Plan. We are working well together. We get on with the job.

Queenslanders are over the nonsense that we saw under the Labor government. They just want us to get on with it, particularly in regional Queensland, not only for the young kids who will want to participate in the Olympic and Paralympic Games but also for the rail, roads and transportation infrastructure that will be established with our \$7.1 billion deal that is locked and loaded and will be delivered between the state and federal governments.

**Mr JAMES:** Deputy Premier, with the recent announcement of the procurement of venues such as the Barlow Park stadium in Cairns near my electorate, can you outline how regional Queensland will benefit from the renewed focus on infrastructure delivery through the 2032 Delivery Plan?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It was great to join the member for Mulgrave and the member for Barron River recently. The member for Cook could not join us because he was in the Torres Strait with the Premier, visiting Indigenous communities. We were at Barlow Park with the mayor of Cairns to announce the procurement for, and upgrade of, what will be an amazing facility of 5,000 seats once done. We have already gone to procurement on the early design stage of Barlow Park and the indoor centres for both Moreton and Logan. We have also gone to procurement for the early design stage for the Sunshine Coast outdoor stadium. I know the member is excited about the minor venues that have gone to procurement.

In Far North Queensland, Barlow Park will be upgraded from 1,700 seats to 5,000 permanent seats. The vision for the games has always been to maximise the greatest games for all of Queensland. This was a problem with the former Labor government. They botched it up so much that they had regional Queenslanders calling for the Crisafulli government to cancel the games. We were never going to cancel the games because we knew the benefit of legacy for infrastructure. We had to show, through the delivery plan, that all of Queensland was going to benefit from the games and not just South-East Queensland.

That is why we have the Barlow Park upgrade in Far North Queensland. We have sailing in Townsville and Whitsunday. We have archery in Maryborough and rowing on the mighty Fitzroy River. How exciting for Central Queensland to have rowing on the mighty Fitzroy River. Incidentally, they row on that river every week. They hold national and state titles there. At this time of the year, when the Olympic and Paralympic Games will be on, it is beautiful. It is like a mirror. The Premier was there with the sports minister the other day. That will be great for regional Queensland. Equestrian events will be held in Toowoomba. There is the upgrade to the RNA showgrounds. The Sunshine Coast will benefit. Hockey will be held on the Gold Coast. This is about all of Queensland, including the \$250 million Games On! program to upgrade facilities right across Queensland. Kids in the bush and regional Queensland can also experience great facilities like tennis courts, soccer fields, netball courts, cricket—if they love cricket they can do that as well—under our Games On! plan.

We are very much focused on regional Queensland for the delivery of the Olympic and Paralympic Games but, more importantly, the infrastructure that comes with our 2032 Delivery Plan. Labor basically abandoned regional Queensland with their plan. It was all Brisbane focused. It was not regionally focused. They had no Games On! program. There were no upgrades to grassroots community sports under Labor's plan. They botched the arena. They were going to knock down the Gabba, then they were going to repaint it, then they were going to do a little bit of it and then they were just going to leave it. They looked at Suncorp Stadium. Then former premier Steven Miles came up with the harebrained idea to have it at QSAC and spend \$2.25 billion on temporary seating. That was ridiculous. That is why we bedded down with the federal government. We got a deal across the line for them to provide approximately 50 per cent funding. It is so exciting to be able to deliver this and see this stuff come out of the ground, particularly in regional Queensland.

**Mr McDONALD:** Deputy Premier, can you outline how this budget will deliver on the government's commitment to fund critical games infrastructure, including the athletes villages? Are you aware of any alternative approaches regarding the planning and funding of this infrastructure in the past?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** That is a great question and, again, it is a doozy of an answer with respect to the former Labor government. I talk to people all the time who say, 'How could the Labor Party have got it so wrong for so long?' They are all sitting over there now. The former treasurer and deputy premier was responsible for the delivery and funding of this and they just botched it.

I look at it and I look at what we have done in nine months—creating the delivery plan, setting up the board and getting mayors in regional Queensland on board. It is not hard to bring people on a journey, but you have to be honest with people. That is what we have to do. The other thing you have to do is make decisions, and that is exactly what we did. Not everyone will be happy with the decisions, but you need to make decisions and explain why you made them, particularly to those in regional Queensland.

The member asked about the athletes village. This was another complete botch-up by the former government. They made a big announcement that they were going to have three athletes villages—one at the Gold Coast, one at Hamilton Northshore and one at the Sunshine Coast. They said it was all funded but they did not say how much they would cost or where they were in the budget. They just

expected Queenslanders to believe them. The longer the Labor Party were in power, particularly under the former deputy premier, the more arrogant they became and the more they expected Queenslanders to believe them. Queenslanders stopped believing them in October 2024.

I can advise today that the former Labor government oversaw what I would call an Olympic-sized budget blowout. The cost of the athletes villages has created almost a \$3.5 billion black hole in the budget. They forgot to budget for the athletes villages. They did not provide the funding. They did not do a deal with the federal government. The new Crisafulli government has had to pick up the pieces, sort out the athletes villages and make sure there is funding.

The former Palaszczuk-Miles-Dick Labor government only allocated \$155 million to build suburban streets and paths for the proposed village. The funding was not even for the village; it was to build the road to get into the village, and it was also through EDQ. Taking that \$155 million out of \$3.5 billion leaves a staggering \$3.45 billion shortfall, and the former treasurer, who sits over there now, expected Queenslanders to believe him when he said, 'It's okay. It'll all be okay.' No, it was not going to be okay. We had to sort it out. Labor forgot about the 16,400 athletes and officials who need to be housed during the games and they must come clean to Queenslanders about why they failed to fund the athletes villages properly. They have never explained to Queenslanders why they failed to fund the \$3.5 billion.

We will get on with the job. We will develop: the Brisbane Showgrounds; the athletes villages; the Sunshine Coast's Maroochydore City Centre, including an arena at the Sunshine Coast Convention Centre, which we have never had on the Sunshine Coast before; and the Gold Coast athletes village at Royal Pines. We are excited to proceed with that because people will have homes to move into after the 2032 games.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We will have one more question from government members.

**Mr JAMES:** Now that Queenslanders finally have a games plan that they can be proud of, can the Deputy Premier provide an update on the progress of procurement and delivery activities for Olympic and Paralympic venues in the government's 2032 Delivery Plan?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is a great question. My answer revolves around questions the honourable member for Woodridge was asking before about the \$7.1 billion and wanting the itemised costs. We have worked with the federal government. They are a red team and we are blue, but we worked together—just as we did on the 80-20 funding split for the Bruce Highway that the Labor Party in Queensland said could never be done. We remember that they accepted a 50-50 funding split. They all flew to Canberra for a Team Queensland comrade sit-down and said that they were going to get the funding. They came back with 50-50 funding for the Bruce Highway, which was negligent and impacted the lives of Queenslanders.

It is the Crisafulli government who did the deal with the federal Labor government for an 80-20 funding split. It is the Crisafulli government who did the deal with the federal government for the biggest investment into education in Queensland's history. It is the Crisafulli government who has done a deal for nearly 50-50 funding for the Olympic and Paralympic venues of \$7.1 billion. It is a shame that the Labor Party in Queensland, who botched this so much, still want to play political games with the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Queenslanders are done with that. They just want a government to deliver—to get on and build the infrastructure. They want to see things starting to come out of the ground.

I can advise the honourable member that procurement is now open for a number of key venues. GIICA is in charge of the delivery of the venues in time for the games. Incidentally—and I might get distracted slightly here—I know it would be very hard for the former treasurer to understand why our government is committed to retain the Olympic venues and Paralympic venues within \$7.1 billion. The former Labor government could never do it—everything blew out. They cannot accept that we hold ministers and organisations accountable to deliver the infrastructure within a budget. The budget is \$7.1 billion. That is why every time I stand up I say it is \$7.1 billion. The federal government has acknowledged that now because it has done the deal with the state government for the \$7.1 billion. The only people who cannot acknowledge it and keep talking about blowouts are the Labor Party because that is in their DNA. It is not in our DNA. The federal government has not expressed a concern about our \$7.1 billion.

There are four major venues that are open for procurement. We launched for work to commence on the Logan Indoor Sports Centre, the Moreton Bay Indoor Sports Centre, the Barlow Park stadium upgrade and the Sunshine Coast Stadium upgrade. The first stage closed on 24 July. These are jointly funded venues with the Australian government, confirmed in the Queensland budget, making official commencement in venue delivery.

Victoria Park precinct planning and coordination is underway with a specialist master plan, project management expertise and a subcontractor team that can successfully deliver the project. It includes the Victoria Park main stadium, the RNA showgrounds, including the Brisbane Athlete Village, and the National Aquatic Centre. We have gone to procurement now for a precinct master plan for those three very exciting opportunities. The EOI activity is now live on the vendor panel website and will close on Friday, 1 August. It will inform the shortlist of suppliers who will take part in the invitation-to-offer phase, to be released early in August 2025. It will identify and define connectivity, utility, access networks and the transport scope required to cater for the aggregate requirements of the main stadium, the NAC and the BAV and for the precinct to successfully function during the games and in legacy.

In conclusion, the Crisafulli government is getting on with the job. We have gone out to procurement. We have done more in the space of three months than the former Labor government did in 1,400 days. That is Labor's legacy. Our legacy will be delivering the best games in 2032 and the record level of infrastructure required for all across Queensland.

**Mr DICK:** I table an article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* about the Gold Coast Light Rail extension. This goes to my question, which is to the director-general. This article talks about weighting submissions for the Gold Coast Light Rail project. Director-General, in your department's community consultation you talked about weighting submissions and having differential weighting in submissions, depending on where individuals live on the Gold Coast. In your department's community consultation survey, what weight is given to a submission by an 18-year-old man living in Mermaid Beach?

**Mr Sosso:** I have not had a chance to read this article yet, honourable member. Perhaps I could answer your earlier question. Firstly, I have had a chance now to look at the document you gave me with respect to land resumptions. It appears to me to be an earlier version of the preliminary evaluation carried out by the Department of Transport and Main Roads which was completed in March 2024—the Burleigh Heads to Coolangatta public transport project. Would that be correct?

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, Director-General. Perhaps I could get a relevant answer to my question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You do not like the history, do you.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Did you take that on notice?

**Mr Sosso:** Yes, I am coming back to him. I thought this was an appropriate time to come back to him. It was the first opportunity.

**Mr SPEAKER:** It would be great if you could answer this question; otherwise, we will come back to it so you can get the material and the member can go on to his next question. Are you able to answer the question that was just asked?

**Mr Sosso:** How much weight should be given to an 18-year-old who lives where?

**Mr DICK:** How much weight would be given to the submission of an 18-year-old man living at Mermaid Beach?

**Mr Sosso:** I say to the honourable member that the community engagement part of the exercise has concluded. As the honourable member would be aware, we received a large number of submissions from the public—5,700 approximately—and we conducted a town hall meeting, which was attended by the members for Currumbin and Burleigh and by the Deputy Premier. Nearly 600 people were present. With respect to the community engagement part of the exercise, which has concluded, we give due weight to all submissions. It is not an arithmetic exercise of great exactitude; it is a commonsense exercise. We are now in the technical component of the exercise and we anticipate that will be concluded in the next month or so.

**Mr DICK:** Your evidence then was, Director-General, that you treated all submissions the same, but that is not what the Deputy Premier said. If I can take you to the article I tabled, the Deputy Premier said—

... everyone could submit but southern Gold Coasters 'will be taken into more consideration' ...

The member for Burleigh, Mr Hermann Vorster, said—

Submissions are not equally weighted because we made a specific election commitment to the electorates of Burleigh and Currumbin ...

The article continues—

... submissions from his constituents would be weighted more heavily ...

Could you explain to the committee—and perhaps you could table—the methodology that is used by the department in assessing submissions from Gold Coasters which, in the words of the Deputy Premier and the member for Burleigh, ‘are weighted wherever you live on the Gold Coast’?

**Mr Sosso:** I said all submissions would be given due weight. I did not use the term ‘equal weight’. If you were to receive a submission from a person living in Byron Bay who supported light rail and you had a submission from a person whose house in Palm Beach was going to be demolished, would you give them due weight? Would you say they should have equal weight? A commonsense approach is obviously going to be adopted. If you are an affected landowner living at Palm Beach and if you are a person with an interest in light rail living at Labrador, are you the same? This is common sense.

**Mr DICK:** It is in the public interest to understand the analytical approach taken by officers of the department in analysing submissions and then providing submissions to you as director-general and the executive government. How is the weighting determined? What more or additional weighting is given? How is the methodology used to give increased weighting to people on the southern Gold Coast as distinct from people on the central and northern Gold Coast? Could you explain how the weighting methodology works?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Or those pretending to live in Woodridge.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Director-General, is there any more you can add to that?

**Mr Sosso:** I would say to the honourable member that it is not an arithmetic exercise. I understand the tenor of your question, honourable member, and I am endeavouring to give you a sensible response based on the methodology used by most people, including most public servants in the report.

We look at submissions. We weigh them according to the substance of the submission. One of the issues is not just the geographic location of a person but the impact of a particular proposal on that person’s livelihood, lifestyle or whatever. If I were to say to you, is this like an electoral weightage where you get what percentage of this and what percentage of that, the answer is no. We apply a commonsense approach based on our professional judgement.

**Mr DICK:** So you agree that these submissions are weighted differently—

**Mr McDONALD:** Mr Speaker, point of order—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Stop verballing him.

**Mr DICK:** I’m just asking him to respond to a question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You’re a disgrace.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Excuse me, I am taking a point of order.

**Mr McDONALD:** It is based on the grounds that the question is repetitious. The director-general has answered this question respectfully and I think the member for Woodridge should be asked to move on.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I think that the director-general has answered that question. Member for Woodridge, your next question, please.

**Mr DICK:** I want to go to the board members of the Games Independent Infrastructure and Coordination Authority. Director-General, what is the total annual remuneration of the GIICA board chair?

**Mr Sosso:** If you could bear with me for one second. Thank you for that latitude. The board chair is paid \$165,000 per annum. A board member is paid \$70,000 per annum.

**Mr DICK:** I appreciate that answer. Deputy Premier, *9News* reported on 29 May that you had a tense head-to-head argument with the International Olympic Committee representative from Hungary. Have you received any letter of reprimand or concern from the International Olympic Committee or any other Olympic sporting government or rowing body over your behaviour involving the IOC representative from Hungary?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** If I take your question and the context of behaviour as sorting out the mess that you left, then we are getting on with the job. I saw those reports. I have to say that I have had a great relationship with the International Olympic Committee. In fact, we hosted them at Parliament House. They reflected that that was the first invite they had had to Parliament House, despite 1,400 days of Labor bungling it and stuffing it up. We got on with the job and fixed it.

During the review for the 2032 Delivery Plan I met with the incoming president-elect of the International Olympic Committee, Kirsty Coventry, and congratulated her on her election to the high office of International Olympic Committee president. We met online during the review. I advised and briefed her on the delivery plan. She was very happy with the government's interactions with the International Olympic Committee.

We have made it abundantly clear that regional Queensland must and will be a focus of the 2032 Delivery Plan. The problem we had before we were elected is that regional Queensland had all but given up on the Olympic and Paralympic Games because the former Labor government did not invest enough money into regional Queensland for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Member for Woodridge, you may know someone who was responsible for not investing enough into regional Queensland, I do not know. Maybe you were the former treasurer. The money that did not roll to regional Queensland, you could be blamed for.

We are taking a different approach. We are not just rolling over for anybody. The government has made a decision based on feedback and consultation with regional Queensland, particularly the members for Rockhampton and those in Central Queensland. I think you are alluding to rowing in Rocky on the mighty Fitzroy River, which was what was in the article you referenced in your question.

The government has taken the view in our 2032 Delivery Plan that regional Queensland must be a focus for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. We have made a decision on behalf of the government that rowing will be on the mighty Fitzroy River. Young kids in Central Queensland row the mighty Fitzroy every day of the week. They have state titles and national titles there. In fact, for the benefit of the honourable member for Woodridge, the Canadian Olympic team trained on the mighty Fitzroy River in Rockhampton for the Sydney 2000 games. It has had Olympians on the mighty Fitzroy River.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order in relation to relevance.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I referenced the article you spoke about and I am talking about the article.

**Mr DICK:** My question was whether he had received a letter. I think the Deputy Premier has more than fulsomely answered or not answered the question. If I could move on—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You might not like it, but I have a lot more to go.

**Mr DICK:**—to my next question, please.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am still answering.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The minister is being relevant. If you could round out your answer, that would be great.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The member for Woodridge asked me about the International Olympic Committee, the Hungarian International Olympic Committee representative and behaviour. I am talking about behaviour. We are getting on with the job and delivering. Our behaviour is to consult with regional Queensland—something the former Labor government did not do. The government has made a clear decision that rowing will be in Rocky. We have made a clear decision that equestrian will be in Toowoomba, sailing will be in Townsville and the Whitsundays and archery will be in Maryborough. If it is the submission from the honourable member for Woodridge that the government ought not invest in regional Queensland, then he should say so. The Crisafulli government does take regional Queensland seriously.

**Mr DICK:** Mr Speaker, point of order on the relevance, again.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Is he suggesting that we cancel rowing in Rocky? Is he suggesting that?

**Mr DICK:** Could I put my point of order, please?

**Mr SPEAKER:** I will take the point of order.

**Mr DICK:** It was not about investing in Rockhampton, which I obviously support publicly and have said so.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Oh, really?

**Mr DICK:** It was about whether he received a letter.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** That is news.

**Mr DICK:** Perhaps I could move on to my next question, please, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I think we can move on.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** He doesn't like the answers though, does he?

**Mr SPEAKER:** We will move on to the next question. Do you have another question, member for Woodridge?

**Mr DICK:** I do have a question. It is to the director-general. I refer to SDS page 2 and the LNP government's investment in the Residential Activation Fund. On 8 July this year the Deputy Premier announced that \$27.58 million would be committed from the Residential Activation Fund to three projects that will deliver 3,600 homes, in the Deputy Premier's words, in Rockhampton. Director-General, of the 3,600 homes, how many will be delivered as a consequence of the \$17.26 million commitment to the Parkhurst Residential Enabling Infrastructure Project?

**Mr Sosso:** I thank the honourable member for that very specific question. As the honourable member would be aware, the Residential Activation Fund is a \$2 billion fund over the next four years. The Deputy Premier, in a previous answer, has outlined how the fund would work. The Deputy Premier has made a number of announcements around Queensland with respect to projects that will be funded out of that fund. Approximately \$136 million out of the fund is proposed to be allocated that will allow the construction of 20,000 dwellings in Logan; 10,060 dwellings in Bundaberg; 2,780 dwellings in North Queensland, in Townsville and Hinchinbrook in particular; and 3,600 dwellings in Rockhampton.

**Mr DICK:** On what date will the first of those homes funded under that investment of \$27.58 million be occupied?

**Mr Sosso:** I am not Nostradamus; I would not have a clue.

**Mr DICK:** I refer again to that project—the 3,600 homes in Rockhampton that will be delivered, in the words of the Deputy Premier. I refer to that \$27.58 million investment including the \$9.75 million that will be contributed to the North Rockhampton Sewage Treatment Plant UV Disinfection Facility. On what date will the first of those homes be occupied?

**Mr Sosso:** Round 1 program guidelines for the Residential Activation Fund require construction to commence within 12 months of a fully executed funding agreement and be completed within three years of a fully executed funding agreement.

**Mr DICK:** Thanks, Director-General. I appreciate that. That was a direct answer. So it may be up to three years before anyone occupies one of those 3,600 new homes in Rockhampton. Is that a fair assessment?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Quicker than Labor because you never had this plan.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Excuse me, Deputy Premier. I think that is a bit of a hypothetical. You have one more question before we swap over.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, were you directed to remove references to affordable housing from drafts of the 2032 games delivery plan?

**Mr Sosso:** Sorry, was I directed to remove what?

**Mr DICK:** Were you directed to remove references to affordable housing from drafts of the 2032 games delivery plan?

**Mr Sosso:** I have not received any directions with respect to affordable housing in that respect or otherwise.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We now go to government members.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Given the former Labor government's lack of investment in housing supply, can the Deputy Premier outline how the Residential Activation Fund is helping to unlock new housing opportunities in regional and remote communities but in particular in my electorate of Cook?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you, member for Cook, for the question. What a great question, because it follows a bizarre line of questioning from the member for Woodridge, who has resorted to the Labor Party DNA of attacking councils again. He is not supporting a \$2 billion infrastructure fund. This is a new fund—the Residential Activation Fund—that the Labor Party did not have. It is not their plan; it is the Crisafulli government's Residential Activation Fund.

All they did in government was a blame the councils for not delivering land supply. The state put on the councils the projected population growth and the growth they needed to acquire, but they never funded the councils to be able to do it and keep pace with that growth. Then we have this bizarre line of questioning from the member for Woodridge trying to work out whether the Rocky council is going to deliver a house before a certain date. Here is the thing, member for Woodridge: the infrastructure has to start within 12 months. It has to be completed within three years. You are going to have houses

commence within one year because some of the projects are smaller projects and the councils will get on with the job. They will do the roads, they will do the kerb and channelling, they will put the lighting up and they will be able to deliver—but it is up to council. We are resetting the planning partnership with council. We are not going to do what Labor did. We are not going to play the blame game with councils.

I have to say this to the member for Woodridge: the mayor of Rocky, whose chosen colour palette is red, not blue, stood up with me and excitedly endorsed the Residential Activation Fund. The mayor of Logan, again whose chosen colour is red, not blue, stood up with me and thanked us for investing \$135 million into his wastewater treatment plant. Then we have the same tactics from the Labor Party we have seen for 10 years where they just blame the councils rather than coming in here and saying, 'How exciting—a \$2 billion Residential Activation Fund! How can you unlock land in our electorates for the homeless in Woodridge?' No. He does not want to know about that. He just wants to continue his line of attack on councils.

We have reset the planning partnerships with council. I was particularly pleased to be in Far North Queensland recently and announce that, as part of the \$2 billion Residential Activation Fund, in the member for Cook's electorate in Far North Queensland we are delivering \$89 million towards critical infrastructure projects to unlock nearly 3,000 Queensland homes. Here is the thing—and this is not only for the member for Cook. I am going to direct this to the member for Woodridge. Are you going to complain about this one in Far North Queensland—the fact that Indigenous communities will finally have bricks and mortar, a house, and a roof over their head? Are you going to complain about the Indigenous councils and how long they are going to take to deliver this? Guess what? They are going to deliver it a lot quicker in partnership with the Crisafulli government than they would have under the Labor Miles-Dick government—I guarantee that—because this \$2 billion was not even in existence under the Labor Party.

If he is going to be critical of the Rocky council, why doesn't he go into the Indigenous communities and say, 'This will never be delivered'? It will be. We have already paid the money into the bank accounts for the councils. How quick! In fact, one of the Labor mayors said to me—Director-General, you will love this—'My God, I have never seen a state government operate so quickly, so swiftly. The money's in the bank!' They waited years for Labor, and Labor neglected them and never delivered it.

**Mr McDONALD:** Can the Deputy Premier update the committee as to how the Crisafulli government is using the once-in-a-generation opportunity to partner with the private sector for the Gabba entertainment and housing precinct, and is he aware of any previous approaches to this arena?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The arena has had a bit of a sordid history in the last 10 years with the Labor government, because they chose a location and then secretly changed the location. GIICA did a review and suggested that it ought not be in the second location the former Labor government had chosen, so they said the arena should be on the Goprint site, which is in the Woolloongabba Priority Development Area. Essentially, what will happen is that the Gabba will come down after 2032. If the government and the Premier—mainly the Premier—has his way, cricket will be played as an Olympic and Paralympic sport in 2032. Australia will win gold at the Gabba and then the Gabba will come down, but right next door to the Gabba on the Goprint site before 2032 will be a wonderful arena for sport and cultural purposes, an uplift of community.

I have just recently travelled back from the United States, where I toured arenas and stadiums and spoke to international investors that are looking to Brisbane and looking at our market-led proposal to invest in Queensland. The former Labor government said the private sector was not going to invest in an arena. We have had so much interest in this. The former Labor government hated the private sector. They wanted Queensland taxpayers and the Australian taxpayers to fund every dollar, every ounce, of Olympic and Paralympic expenditure, whereas we believe that the private sector, when they have capacity to do it, should partner with the state government and federal government and deliver it. Guess what? 'Team Red' in Canberra have agreed with us. They have reprioritised their \$2.5 billion, taken it all out of the arena and put it into the Crisafulli government's 2032 Delivery Plan—not the Dick delivery plan and not the Palaszczuk-Miles delivery plan but the Crisafulli government's delivery plan, funded, sealed and delivered by the Albanese federal government and the Crisafulli state government, and I am particularly pleased about that.

We had 1,200 to 1,400 days of delay and crisis under the Labor government. We are getting on with the job. We are going to have an arena. It is going to be funded by the private sector. My department is leading the market-led proposal. We are about to go into solid procurement because we

have been out there talking to the private sector about what is deliverable and how we will proceed with the procurement. Once that is in place, probity will be put in place. I think we are going to get a very good outcome for the people of Brisbane and the people of Queensland with a new arena.

**Mr JAMES:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Given that Queensland is the most decentralised state in the country, it is critical that my electorate of Mulgrave has investment in key connectivity links such as the Bruce Highway. How is the Crisafulli government working constructively with their state and the federal counterparts to deliver critical infrastructure in Queensland and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches, particularly given that the former Labor government failed to secure Queensland's fair share of infrastructure investment from the Commonwealth?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The Bruce Highway is such an important asset to Queensland. Unfortunately, we have seen far too many lives lost on the Bruce Highway. There was an underinvestment in the Bruce Highway by the former Labor government for 10 years. It is a crying shame in this state that the former treasurer of the state, the member for Woodridge, could only secure a 50-50 deal with his federal counterparts when they are of the same political persuasion. They travelled down to Canberra and met. They said they were going to do this big 'Team Queensland' and secure a deal.

We were calling at that time as an LNP opposition to revert it back to 80-20 funding. The Labor government in Queensland at the time said, 'Can't be done. The times of an 80-20 federal state funding split are over. It is 50-50. That's the way forward.' We did not accept that. The difference between the former Labor government and our government in opposition is that we did not accept it from our side of politics federally either. Whether it was the Morrison government or the Albanese government, we wanted an 80-20 funding split for the Bruce Highway because we needed that huge level of investment. I know how important this is for the people of Far North Queensland in your electorates, member for Mulgrave and member for Cook.

We have done a deal with the federal government. We have secured an 80-20 funding split on the Bruce Highway: 80 from the feds and 20 from us. The former Labor state government said it could not be done. Imagine a situation where a former state Labor government could only secure a miserable 50-50 deal. Imagine how much worse the deal would have been if it was not with one of their political colour. That is what they could secure with their mates around the table let alone their political adversaries.

We are very pleased that we have been able to secure an 80-20 funding deal with the Australian government to deliver a \$9 billion Bruce Highway upgrade package with \$1.8 billion additional funding to deliver safety improvements up the spine of our state two months—two months—since being elected. We did it in two months. They could not do it in 10 years. Within two months we have achieved what the former government could not do in the last 10 years in office. They signed the Bruce Highway away for a 50-50 funding split. We never believed that was the right thing to do.

We secured a deal for the delivery of games and venue infrastructure with a \$3.435 billion contribution from the federal government towards \$7.1 billion—so nearly 50 per cent funding—for our 2032 Delivery Plan. We refined and reallocated 17 new and upgraded venues to ensure legacy Olympic and Paralympic infrastructure is delivered. Even federal Labor wants to get on and deliver the games and the legacy, so why can't the Queensland opposition get behind it now? They had so long to do it. They messed it up. We are fixing it and now they are still all over the shop.

We still do not know if the honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition supports our 2032 Delivery Plan. He just said that he supports rowing in Rocky, yet he does not want houses built in Rocky because he was just whingeing about how long it is going to take to build houses in Rocky. The housing in Rocky will support the athletes and then build homes for people in Central Queensland after the games, so which is it? He cannot have it each way. He cannot continue to defend his bad legacy when he did not deliver the deal with the feds, did not secure the housing foundations for Queensland's future and did not reassert the planning partnership with local governments, as we have been able to do within nine months.

**Mr KEMPTON:** My question is to the Deputy Premier. Far North Queensland's population is expected to grow by 24.7 per cent by 2041. With the largest capital pipeline in Queensland history and steadily growing populations in electorates like mine of Cook, how does a future focused infrastructure program ensure long-term growth for Queensland and provide investors with certainty that infrastructure can be delivered on time and on budget?

**Mr McDONALD:** Great question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the honourable member for Lockyer. That is a great question. Thank you for your advocacy in Far North Queensland. Under the LNP government in Queensland, Queensland is now open for business. We respect Queensland taxpayers' money. We do not want Queensland's infrastructure projects to be plagued by the cost overruns and black holes that were accepted under the former Labor government.

We are delivering the largest capital pipeline in Queensland's history at \$116.8 billion. This budget is about delivering for Queensland with the generational infrastructure needed for our growing population. The member asked about alternatives. Under Labor, which was beholden to the CFMEU, the integrity of the Queensland government's pipeline was trashed. There was delay after delay and blowout after blowout across every infrastructure project they attempted to deliver, all at the expense of Queenslanders' lifestyles.

Independent economic modelling by Queensland Treasury over 2024-30 estimates that BPIC, which was the CFMEU tax—I will rephrase; Labor's CFMEU tax—would have increased projects by up to 25 per cent and created a net economic cost of up to \$17.1 billion, resulting in seven per cent higher rents and 22,000 fewer new homes in Queensland. The new government is committed to delivering the capital projects that Queenslanders need on time and on budget.

That is in complete contrast to the former government's budget blowouts: Pioneer-Burdekin pumped hydro—\$24 billion blowout, now \$36 billion; Borumba—\$4 billion blowout, now \$18 billion; water infrastructure—\$6.5 billion blowout across 11 projects; and CopperString—\$4 billion blowout, now \$9 billion. I know! I see your facial expressions. You cannot believe it, but I am telling you the truth, honourable member. These are Labor's budget blowouts, all orchestrated by the former treasurer who is sitting across the table from us now asking bizarre questions.

That is not all: Cross River Rail—\$11.6 billion blowout, now over \$17 billion; Queensland Health—\$12 billion blowout, programs and services unfunded; games infrastructure—\$181 million blowout on three minor venues; a \$3.35 billion black hole on the athletes village; a \$650 million blowout on QSAC; a \$1.7 billion blowout on the Gabba rebuild; and on the Logan and Gold Coast Faster Rail the estimated cost blew out from \$2.6 billion to \$5.7 billion and not a single track was laid. That is Labor's legacy on budget blowouts. We want to deliver projects on time and on budget.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I understand the member for Maiwar has a question.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Deputy Premier, my question, which you heard before, is about the Gabba arena, but I will repeat it. It has been proposed by the government that it will be funded through the private sector and built by 2032. Accounting for the member for Woodridge's question—I suspect I know the answer—will you rule out privatising public land at Woolloongabba, either by selling that land or via long-term leases, to incentivise the private companies that you intend to build this new stadium?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** It is a bit hard for a government to rule out privatising land or selling land when you are trying to do a deal with the private sector to build an arena by the private sector. We are saving Queensland taxpayers' money and Australian taxpayers' money by redirecting the federal contribution of \$2.5 billion into the arena. What's the difference? If the private sector builds the arena, whether the land is owned by the state or the private sector the arena is going to be built. We are out in the market at the moment talking to the private sector through the department of infrastructure. We are about to commence a formal procurement process. That will involve looking at the optionality of the land both at the Goprint site and what happens with the Gabba when it comes down after 2032, so we are looking at all things.

We would never say no to an arena if the private sector needs a deal to be done with the land. The one thing the state does have is the land; the one thing the state does have is the powers of planning and the levers to be pulled to unlock that infrastructure. I am not going to pre-empt what may or may not happen in the procurement stage because that will be independently done through my department of infrastructure when they go to market officially. What we are ascertaining at the moment from the private sector is the level of interest in building the arena, the funding of the arena and the capacity of the private sector to fund the arena. I am not going to rule anything in or out with respect to the land because the land is the leverage the state has at the moment, particularly in the Woolloongabba PDA.

**Mr BERKMAN:** Deputy Premier, you have noted that it is your intention that the Gabba will be removed after 2032. I am curious about the existing proposal for 50 per cent of the Cross River Rail site to remain open space. If that is lost to Brisbane Arena, will the government in future ensure that it sets aside an equivalent area for open space at the existing Gabba site once it has gone?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Member, there will be so much open space, green space. You will be able to go there, congregate, have a cup of tea on a blanket in a park. There are going to be homes. There are going to be restaurants. There are going to be apartments. There is going to be an arena where you can catch a show and possibly watch the basketball at the games in 2032. You can go for a stroll down the park. You can catch the Cross River Rail to wherever you want to go. You can catch the faster rail to the Gold Coast. You can catch the Wave to the Sunshine Coast. There is enormous opportunity. Of course there is going to be green space and parkland space.

We are going through the assessment of what that looks like at the moment with the procurement documents. I imagine that whole precinct will be that you will have South Bank and the Visy site, which we will also unlock because we have decided to move the broadcasting centre. The former Labor government basically just wanted to put a Bunnings tin shed on the waterfront at the old Visy site and put some broadcasting in there. We see that as a bit of a waste of space. We think the broadcasting will likely be held in the Convention & Exhibition Centre because we already have the Convention & Exhibition Centre at South Bank. That will unlock all of Visy so you could have the Visy site as a South Bank 2.0. On top of that there is the Gabba site. If your concern is whether you will be able to go for a stroll in a park, I do not think you ought to be concerned. There will be plenty of space to walk around. There will be shrubs and flowers and pot plants—whatever you want. Help design it. Put in a submission.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Are there any more non-government questions?

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, what will be the proportion of affordable housing in each of the athletes villages after the games of 2032 are concluded?

**Mr Sosso:** I cannot give you an exact percentage at this particular time. Obviously, in negotiations with each of those three areas—that is, the RNA, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast, and possibly also Rockhampton—there will be an element of social and affordable housing. The exact percentage will be a subject of negotiation, but I can assure the honourable member that social and affordable housing will play an appropriate role in that housing stock.

**Mr DICK:** So there is no set percentage determined for affordable housing to be delivered after the games for each of those village sites?

**Mr Sosso:** I say to the honourable member that the percentage will be determined as a result of the negotiations but it is of keen interest to the government.

**Mr DICK:** We had some evidence earlier in the proceedings about the appointment process for the acting CEO of EDQ. Director-General, going to the appointment process for the members of the GIICA board, no public advertising was undertaken by the department to seek expressions of interest for board positions; is that correct?

**Mr Sosso:** To the best of my recollection, that is correct.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, there were no selection criteria for the appointment of board members; is that correct?

**Mr Sosso:** Perhaps I might go to the nub of the issue in terms of the department's role in the selection of members of the GIICA board. The department was not involved in the process for the selection of the GIICA board except for undertaking the appropriate probity checks.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am just watching the time. Director-General, there were a few questions where you said you would come back to us with responses. Do you have them at hand?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: our session does not end until six o'clock so we will come back before the end of the session with those.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I am happy with that. We will have one government question.

**Mr JAMES:** Deputy Premier, in response to Queensland's recent disaster events, what actions did you undertake to support disaster recovery, particularly to ensure supply chains remained open, for residents in my electorate of Mulgrave and the broader Cairns region?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The government left no stone unturned earlier this year through the disaster coordination channels on vital resupply efforts in response to the floods in North Queensland and Far North Queensland and to Tropical Cyclone Alfred. I pay particular thanks to all our emergency personnel—the SES, police, QBuild workers, truckies, freight logistics workers, volunteers and other community organisations—for their mountain of work in getting our communities back on their feet.

Member for Mulgrave, I do not know whether you were in the chamber when I said that I grew up in regional New South Wales for a few years in my early life and my dad was a truckie. He was a fuel tank truckie for Esso fuel tanks so my family knows all about fuel supply and needing roads opened in disasters. We stand with all Queenslanders affected—our producers and supply chain partners—in getting livelihoods restored and essential services back up and running as soon as possible.

In response to these disaster events, I signed off on multiple unprecedented emergency planning declarations to support food, medicines and essential supplies getting into stores and onto shelves across a total of 50 local government areas. Shops, warehouses and transport depots in 21 local government areas spanning from Gladstone to Goondiwindi and the Gold Coast were permitted to temporarily operate around the clock as Queenslanders prepared for Cyclone Alfred. Across 29 flood-affected local government areas in Far North Queensland, North Queensland and North-West Queensland, two emergency planning declarations enabled shops, warehouses and transport depots to operate 24/7 to ensure more supplies hit the shelves for Queenslanders.

In addition to the emergency declarations, my department coordinated nine charter flights carrying essential supplies to Cairns, delivering an additional 198,000 kilograms of pallets of food into local supermarkets. I want to acknowledge all of the efforts from the departmental officials to get the supply on the ground. I know that when the North Queensland floods were raging Far North Queensland had plenty of food in stock at that time, but then when the highway and the roads were cut the supply was not afforded. The inner roads were cut as well, so we had to take the emergency measure and get the planes full of food and delivering up there. I want to thank you, the member for Cook and the member for Barron River, Bree James, for the amazing work you did in collating and collecting and letting your community know about the food supply. We were getting concerned because the only photos we were seeing in any of the shops up there were of bananas. I know that you love bananas in the Far North, but you were over them after a couple of weeks. The priority of the government was to ensure we got all the food supply.

At the same time that was happening, the government was absolutely working through TMR to open the roads as quickly as possible. We worked with Defence, the Army, to build the bridges back and get the temporary solutions so we could get the trucks across. Whether it was rail, road or air freight, we were using and pulling every lever humanly possible. As I said, we were making many declarations to support the local governments and the local communities to ensure the food supply and recovery efforts were there.

It is very challenging when those in a community go into their local shops and they cannot see the food. I note that the department was in almost daily contact with the major supermarkets—Coles and Woolies—and, interestingly, a lot of the independent grocers who rely on local food supply were readily stocked and available. I know that the member for Lockyer always claims that the best veggies come from the Lockyer, but I can assure—

**Mr McDONALD:** You're a very good judge.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Indeed. I can assure the member for Lockyer that Far North Queensland and North Queensland produce some pretty good produce as well and—

**Mr KEMPTON:** Far superior.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am not going to take the interjection, member for Cook. I would not want to get in between you and the member for Lockyer and the member for Mulgrave. The government dealt with three disasters in a matter of months after being elected, but the Premier, with the Disaster Management Committee meetings and bringing the local governments into those Disaster Management Committee meetings on a daily basis—sometimes two or three times a day—helped us coordinate and communicate not only with the local communities but also with the wonderful work that all the government members were doing on the ground. Thank you for your efforts.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We have now reached the end of the time allocated for consideration of the proposed expenditure for the infrastructure portfolio area. Thank you, Deputy Premier, officials and departmental officers. The committee will now break until 4.30 pm, when the committee will examine the estimates for the portfolio area of planning.

**Proceedings suspended from 4.00 pm to 4.30 pm.**



**Mr SPEAKER:** Welcome back, Deputy Premier and officials. The committee will now examine the estimates for the planning portfolio area. Deputy Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement regarding the planning portfolio area of no more than five minutes.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I start by offering a declaration of a conflict of interest pursuant to standing order 262 and 263 so far as it relates to the Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme. This declaration has been made in the parliament and public with respect to the scheme and the property that I own being impacted by the planning scheme. Of course, I did not make any decisions with respect to the planning scheme. That was delegated authority.

Our budget locks in planning reforms vital to address the housing crisis left after 10 years of Labor failures in planning. We are resetting the planning partnerships with local government, and I have to say as I go around the state and talk to the local governments, they are excited by the fact they now have a Crisafulli government that is listening to them, working with them, partnering with them, collaborating and cooperating with them, and we have ended the blame game. Too much, under the former Labor government, we saw the former Labor government blame councils for not delivering on infrastructure and houses, despite the fact it was the state government that put the housing growth targets forced upon local governments. We want to partner and reset this planning partnership with local councils, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

We will not do what the Labor Party did. The Labor Party steamrolled local governments all the time with respect to housing. We want to, as best we can, work with local governments because delivering housing supply across Queensland is a matter of priority for this Crisafulli state government and also the local governments. Through our \$12.5 million Scheme Supply Fund, 46 councils are receiving support to fast-track housing delivery.

We also have a policy to deliver houses on church and charitable land. Members of the committee would know the former Labor government had a few housing round tables because a housing round table was going to be the be-all and end-all solution to the housing crisis in Queensland. It was not, because when you have a round table, you have to act. You have to have action that follows a round table. The former Labor government were very good at having meetings and doing press releases and saying what they were thinking about doing, what they might do, but ultimately they never did.

We are getting on with the job. I can announce today that the department has released a new model code to support housing on church and charitable land. We have done this in partnership with the Local Government Association of Queensland, and now we have a new model code out there to distribute to show we are serious about church and charity land and unlocking land across Queensland. That is what action looks like in the new Crisafulli government.

I also might say, talking about housing, the member for Woodridge, as the former deputy premier of Queensland, talked about releasing land. I quote from a speech he made into parliament in 2021 when the member for Woodridge said—

That is why I am pleased to announce that our government will open expressions of interest to the market today to deliver 3,600 homes through the Housing Investment Fund.

...

Through the proceeds of the Housing Investment Fund, we will be able to supply up to 3,600 new social housing dwellings across Queensland over the next four years...

That speech was delivered by the member for Woodridge in 2021. It was a \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund and not one house was delivered before the change of government in October 2024. The member for Woodridge comes in here and lectures people and councils on the Residential Activation Fund, unlocking land supply, yet he was the minister responsible for a housing investment fund that did not build one home for Queenslanders or people moving to Queensland in the time period he said, before the election in October 2024.

We also promised the people of Queensland at the election that we would look after regional Queensland with respect to renewable energy projects. Renewable energy proponents and the developers for too long have had it too good in regional communities where they have not had proper assessment and processes. We committed to the people of Queensland and the people of regional Queensland that we would change the process and make applications for renewable wind farms and solar farms equivalent to that of resource companies or the agriculture sector when they are wanting development approved in their areas. We have now legislated. We have put the approval process in place. We have social impact assessments where every proponent of a wind farm or solar farm in regional Queensland or, for that matter, anywhere in Queensland will have to go through a social impact assessment. They will then, after that assessment is completed, have to do a community benefit agreement with the local government. That is surety. It front-ends all the work that should have taken

place over the past 10 years, but the Labor government, in their reckless rush to renewables, forced regional Queensland communities to have infrastructure that they might not necessarily want or they were not involved in. This is about consultation. It is about the Crisafulli government listening to Queenslanders, and we have legislated exactly what we promised we would do.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Thank you. I will go to non-government members for the first question.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, your department has a procedures manual which establishes clear processes to be followed by departmental staff when managing proceedings in the Planning and Environment Court; that is correct, is it not?

**Mr Sosso:** To the best of my knowledge, that is correct.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, it is standard practice for your department to consult with the relevant technical agency for a state interest such as the Department of Transport and Main Roads or the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation before deciding to join an appeal; that is the case, is it not?

**Mr Sosso:** To the best of my knowledge, that is absolutely correct.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, was the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation the agency responsible for the tourism state interest consulted before your department's decision to join the appeal between the Geoffrey Thomas Family Trust and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council in relation to a proposed \$24 million luxury accommodation development on the site of Maleny Manor?

**Mr Sosso:** The decision on whether the department would seek leave of the court to become a party to those proceedings was at my instance as the Chief Executive of SARA, and as the honourable member would be aware, because there was an affidavit filed in the Planning and Environment Court by an officer of my department, Mr Joyce, it sets out at some length the steps that were undertaken by the department in that matter. I do not know if the honourable member has had a chance to look at that particular affidavit, but he would know that at the earlier stages of that matter, I was not involved. I had delegated my authority further into the department, and the department had determined that there was not a state interest because they had consulted with the Department of Transport and Main Roads. That was in accordance, as with your question, with standard practice and appropriate. It was only at a later stage that I became involved. I am happy to outline that involvement if you wish to ask further questions. I do not want to talk at length at this stage in case you have a further follow-up question and I do not want to waste your time.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, what advice did the Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation provide to you or the department in relation to the tourism state interest prior to the department joining the appeal involving that matter?

**Mr Sosso:** As the member for Woodridge would be aware, the member for Glass House and the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Andrew Powell, wrote to the Deputy Premier on the proposed Maleny development. I am sure the honourable member for Woodridge has seen a copy of that particular letter. In that letter, the minister and member wrote indicating that both he and local councillors Winston Johnston and Jenny Broderick were supportive of the development and outlined at length in that particular letter the positive impact that that development would have, in their opinion. I had a look at that letter. It was brought to my attention and I formed the view, without going further, that *prima facie* there was a state interest.

**Mr DICK:** We will come to the letter. Director-General, I want to clarify there was no advice on state interest provided by the Department of the Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation?

**Mr Sosso:** I would say to the honourable member no. The answer is as follows. Earlier in the process, as I indicated, there was liaison with the Department of Transport and Main Roads. The member for Glass House and the minister wrote to the Deputy Premier. Quite appropriately, the Deputy Premier did not have any further role in the matter. It was brought to my attention by his chief of staff. I formed the view that there was a state interest because the issue at hand—the matter was already proceeding—was that, *prima facie*, there was a state interest. The issue is: should the state seek leave to become a party? Proceedings were on foot and there was a question of expedition in order for that question to be resolved. If it had been earlier in the piece, obviously a different proposition would apply. The question was to me, as the chief executive of SARA: *prima facie*, based on the material before me, was it in the state's interest for it to seek leave to become a party in the Planning and Environment Court proceedings? I formed the view rapidly, based on the material before me, that, *prima facie*, that was the case.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, you received a letter from the member for Glass House and then you formed a view you should intervene. Can you explain the steps and the action you took to verify whether the issues raised by the local member constituted a genuine state interest trigger?

**Mr Sosso:** Having regard to the fact that you have, I presume—have you seen the affidavit of Mr Joyce?

**Mr DICK:** I am not answering questions, Director-General; you are answering them.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You should.

**Mr DICK:** On a point of—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** If you are going to ask questions about it, you should know about it.

**Mr DICK:** Are we going to have a debate, Speaker?

**Mr SPEAKER:** No, we are not going to have a debate.

**Mr Sosso:** I am sorry, Speaker; I was not trying to interrogate the member for Woodridge. He is too good a barrister for that!

**Mr SPEAKER:** If you could just answer the question, that would be good.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, Speaker.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** That is offensive; I would not say that!

**Mr SPEAKER:** It is up to you. Are you finished? Deputy Premier.

**Mr Sosso:** I said to the honourable member that, with all due respect, you would have seen—I presume the answer to my question is yes—that I received the particular document and I made a decision within hours. I made contact with the state planner immediately because a decision had to be made. I suppose my sin is the sin of expedition, because I had to make a decision—and it was blatantly obvious from the terms of the letter that the state did, *prima facie*, have an interest and should seek leave. I say to the honourable member: both the presiding judge and the local council agreed.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, are you aware of any precedent or other case where the department joined a planning appeal without being named, without technical advice and solely based on a letter from a local member of parliament?

**Mr Sosso:** In 2016-17, the department joined 17 appeals; 37 in 2017-18; 14 in 2018-19; 37 in 2019-20; 13 in 2020-21; 17 in 2021-22; 14 in 2022-23; 15 in 2023-24; and 38 in 2024-25. It is a standard practice and, in my respectful submission to you, it is in the state's interest that the department become involved in certain appeals so that the state's interests can be properly ventilated in the court.

**Mr DICK:** Director-General, can you confirm whether your instruction to join the Sunshine Coast appeal after your department previously decided not to comply with your department's established procedure for joining proceedings?

**Mr Sosso:** I would submit to you, honourable member, it was a prudent decision of mine and, having regard to what transpired, a correct one.

**Mr DICK:** I am not asking for submissions; I am just asking for answers, please. Director-General, how much has your department spent on this appeal so far?

**Mr Sosso:** If you will just bear with me for one second, member—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Probably less than you spent when you were the planning minister!

**Mr SPEAKER:** We do not need any quarrelling, thank you very much.

**Mr Sosso:** I do not have an end date for this so I am not saying this is the final figure, obviously, but the figure before me is \$85,199.

**Mr SPEAKER:** One more question, member for Woodridge, before we swap over.

**Mr DICK:** Deputy Premier, you have not made a decision yet on the Sunshine Coast Council's temporary local planning instrument to increase housing supply and deliver diversity in Birtinya. Is that the case, even though the statutory deadline passed in April?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The department were assessing the TLPI that the council had submitted. I understand it came from the department to my office in only the last few days. My office is assessing it now. I will work and collaborate with the council. We have a good working relationship with the Sunshine Coast Council. In fact, I was with the mayor, Rosanna Natoli, only last week when we announced \$82 million to unlock thousands of blocks of land in the Maroochydore CBD. That is on top of the

infrastructure and the arena we are doing, the convention centre and the Wave—all the billions of dollars of infrastructure the LNP government are putting in. The Labor party neglected the Sunshine Coast for many years so we are getting on with the job.

The TLPI has been under assessment from the department. There are no repercussions, member for Woodridge, if the TLPI is not approved or disproved before the end of the statutory timeline. In fact, we negotiate with councils. Once I make an assessment, I will make a decision on it. At this point in time I have not made an assessment of it. It was a decision locally that increased the heights in the Birtinya town centre and there is community concern about it. The department have taken the appropriate time to fully brief me on the TLPI.

The other TLPI with the council was the hotel TLPI they gave. That came in, and I accepted 50 per cent of the TLPI the council wanted and rejected 50 per cent. They wanted hotel development on the beachside communities in Alexandra Headland and Mooloolaba and I rejected that, but I allowed them through the TLPI to proceed with developments in Caloundra and Maroochydore and the council were accepting of that. We work with councils on the TLPIs and we will continue to do that. As the director-general said in relation to the particular case of the issue you were prosecuting before, there have been hundreds of cases where state departments of planning have intervened in court cases—

**Mr DICK:** Mr Speaker, point of order—

**Mr BLEIJIE:**—including when you were the planning minister, I might add.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I will hear the point of order.

**Mr DICK:** If I could articulate my point of order—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** There were a record number of interventions by Cameron Dick as the planning minister.

**Mr DICK:** If you could refer to me by title.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Premier, there is a point of order.

**Mr DICK:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, I appreciate your protection. My question was about the TLPI, not about consequent matters. That is all I asked and he has answered it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Very good.

**Mr McDONALD:** With reference to the Crisafulli government's commitment to deliver one million homes by 2044, can the Deputy Premier please update the committee on recent decisions this government has made to deliver on that commitment, including any relevant approvals and measures to unlock church and charity land?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I thank the member for Lockyer for the question. We know there is a housing crisis created by the Labor Party during 10 years of inaction and we are doing everything we can to deal with it. In the last nine months—and there is a long way to go—we have been making some good progress. I know as chair of the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee, the member has a keen interest in seeing through this government's housing policies to deliver one million homes by 2044.

In just a matter of months the Crisafulli government has moved to unlock 77,000 new homes. This includes the Residential Activation Fund with 46,800 homes being unlocked through the 34 projects to date and there is plenty more to come. In fact, if you look at our \$2 billion Residential Activation Fund with money out the door compared to the member for Woodridge's Housing Investment Fund where not one home was built before the election in 2024, we are already showing in nine months that we are getting on with the job and providing homes for Queenslanders to live in. Additionally, 30,200 homes within the last four months alone have been unlocked through the declaration of the Southern Thornlands, the Mount Peter and the North Harbour PDAs. When it comes to development approvals and EDQ, within the last quarter there were 2,890 lots and dwellings approved. This is an increase of over 1,320 approvals compared to the same period and yet the member for Woodridge wants to attack the acting CEO, who is doing a marvellous job in unlocking land supply, but that again is just the member for Woodridge's attack on public servants. That is what he does every day.

**Mr DICK:** Point of order, Mr Speaker. I take personal offence. I have attacked no-one and I ask the Deputy Premier to withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member has taken personal offence and has asked that you withdraw.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. I have also approved seven MID's for social and affordable housing totalling 289 homes. There are an additional nine MID's under assessment, totalling another 540 homes. The Crisafulli government has also approved six SFD's totalling 1,491 homes of which 358 are affordable. The Woolloongabba SFD approval is already under construction, delivering 440 homes.

We are getting on with the job and, as I announced earlier, today we have released the model code to unlock church and charity land and we delivered this commitment within 100 days of government. Then we went and worked with the LGAQ to deliver the code. However, we do not stop there. We have been working with the LGAQ on developing this model code for local government to incorporate into their planning schemes. It was drafted by local government for local government. It is an opt-in tool and can be tailored to local needs. It will not be forced on them like the former Labor government was very keen on doing. Because it was designed by local governments, they actually want to use the tool and they have the sense to buy in that they have not had in the past 10 years because of Labor Party rule in Queensland and them really not listening to councils. The model code is a rule book for developing community housing on land with its own community facilities compatible with surrounding uses.

**Mr JAMES:** With reference to resetting the planning partnerships with local governments, can the Deputy Premier please update the committee on how this key deliverable will support the government's commitment to lead the work on developing new regional plans, which cover every corner of the state including the far north regional plan covering my electorate of Mulgrave, and is he aware of any other approaches that have been taken to regional planning?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I thank the member for Mulgrave for the question. He is such a great advocate that he has already secured a priority development area in the short time he has been in government as an MP, so congratulations. Regional plans are important—and thank you for raising the draft Far North Queensland Regional Plan with me. I also note his interest as a former deputy mayor in resolving the planning partnership with local governments, which is really important.

Last year I met with the FNQROC about the plan and—are you ready for this, committee members—when I briefed them they told me they had not seen the draft regional plan that the former government was about to go out to consultation on. I was in shock to know that the former state Labor government prepared the draft Far North Queensland Regional Plan and did not involve the local governments in Far North Queensland in this regional plan considering this is what the Labor Party forced upon these councils. It is not hard to listen to communities. It is not hard to listen to local government.

I committed to all the mayors of Far North Queensland that I would not go out to public consultation on the draft. What I did—and this was new for local governments because they had not had this experience with the Labor government before—is I sent the Far North Queensland draft regional plan to the Far North Queensland regional mayors for them to look at. They could not believe it; they got a plan in draft that the Labor Party refused to give them and was just going to force upon their communities. That is because the Labor Party love playing the blame game with councils. We do not. We want to reset the planning partnerships with council. Still to this day, nine months later, I cannot fathom how ministers in the planning department would not bring local governments with them on a journey for their Far North Queensland Regional Plan. It just shows the disdain the Labor government have for our local governments.

I committed to those councils that we would send it, which we did straightaway. We gave them until the end of March this year to come back to us with any changes they wanted. That process has now taken place and we are on the verge of releasing a draft regional plan for consultation with Far North Queensland that has been drafted in consultation with local government. I would have thought a former minister in the Labor Party would have thought, 'If we are going to release a regional plan, it is best to have the support of the local government when we release it rather than just release it like Big Brother,' which is what the Labor government forced upon our communities.

We are taking a different approach in the new government. We are resetting the planning partnership with local government. We have committed \$31.1 million over the next four years to see the program. We are reviewing all the regional plans. I think the former Labor government did one plan every three years. We are going to do every regional plan within 3½ years in consultation with local government and front-end a lot of the consultation and community work that the former Labor government should have done but never did because they were so incompetent. Whether it is housing, health or cost of living, everything they touched turn to custard. As part of the resetting the planning partnerships with local government, as I said, we now have the model code for church and charity land in partnership with them. We look forward to working with the LGAQ. We look forward to working with all the local governments.

Before I go to the next question, I want to say this about one of the regional plans, which was the Fraser Coast regional plan. I met with the Fraser Coast mayor who, again, is not a political ally of the LNP; he is a Labor guy. He is a good mayor, though. He has been working with us on these things. He

told me that his regional plan was forced on his community by the former Labor government. They did not agree with it. The Fraser Coast council voted against the Wide Bay regional plan and the former state Labor government still forced it upon them despite the fact they voted against it. I said to the mayor in the Fraser Coast, 'You tell me what you want changed in the regional plan and I will change it,' and we have done it. Now we have a Fraser Coast Regional Council happy with the regional plan. It is not hard. It is not rocket science. It is just about a minister doing what a minister ought to do and consult with communities. I think the arrogance had built up so much in the Labor Party and their ministers that they just lost touch with reality; they lost touch with community.

**Mr KEMPTON:** My question is for the Deputy Premier. We know that the former Labor government's reckless rush to renewables came at a cost to local communities who were not consulted on major projects that would impact them. Can the Deputy Premier please update the committee on the legislation that recently passed the parliament including how renewable energy projects are now assessed in Queensland?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** This was a big election commitment of the Crisafulli government. This was about listening to regional communities and making sure wind and solar farms were impact accessible and there were codes in place, social impact assessments and also community benefit agreements put in place with the local communities. It is about front-ending all the community consultation—again, something the Labor Party refused to do. Again, it was not hard. Look at the gas industry all those years ago before the LNP government introduced the GasFields Commissioner and put a regime in place for these types of approvals to take place. At the heart of that is people—people and communities. That is what this policy is about.

Our nation-leading laws enshrine community benefits into legislation, making it a requirement for a proponent to enter into a community benefit agreement with a local council before a development application can be lodged for assessment. Our policy does not say wind farms and solar farms are not going to be approved. It just says they are going to go through a process of community consultation—something afforded by the Crisafulli government, not by the former Labor government.

I know the member for Woodridge flew all the way to Rockhampton to do media on a wind farm. He was attacking the decision to call in the wind farm and he did not even know the name of it. He did a big media conference and he called it the Moonlight Range Wind Farm. It is not even the name. It is the Moonlight Ridge. He did not even know the name of it, but he went to Rocky and advocated that we should have approved this wind farm. The opposition leader, Mr Miles, dubbed our renewables policy, which has at its heart community and people, 'dumb' despite it getting support from the LGAQ, industry groups and regional Queensland and then he ultimately voted for the legislation.

Again, it is the level of hypocrisy in the Labor Party that they say one thing outside the parliament—whether it is about the Olympic and Paralympic Games or whether it is our renewable legislation that puts people at the heart of our policy—and then in the parliament they come in and they vote for it, but they do not go out to the community and say, 'Actually, no, we backed the LNP's laws.' It was laws backed by the Labor Party, despite the fact that they were out there trying to run politics about our policy.

During the election campaign and every time I have been to regional Queensland since the election campaign, when you go into a town hall—and I know it is a foreign concept to the Labor Party to go into a town hall in regional Queensland because they do not quite like regional Queensland—and there are grown men crying with their partners and their wives about the impact of these renewable energy projects in their communities and they have not had a say. It is depressing, and that is why we have taken a policy to listen and put people at the heart of our policy.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Time has expired. We have reached the end of the time allocated for consideration of the proposed expenditure for the planning portfolio area. Thank you to the Deputy Premier, officials and departmental officers. The committee will now examine—

**Ms BUSH:** Mr Speaker, point of order: I would just note that the Deputy Premier and the director-general failed to answer eight questions and that they did undertake to get back to us in this session. Are they getting back to us or can they take that on notice?

**Mr McDONALD:** By six o'clock.

**Mr SPEAKER:** At the conclusion.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am not taking them on notice. I said at the end of the session, which is at 6 pm.

**Ms BUSH:** Great; thank you.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Yes, all questions will be answered then. The committee will now examine the estimates for the industrial relations portfolio area. Deputy Premier, if you wish, you may make an opening statement regarding the industrial relations portfolio area of no more than five minutes.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** At the outset, can I say that the days of the CFMEU's culture of systemic violence, intimidation, misogyny, fear and bullying are coming to an end. Labor's CFMEU protection racket is over, once and for all. Our commission of inquiry, for which we announced the terms of reference today, has broad terms of reference that will stamp out CFMEU standover tactics and return the rule of law to Queensland's construction industry. Allegations of criminality, organised crime links and financial irregularities will be put under the commission's spotlight, with important protections to enable victims and whistleblowers to tell their stories. I have to say that I am overjoyed with anticipation of having questions from former minister Grace Grace about the CFMEU, and I think we should just get into it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Okay. We welcome the member for McConnel to the panel, and I am assuming that you will ask the first question.

**Ms GRACE:** I will; thank you, Mr Speaker. Minister, you are quoted as saying the Crisafulli government is committed to openness and transparency. With reference to page 5 of the SDS and in the spirit of this supposed openness and transparency, can you please outline for the committee the reasons that former WorkCover Board chair Anthony Lynham and former WorkCover Board deputy chair Jacqueline King were terminated from the board less than halfway through their terms?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Here we go. In terms of the protection racket, nothing changes: whether the former minister is on this side of the table or that side of the table, it is about Jacqueline King, the QCU general secretary, and a former Labor mate who was the chair of the WorkCover Board. We have appointed former Queensland Law Society president Chloe Kopilovic as the chair of the board, so we replaced a former Labor member of parliament with a woman—a young woman—who was a former president of the Queensland Law Society. What sort of world, in an industrial relations space, do we live in when the shadow minister comes in here and whinges that we have replaced a male former Labor member of parliament with an upstanding community advocate who is involved in charity work not only on the Sunshine Coast but across Queensland? She is professional, she is a director of a law firm and she was the former president of the Queensland Law Society—

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Speaker, point of order.

**Mr BLEIJIE:**—and the shadow minister—

**Ms GRACE:** My question was why were they terminated from the board, not who the new appointees are. Why were they terminated from the board before halfway through their terms?

**Mr McDONALD:** Mr Speaker, a point of order.

**Dr ROWAN:** Mr Speaker, a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Who is going to do the point of order? There are two points of order.

**Dr ROWAN:** On the point of order, Mr Speaker, the minister is being responsive in providing the context. It is clear from the answer that is being provided as to why certain decisions were taken and I would submit to you that he be permitted to continue to answer the question.

**Mr McDONALD:** Well said.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The minister is talking about appointments to the board. He is conscious of the question that has been asked, but he is also giving it context, so I will allow you to continue, bearing in mind the question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The context I was creating for the member is that we had better people to do the job than a former Labor member. I see the smirks and laughing, so if the member is advocating that I get rid of a young, female professional who was a former president of the Law Society and replace her with a middle-aged male from the Labor Party who formerly sat in the parliament—if that is what she would do—okay, but this government is taking a different view. The other thing I did is I got rid of a few other people from her boards, including CFMEU officials. I would love her to ask me about CFMEU officials that I have terminated from the board because I did it on day one. While the member for McConnel was running a protection racket for the CFMEU, appointing people like Kurt Pauls to the workplace health and safety board, I got rid of them.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Speaker, point of order.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Grace Grace protects the CFMEU. I sacked the CFMEU!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for McConnel, you have a—

**Ms GRACE:** I think, Mr Speaker, this is outrageous. I take offence and I ask that that be withdrawn.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** So you should!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Okay. The member has taken personal offence, so I ask you to withdraw—

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw and I—

**Mr SPEAKER:**—and we can do without the personal reflections.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for McConnel, you have another question?

**Ms GRACE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Director-General, did the department recommend that these board members be terminated and the department provide a selection of potential nominees to the minister to replace the terminated board members? I want to be clear: I am not after names or anything, just the process.

**Mr Sosso:** Was the first part of the question did the department provide advice or make a recommendation about the termination?

**Ms GRACE:** Yes.

**Mr Sosso:** The answer to that question is, no, the department did not make a recommendation.

**Ms GRACE:** Then after the terminations, Director-General, did you provide any selection of potential nominees to the minister to replace the terminated board members? I do not want names; I just want the process. Did he ask for any nominees for replacements?

**Mr Sosso:** The department had no role to play in that.

**Ms GRACE:** Minister, given the new make-up of the board, can Queenslanders have confidence that the Crisafulli government is committed to ensuring the board has a balanced composition representing employers, employees and medical experts?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I replaced a former Labor member of parliament with a former Law Society president. I think that is a pretty good start. I replaced a union official with Greg Hallam, who was the former CEO of the Local Government Association of Queensland and who implemented a pretty good insurance scheme for the LGAQ across Queensland, in all of the 77 local governments across the state, so, yes, I actually think it is a better board than what she appointed.

**Ms GRACE:** And, Minister, they were your decisions, your recommendations? You did it on your own? You appointed these people on your own?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Who else would have done it? I am the minister; I appoint the board. The rigorous process you went through to put Anthony Lynham on the board you might detail to this committee as well. Let us know if he went through a merit-based selection process and he just happened to be a former Labor—

**Mr SPEAKER:** We are talking about these appointments.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yes, so I ask the former minister to explain the process she put in for her appointments. I have put in two individuals who are highly skilled and highly qualified and I think the board is all the better for it.

**Ms GRACE:** Director-General, Queensland workers rely on WorkCover and its board during times of great personal difficulty following injury and being a board member carries serious responsibilities. Can you advise the committee on what induction process, if any, is given to new board members outlining, for example, their roles and responsibilities, the code of conduct and the importance of their position?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** She does not want to mention the CFMEU—everything but the CFMEU. Just say it, Grace—CFMEU. Just say it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We do not need any cross-chamber chatter.

**Ms GRACE:** Stop the intimidation.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Director-General?

**Mr Sosso:** Yes; thank you, Mr Speaker. With your indulgence, honourable member, I have asked Ms Donna Heelan, the acting deputy director-general, to come forward. She can be of assistance in specifically answering your question, if that is okay with you.

**Ms GRACE:** Yes, it is fine; thank you, Director-General.

**Ms Heelan:** I thank the member for the question. Could I ask for you to repeat that, please?

**Ms GRACE:** An induction process for new board members: roles, responsibilities, code of conduct, the importance of their position. Is that generally given to new board members?

**Ms Heelan:** Bear with me. I do not have that material in front of me.

**Ms GRACE:** Can you come back to us?

**Mr Sosso:** I would just say to the honourable member that is normal practice.

**Ms GRACE:** I accept that. Thank you very much for your response. Minister, you appointed new deputy chair Greg Hallam to the WorkCover board. You have said that now. We now table some social media posts by Mr Hallam.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Could we wait until the Deputy Premier gets these before you continue with your questions.

**Ms GRACE:** One post shows a picture of a woman in a tight T-shirt that reads 'slutty nurse costume' and says, 'I thought my new girlfriend might be the one. But after looking through her knicker drawer and finding a nurse's outfit, a French maid's outfit, and a police woman's uniform, I finally decided: if she can't hold down a job, she's not for me.' Another shows a husband naming his wife 'Nag, Nag, Nag'. Minister, are these posts in line with the behaviour expected from public sector board members?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Of course not. The member has tabled Facebook posts. I do not know the veracity of the Facebook posts and the individual who is mentioned or if it is, in fact, the real person. I do not know. I cannot verify that. But of course it is not appropriate. I might add that if the member is so concerned about Mr Greg Hallam then why did Labor appoint Greg Hallam to the Queensland Reconstruction Board in 2011? If they have all these issues with Facebook posts and trawling one's Facebook accounts, perhaps they should not have appointed him to the positions they appointed him to when they were last in government for 10 years.

**Ms GRACE:** Minister, these have only just appeared. You will find that if you do any research in relation to it. My question is what assurances can you provide to female nurses and midwives lodging psychological claims for sexual harassment that they will be taken seriously given the deputy chair is posting content referencing 'slutty nurse costume' recently? Only just now—not in 2011, very recently.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I do not troll people on Facebook 24/7 so I am not sure what people are posting just now. I am not sure what you are posting. I would love you to post condemning the CFMEU, but I have not seen it. Here is what I can guarantee to the honourable member: women on construction sites will be better protected because the CFMEU will not get away with their behaviour and intimidation, the physical and sexual assault that the CFMEU has been doing for many, many years. This government will stamp it out. That type of behaviour by anyone is not appropriate.

**Ms BUSH:** Minister, what assurances can you provide to female police officers who are lodging psychological claims for sexual harassment that they will be taken seriously given the deputy chair is posting content referencing police uniforms in knicker drawers.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I can guarantee anyone that puts a claim into WorkCover will be assessed pursuant to the rules and the regulations and the policies of WorkCover.

**Ms BUSH:** Minister, again I would like to put to you what assurances can you provide to female hospitality workers who might be lodging psychological claims for sexual harassment that they will be taken seriously by the deputy chair given he is posting content referencing French maid outfits in knicker drawers?

**Dr ROWAN:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: I understand the premise of the question that is being asked by the member for Cooper, but I ask how it is directly related to the budget and the budget papers. I understand the point has been made through previous questions, and I think we are now getting to a repetitive nature with the line of questioning and perhaps there are other matters that need to be canvassed.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I actually think the Deputy Premier would probably want to answer the question so I will call the Deputy Premier.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The guarantee is there, but I also make the point to the member that the board does not assess the claims of individuals. There is a regulator in place. The board sets the policy and direction. I have already said I am not sure of the veracity of what you have tabled. I have not seen it.

It is inappropriate if that is the case. But the board does not assess the individual applications. Those are being assessed by the very same people that I suspect assessed them when Labor was last in office.

**Ms GRACE:** Having said that, the board does set the policy, they set the strategic direction and they set the manner in which WorkCover conducts itself. What assurances can you provide women in the workplace in general that psychological claims for sexual harassment will be taken seriously when we have seen posts like this from your appointed deputy chair of the WorkCover board?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Okay. Thank you for the question. If the member personalises my appointments, then her appointment to the Work Health and Safety Board of CFMEU official Kurt Pauls—

**Ms GRACE:** Relevance, Speaker.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** You do not want to talk about who you appointed?

**Ms GRACE:** This has nothing to do with the Work Health and Safety Board. Relevance.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Deputy Premier, member for McConnel. The Deputy Premier has just started his response. He has heard the question.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We take these issues very seriously and the chair, who is a young, upstanding woman, takes these issues seriously. That assurance is there. The policies are set by the board. The regulator assesses the applications. No matter who puts in a claim, it will be assessed pursuant to the proper procedures that have been in place for a long time.

**Ms GRACE:** Minister, you have made it very clear you remove, terminate, appoint new board members. It is also clear there is a possibility of an induction process—I think the director-general more or less assumed that that would be a case—making it clear to new board members the importance of their role and the behaviour expected. What action are you going to take about these posts?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Having only been given a copy of two Facebook posts in budget estimates, perhaps the member will allow me some time to look at the veracity of the allegations she is making and I will make the appropriate inquiries.

**Ms GRACE:** Director-General, are these posts in line with behaviour expected from public sector board members?

**Mr Sosso:** I can simply reiterate what the minister has said: that the posts, from looking at them, are inappropriate and sexist and offensive, possibly misogynist. But as the Deputy Premier has said, I do not know whether they are genuine or not or who they are. All I can say is from an ordinary person's point of view they are not acceptable.

**Ms GRACE:** Can I please call the CEO of WorkCover, Mr Pennisi. WorkCover has codes of conduct in place for your staff. Can you advise the committee what policies and procedures are in place for addressing behaviour perceived as sexist?

**Mr Pennisi:** Thank you for the question. We have policies in place which deal with a range of matters, including code of conduct, what is appropriate behaviour and what is inappropriate behaviour.

**Ms GRACE:** Minister, you have heard how seriously the director-general and the CEO of WorkCover take behaviour like this. I think the director-general termed it as possibly even misogynistic, sexist, unacceptable. Given your power to determine who is or is not on the board, if it is verified that these posts are, indeed, made by the deputy chair of WorkCover, will you take this matter seriously and what action will you take?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** This is what I will guarantee, member for McConnel: I will take this issue more seriously than she ever took the issue of the CFMEU when for 10 years she defended and protected them. On behalf of women, I will take these issues seriously and I will deal with them.

**Ms GRACE:** Speaker, point of order: I take offence and ask for that to be withdrawn

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member has taken offence and I ask that you withdraw.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw.

**Ms GRACE:** Minister, what action will you be taking? What is the range of actions possible in relation to these posts from a deputy chair, who was appointed by you following the sacking of people who were doing an excellent job on the WorkCover board?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for McConnel, I will ask you to rephrase the question. You were going okay but there were a few imputations towards the finish. Could you rephrase the question, please?

**Ms GRACE:** I will make it very simple, Speaker. What actions will the minister take on a range of matters, if they are verified as being accurate, following the description by the director-general and the CEO of WorkCover?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The member has just anticipated me by saying 'if they are verified'. For one to take action, one must investigate. I am not going to do policy on the run in a budget estimates hearing. The member has just said 'if they are verified'. Let us let the regulator investigate it first and then we will see if action needs to be taken.

**Ms GRACE:** Director-General, in reference to page 5 of the SDS, can you advise the role the department is taking in the current enterprise bargaining negotiations, for example, with Queensland Health and the QNMU and Education Queensland and the QTU?

**Mr Sosso:** I will defer to the acting deputy director-general, Ms Donna Heelan, who might be able to assist you.

**Ms Heelan:** Apologies: can you repeat the question?

**Ms GRACE:** Ms Heelan, in reference to page 5 of the SDS, can you advise the role the department is taking in the current enterprise bargaining negotiations, for example, with Queensland Health and the QNMU and Education Queensland and the QTU? I know there are others such as the police and the professional association with TMR. What is the role the department plays in relation to these bargaining negotiations?

**Ms Heelan:** The Public Sector Industrial Relations team, or PSIR, partners with agencies in planning, negotiating, arbitrating and finalising enterprise bargaining agreements and determinations. It develops policies, directives, circulars and guidance notes on industrial relations matters and manages the industrial relations arrangements between government and government owned corporations.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We will now go to government members.

**Mr McDONALD:** Deputy Premier, are you aware of past government actions that enabled the CFMEU's cultural practices of bullying and intimidation?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I have been sitting in these estimates for the past 10 years. This would be my 17<sup>th</sup> estimates, but for the past 10 years I have been here when the member for McConnel was the industrial relations minister and I was on the other side of the bench. I was prosecuting the issues of the CFMEU: the bullying, the fear, the intimidation, the misogyny and the sexual and physical abuse by CFMEU members. The member for McConnel, at all times, said I was union bashing. She defended the CFMEU—'nothing to see here'.

**Ms GRACE:** Speaker, point of order: I think the member is exaggerating and misleading. I take offence and I ask that that be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member has taken personal offence and asks that it be withdrawn. I do not encourage argumentative language.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. I take this issue of the CFMEU very seriously, because for 10 years I prosecuted these issues. For 10 years I saw the Labor government walk into the parliament and pass legislation supporting the CFMEU, getting donations from the CFMEU, appointing CFMEU members to prestigious board positions. For 10 years I took whistleblower complaints from workplace health and safety inspectors and Office of Industrial Relations staff and I brought them to the floor of estimates. I do take these issues very seriously.

If former Labor governments and ministers had acted when these issues were raised on the floor of estimates, we would not have the issues we are seeing today in the CFMEU which have led administrator Mark Irving KC to task Watson SC with conducting a review into the CFMEU. The Watson review says that the CFMEU has got its way time after time on numerous aspects of policy during practical negotiations. Close inspection of diary disclosures reveals ministers in the former Labor government met CFMEU officials on more than 200 occasions. This was the wound that festered for years while the member for McConnel dismissed all who sounded the alarm as union bashers.

**Ms GRACE:** Speaker, point of order: that is an exaggeration. I take offence and I ask that it be withdrawn. It was me who put them into administration, together with the federal LNP government.

**Mr SPEAKER:** A point of order is not a chance to make a speech, member for McConnel. You have taken personal offence. Minister, I ask that you withdraw.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. It may help the committee if I quote the member for McConnell. As long as nine years ago, in 2016, the member for McConnell was complaining of the Liberal National Party's 'disgusting union bashing, continually broken-record talking about one particular union—the CFMEU'. That was a quote from the member for McConnell. In 2018, the member for McConnell was protesting—

Every time we sit in this House, the member for Kawana and the Leader of the Opposition come in complaining about the CFMEU.

I want to read into the record a few other quotes from the member for McConnell. In 2016, during the debate on the Industrial Relations Bill, she said, 'continually broken-record talking about one particular union—the CFMEU'. In question time, I tabled a photograph and asked the member about it. I said—

It appears to show the member for Brisbane Central at a rally in support of Michael Ravbar during the royal commission into trade union corruption.

The member for McConnell responded—

Surprise, surprise, I am also a very proud unionist.

In 2017, during the debate on the Work Health and Safety and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, I tabled photographs demonstrating the CFMEU influences on the legislation tabled and the minister at the time joked that she had better photographs.

**Ms GRACE:** Point of order, Speaker: that is out of context. It was a photo of me at Labour Day and I said I had better photos at Labour Day. That was incorrect and I ask that it be withdrawn. You are verballing.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am quoting *Hansard*.

**Mr McDONALD:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: the Deputy Premier is quoting from *Hansard*. If the member feels that he is being misleading, there is a different process for that. It is not a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member for Lockyer has a point. The member is quoting. If you do disagree with that, member for McConnell, I would ask that you write to me.

**Ms GRACE:** Point of order, Speaker: you cannot quote out of context. The photos were in relation to Labour Day and he is quoting out of context. I take offence that he is quoting out of context and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member has now taken offence.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. In 2018, during question time, the member for McConnell said—

Every time we sit in this House, the member for Kawana and the Leader of the Opposition come in complaining about the CFMEU.

That was a quote. In the 2020 estimates, I said—

By the CFMEU, Minister, yes. The CFMEU are bullying your employees.

The then minister asked—

Where is your proof?

I said—

Proof? Here.

That was when I tabled 57 pages showing intimidation and bullying by the union movement. The then minister, Ms Grace, said, 'Table it.' And I did.

In 2021 I asked about an officer—Helen Burgess—in the Office of Industrial Relations. Former minister Grace said—

Not one of the allegations raised by the member for Kawana has been substantiated. I feel for Helen Burgess, who he keeps writing about.

In 2022 in question time I asked about workers who were put in harm's way by the CFMEU. The minister at the time, Ms Grace, responded—

What is interesting is that those opposite talk about two things; they have an absolute obsession with the CFMEU ...

I have had an obsession with the CFMEU for 10 years, and it is only now that a government is getting on and fixing the culture of the CFMEU. She went on further—

They have an obsession with the fake unions and an obsession with the CFMEU. The answer is: we will stand in solidarity with workers.

In further estimates I asked about resignations due to the allegations of CFMEU bullying and harassment. Ms Grace responded—

... people resign from workplaces for all kinds of reasons.

In estimates in 2022 I talked about a sex offender, Luke Gibson, a CFMEU official. I said—

Director-General, CFMEU entry permit holder Luke Gibson intimidates and harasses women. It has been alleged he was barking at a female safety officer, called her an effing—

**Ms GRACE:** That is enough.

...

**Ms GRACE:** Point of order, Chair.

...

**CHAIR:** We have a point of order.

**Ms GRACE:** This is unparliamentary conduct about someone who cannot defend themselves ...

She was defending Luke Gibson, a sex offender in the CFMEU.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Speaker, point of order: relevance. What is the relevance of all of this?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, I was asked about the culture of intimidation at the CFMEU.

**Ms GRACE:** Not me.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am just getting started on you.

**Ms GRACE:** I am sorry, Mr Speaker, point of order: relevance. It is about the CFMEU, not about me.

**Mr McDONALD:** Mr Speaker, to assist on the point of order: my question to the Deputy Premier was about the previous actions and culture of the CFMEU.

**Ms GRACE:** Of the CFMEU, not me.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** What enabled the CFMEU? You enabled the CFMEU. You and the Labor Party enabled the CFMEU.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Ms GRACE:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: If the Deputy Premier is making accusations of enablement, I take offence and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. Luckily the former minister for industrial relations will have an opportunity to go to a royal commission into the CFMEU and talk about all of these matters and defend what she has put on the record for 10 straight years when I have asked about the CFMEU. In 2024 I asked about Kurt Pauls, who had extensively contravened federal and state workplace laws, because former minister Grace had appointed him to the Work Health and Safety Board. She said—

Kurt Pauls is a worker representative on the board established under the act. My understanding is that he gives advice and recommendations. They work with the department. He went through all of the checks and balances.

He had a list of contraventions a mile long in the Federal Court.

**Mr JAMES:** Can the Deputy Premier inform the committee why a commission of inquiry is necessary to clean up the CFMEU and the construction industry in Queensland?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** The answer to the member's question is that hundreds of whistleblowers tried to get action from the former Labor government for 10 years—workplace health and safety inspectors and Office of Industrial Relations staff—but they were not listened to by the former Labor government. We met with the workplace health and safety inspectors and the Office of Industrial Relations staff who were raising these issues of harassment on so many occasions over the last 10 years while in opposition. We met with construction companies who were raising the issue of a gun being held to their head during EB negotiations. Believe it or not, there was a contravention at a worksite in Queensland and former minister for industrial relations Grace Grace joined the application to support the CFMEU's industrial dispute in the court. The minister joined to support the CFMEU's application in court. That is a fact. That is a fact!

**Ms GRACE:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: That is actually misleading. It was not in support; it was to clarify the state legislation.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Come on!

**Mr McDONALD:** On the point of order, Mr Speaker: the Deputy Premier is being directly relevant to the question. If the member feels that he is misleading the committee, there is a different process to follow.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for McConnel, you do have the opportunity to write to me if you feel the member is misquoting.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** There was a court case involving the CFMEU, if memory serves me correctly, on the Sunshine Coast. The court found that the CFMEU had behaved inappropriately and the then minister for industrial relations joined the court case. There is only one reason you would intervene in a matter and join a court case. The ruling of the Federal Court of Australia states—

Submissions of the minister—the minister supports the position of the respondents that the application should be dismissed.

**Ms GRACE:** Yes.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** That is you supporting the CFMEU. The court case states—

Submission of the minister—the minister supports the position of the respondents that the application should be dismissed.

The respondents were the CFMEU. You cannot get any clearer, Mr Speaker.

**Ms GRACE:** They were the applicants.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I said 'the respondents'. To answer the member's question: we have had more than 10 years of bullying, misogyny, intimidation, fear and public servants feeling they could not take their concerns to ministers or to government, and this government is not going to tolerate it anymore. We have zero tolerance for this sort of behaviour and culture on construction sites in Queensland.

We know that EBs have been negotiated in bad faith because the CFMEU have threatened women and children. The Watson report states that a public servant was locked in a room with officials from the CFMEU. What did the former industrial relations minister do about one of her public servants being locked in a room with CFMEU officials and berated for 20 minutes? A workplace health and safety inspector's daughter was located at a gymnasium and bullied because of their parent's work on a workplace health and safety site in Queensland. What did the former minister for industrial relations do about that workplace health and safety inspector's daughter being approached at a gym by union thugs? What did the former minister for industrial relations do when the AWU were marching at the Labour Day march and the young son of an AWU official was berated by a CFMEU official?

What did the former minister for industrial relations do about all of that? What did the former minister for industrial relations do when I raised in estimates hearings a year or two ago that there was a criminal bkie link to a scaffolding company that was doing work on Parliament House? The then minister for industrial relations, Grace Grace, said at the time, 'I don't know about it. I'll look into it.' What did she look into? What was the result of the minister's looking into that?

We know that Anastacia Palaszczuk put a ban on Labor ministers meeting with CFMEU officials. When Steven Miles became Premier, he got rid of the ban and Labor ministers started meeting with the CFMEU again. We know that over the last 10 years Labor ministers had over 200 meetings with CFMEU officials. We know that the Labor Party accepted millions of dollars in donations from the CFMEU in the past 10 years. We know that legislation was changed, such as allowing the CFMEU to take photographs of workers and workplace health and safety inspectors. The minister at the time had an obligation to protect the public servants. They are also workers. They deserve to go to work and go home safely to their family, but time and again these issues were dismissed as just union bullying.

**Ms GRACE:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: I take offence that they were dismissed and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I did not hear you named. I do not think the Deputy Premier named you.

**Ms GRACE:** He is talking about me.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I didn't raise her name.

**Mr McDONALD:** Mr Speaker, point of order: the Deputy Premier is being complete in his answer and he is providing evidence of the credibility of the current opposition.

**Ms BUSH:** Mr Speaker, point of order: the member has taken offence. He is clearly referencing the minister in his response.

**Mr McDONALD:** It is collectively.

**Ms GRACE:** No, he is not.

**Mr SPEAKER:** That might be your view, member for McConnel, but there has been more than one person in that position over the years.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Speaker, point of order: he was referring to the past minister for industrial relations.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Cameron Dick was a former minister for IR.

**Ms GRACE:** He made the comment that when those things were brought to me they were dismissed. I take offence and I ask that that be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** To continue on, would you withdraw, Minister.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, the Labor Party has had many former ministers for industrial relations and—guess what?—they were all as bad as each other. I collectively talk about all of them.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Speaker, point of order: I take offence and I ask that that be withdrawn.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I did not mention the member.

**Ms GRACE:** I was a former industrial relations minister and you said that I was as bad as everyone else. I take offence—withdraw.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Your words.

**Ms GRACE:** Your words.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Yet, true.

**Mr SPEAKER:** In the context of that statement, I am going to ask you to withdraw and then you can proceed.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. That is why the Crisafulli government has taken the extraordinary step to set up a royal commission—known in Queensland as a commission of inquiry. We will protect witnesses. We will get to the bottom of donations to the Labor Party. We will get to the bottom of the legislation passed.

One of the first things the Labor Party did when they won office in 2015 was abolish and repeal all the laws the former LNP government put in place to protect workers on construction sites in Queensland, including, I might add, the 24-hour right of entry provision that we introduced between 2012 and 2015 which meant that unions had to give 24 hours notice before they entered a construction site. We brought that in. Labor abolished it when it came to government. The Watson SC report says that public servants were berated by union officials in 2015 when the Labor government won office, so much so that the CFMEU officials said, 'We own the government. We run the state.' That is what the CFMEU knew happened after the Labor Party won in 2015.

There have been so many issues over the last 10 years with workplace health and safety and staff in the Office of Industrial Relations. They need to be heard. I thank God that Queenslanders voted out the Labor government because if an LNP government had not been elected in October these voices would still be screaming into the air as they have been for 10 years with no action taken. We will not tolerate this behaviour on construction sites. We do not accept it in any workplace. Why was it allowed to go on for so long on construction and building sites in Queensland?

The National Association of Women in Construction support our calls for a royal commission. The Australian Constructors Association support the royal commission. The Major Contractors Association support the royal commission. The Business Chamber Queensland support the royal commission. The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry support the royal commission. The Property Council of Australia in Queensland support the royal commission. We will get to the bottom of who did what and, more importantly, who did not do anything to protect workplace health and safety staff.

My priority as Minister for Industrial Relations is everyone sitting behind me and the 700 or so others who work in the Office of Industrial Relations. We will put their interests first and not those of the CFMEU. We will not allow the bullying, fear and intimidation that has been allowed to perpetuate under every Labor industrial relations minister for 10 years. This gives a voice that they have not had for so long in Queensland. I look forward to them telling their stories.

In conclusion, we will protect the witnesses because it is triggering for a lot of people. A lot of the testimony that has been sent to me and given to me since I addressed all Office of Industrial Relations staff is retraumatising for them. I even have letters from workplace health and safety officials enclosing copies of correspondence they sent to former minister Grace and they say that former minister Grace did not do anything.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Speaker, point of order: I take offence at that last comment and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member has taken offence. I ask that you withdraw.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw. Lucky the royal commissioner does not have to withdraw because that former minister over there is going to have a lot of offence in the royal commission, no doubt.

**Mr SPEAKER:** All I asked you to do was withdraw.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Speaker, point of order: I take offence to that last statement and I ask that it be withdrawn. He does not control a royal commission.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member has taken offence. I ask that you withdraw.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for McConnel, do you have a question?

**Ms GRACE:** Director-General, has the department received any log of claims from unregistered organisations relevant to any EBA negotiations such as negotiations currently with the QNMU?

**Mr Sosso:** With the indulgence of the member for McConnel, I will turn to the acting deputy director-general for industrial relations to see if she can assist you with that specific question.

**Ms Heelan:** My understanding is that the answer to that question is no.

**Ms GRACE:** There is a statement from NPAQ and there is a media report from the *Brisbane Times* that I table.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Please give a copy of those to the director-general before we go to the question.

**Ms GRACE:** If you read both of those it quotes that NPAQ was invited to send a log of claims to the health department and the minister. They were invited to submit that log of claims. Are you aware whether NPAQ was invited to submit a log of claims in relation to the QNMU negotiations?

**Mr Sosso:** Firstly, member for McConnel, I can say that, to the best of my knowledge, the answer is no, I am not aware of that. I will turn to my colleague the acting deputy director-general who may be able to assist you further.

**Ms Heelan:** The Office of Industrial Relations has not. However, I could not speak on behalf of the Department of Health, Queensland Health.

**Ms GRACE:** Director-General or Ms Heelan, you collaborate on bargaining. You are not aware of any log of claims sent to Health or the minister, so are those articles incorrect or misleading?

**Mr Sosso:** With respect to the member for McConnel, that is a question that I think is better directed to the Minister of Health.

**Ms GRACE:** It is in the context, Director-General, of the role that I had clarified about working with agencies when bargaining is taking place.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, point of order: if the member has referred to an article that says the log of claims have been given to the health department, we are not health department. It is appropriate that the shadow minister asks those questions of the appropriate department. It is not this department; it is the health department.

**Ms GRACE:** To clarify: this is in relation to the role of the Office of Industrial Relations. They have a role with agencies.

**Mr SPEAKER:** It is up to director-general to answer as he sees fit.

**Mr Sosso:** I will segue back to the acting deputy director-general, but can I say to the member for McConnel, as a previous minister for industrial relations, you would be aware that the department does have a role to play in EB negotiations, but it is not involved in minutiae of those negotiations. It is involved at a higher level and provides specific advice from a coordination perspective. That is why I said if you want that level of specificity, with respect, I think it would be better to ask Queensland Health.

**Ms GRACE:** Minister, the article quotes you as having invited NPAQ to lodge a log of claims. NPAQ has stated that that was the case. Who is being truthful? Have you had any meetings or discussions with NPAQ, and did you invite them to submit a log of claims?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I suspect it is hard for them to submit a log of claims considering that, when you were the industrial relations minister, you all but abolished them from the industrial relations landscape in Queensland. You legislated against competition amongst employee representatives. You denied

nurses and you denied teachers an opportunity to choose their advocacy. You even stopped them having lawyers in the Industrial Relations Commission. The LNP government believes, as our policy was in the election, that members, public servants—whether it is teachers or nurses—should have the ability to speak to whatever advocacy group they want. They do not have that ability because the former Labor government trashed the rights of workers in the state.

**Ms GRACE:** Minister, it has been more than half an hour since I tabled the posts by the deputy chair of the WorkCover board. Has the Deputy Premier been provided with any advice about the posts to verify them and of what action will be taken? Will he take the action on notice and get back to this committee, please?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I have been speaking about the CFMEU for half an hour. I have not left estimates. I am concentrating on answering the questions being asked of me by honourable committee members, which is my priority this evening.

**Mr SPEAKER:** We will go to government questions.

**Mr KEMPTON:** Is the Deputy Premier aware of organisations or individuals that the CFMEU has sought to influence to enable their behaviour?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** To the honourable member, absolutely, we are aware of it. Jeez, where do you start—the Labor Party in Queensland, former ministers. There was lots of influencing by the CFMEU over the Labor Party and by the Labor Party over the CFMEU—so much so that we have seen time and time again the Labor Party return the favour. It has been an arrangement between the Labor Party in Queensland and the CFMEU: ‘You scratch my back and I’ll scratch your back.’

The royal commission that we have announced seeks to look to the enablers of the CFMEU in the last 10 years in particular. I think it would be interesting to look at legislation that has gone through the parliament in the last 10 years by former Labor industrial relations ministers and what benefit that has given to the CFMEU. Do not underestimate that: the legislation that went through the parliament enabled the CFMEU to get away with what they did for 10 years under the nose of the former Labor government. The Labor government kept legislating to protect the CFMEU.

In fact, before the election, legislation was passed in the parliament that allowed the CFMEU to take photographs and video of not only workplace health and safety inspectors but other workers on construction sites in Queensland. People might say, ‘What does that matter on a construction site?’ The Watson SC report reveals that the CFMEU were using doctored photos and videos against workplace health and safety officials. Isn’t it interesting that one minute we get the former Labor government introducing legislation allowing the CFMEU to take videos and photos on construction sites, and then we have evidence and testimony put into the Watson review that photos were being doctored and used against workplace health and safety inspectors in Queensland?

As I said, I will always—and I always did as industrial relations shadow minister for 10 years and minister for industrial relations before that between 2012 and 2015—put the rights of the workers first: the public servants, the workplace health and safety officials, the constant whistleblowers who came to me over the last 10 years when we were in opposition. We will ensure that the royal commission we have announced hears the testimony of these people. If the need arises, they will have in camera testimony so as to not have retribution from the CFMEU. Despite the CFMEU being put into federal administration, we are still seeing construction sites in Queensland affected. A couple of weeks ago on the Gold Coast, the CFMEU rocked up and found out a company was using a different crane company that was not associated with the CFMEU. They bullied and threatened this company that is a non-CFMEU union aligned EB.

Make no mistake, the administration has not stopped the issues and the culture in the CFMEU. The administrator will do what he needs to do and the government will do what we need to do, but we also have a very important royal commission which we have announced the terms of reference for. Up until last year, the member for Bancroft, who is a sitting member of parliament, was a member of the CFMEU. He is a member of parliament and up until last year he retained his status as a CFMEU member. The member for Waterford, who is the shadow treasurer in the state, was a former left faction convener with Michael Ravbar.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Minister, I know you are on a roll but there were a number of non-government questions that the director-general was going to seek further information on. We might go through those while we still have time.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** A question was asked about the breakdown of the \$105 million of previously allocated funding and how it has been reallocated. In relation to the Australian Battery Industrialisation Centre, funding was allocated to the planning and design at CleanCo Swanbank energy hub in

establishing an industry concierge service, along with other related project costs and contingencies. Following the federal government's failure to advance their 2022 commitment to establish a battery centre in Queensland, the remaining balance of unallocated funding was reallocated to the Sovereign Industry Development Fund—which, I might add, is a wonderful fund that is funded by the Crisafulli government. Applications opened today for defence, biomedicine and biofuels industries, and we are looking forward to seeing the wonderful applications that come as part of that Sovereign Industry Development Fund.

The second question we said we would come back with information on is how many department employees have met with affected workers in Kingaroy and what funding programs may be available to those affected workers. That was with respect to the Bega issue that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised. As the member for Woodridge would know, media reported the Bega Group was reviewing the future of the Kingaroy facility in June 2024 when the member was the deputy premier of the state of Queensland. So it begs the question: what did Cameron Dick do when he was the deputy premier about the workers at the Bega factory when he knew months before the state election in October? It was reported that they were looking at the future of their Kingaroy facility in June 2024 when in fact he was the deputy premier. It begs the question again: time and time again we saw the Labor Party trying to revise history of their 10 years in office. When they were in power and in a position to do something—whether it is Bega or the CFMEU—they did not. I will go on.

Since the announcement was made, I understand both the Department of Primary Industries and my department have been engaging with representatives of workers from the company. As the member for Woodridge would know, the Worker Transition Scheme is available to provide coordinated support across Queensland, federal and local governments to workers who have been made redundant. In this case, the former deputy premier would have known, so I think it is a little classless to be asking questions about that when he would have been afforded the opportunity to do something about it when he was the deputy premier in 2024 and he did not do anything about it. Again, typical Labor Party.

**Ms BUSH:** Point of order, Mr Speaker: there are still two outstanding questions, by my count. One of them was put to the director-general of what funding has his department made available this current financial year and next to support the 150 workers in Kingaroy and Tolga who will be made redundant. The second was to the Deputy Premier: given the evidence of the director-general, will you immediately activate the worker transition and rapid response scheme to assist the impacted workers?

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I will repeat what I just said because I have answered the question. As the member for Woodridge and the member for Cooper would know, the media reported the Bega Group was reviewing the future of the Kingaroy facility in June 2024 when the member was the deputy premier. Since the announcement was made, I understand both the Department of Primary Industries and my department have been engaging with representatives of workers from the company. As the member for Woodridge would also know, the Worker Transition Scheme is available to provide coordinated support across Queensland, federal and local governments to workers who have been made redundant. Support is available, and that is a matter between what the worker wants and what they are trying to ascertain from that approach. I also made the point that it started in 2024 but it is an 18-month transition strategy. We will afford all the support we can to the workers, as I have indicated twice now.

**Ms BUSH:** Point of order: I apologise and I appreciate the response, however, we were after an exact figure. I believe the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was asking for an exact figure of what funding the minister's department has made available this financial year. If the Deputy Premier cannot answer that, perhaps he can take that on notice today.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I am not taking it on notice. I have answered the question.

**Ms BUSH:** Speaker, I would like to move a motion that the Deputy Premier does take it on notice.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** We can move a motion why the former deputy premier, Cameron Dick, did not do it in 2024 when he had the opportunity.

**Ms BUSH:** Speaker, I move a motion that the Deputy Premier take that on notice.

**Mr SPEAKER:** It is up to the member whether he takes it on notice. We cannot instruct him to.

We have now reached the end of the time allocated for the consideration of the proposed expenditure for the industrial relations portfolio area. Thank you, Deputy Premier, officials and departmental officers. That concludes the estimates hearing for the State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee for today. I would like to thank the committee members and visiting members who participated in the hearing. Thank you also to Hansard and the parliamentary broadcast staff together with all other parliamentary staff who assisted here today.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** Mr Speaker, with your indulgence can I just thank all of the departmental staff and ministerial staff who have helped with the estimates process. They are an amazing team and I thank them, particularly the Coordinator-General, the director-general, all of your staff, my ministerial staff, the committee secretariat, the Clerk, the Speaker and all committee members. It has been very good; thank you very much.

**Ms GRACE:** I thank all relevant officers as well.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I declare today's hearing closed.

**The committee adjourned at 6.01 pm.**